The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Political Risk Assessment – PMGT 6477

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Course Description

Organizations, whether public or private, must continually anticipate, understand, and mitigate risks to their reputations and operations. Political risk - created by governmental, financial, and social volatility - is among the greatest challenges that organizations face. As a result, political risk assessment is an essential capability for political managers and the organizations they serve. It is particularly important in today's hyper-connected world, where dynamics anywhere across the globe can impact any organization. This course will teach students the tools of risk assessment, enabling them to better forecast, analyze, and react to political volatility.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Employ the key tools of political risk analysis for the purpose of predicting, analyzing, and managing risk.

- Identify when and how to apply forecasting tools for strategic planning and decision-making.

- Evaluate financial, governmental, and social information, trends, and activity that may impact an organization's objectives, reputation, and/or operations.

- Present political risk assessments to senior leaders and decision-makers in verbal, written, and presentation formats.

- Apply the lessons from past successful political risk mitigation measures when navigating complexity driven by political volatility.

Textbooks & Materials

The Fat Tail: The Power of Political Knowledge in an Uncertain World by Ian Bremmer and Preston Keat

Superforecasting: The Art and Science of Prediction by Philip E. Tetlock and Dan Gardner

Course Calendar

Week 1 - Class Overview & Introductions

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: Post your bio/resume and select your "client" company

Week 2 – Recognizing & Measuring Risk

Reading: Bremmer and Keat: Chapters 1,2,3

Assignment(s) Due: None

Week 3 - Understanding Political Risk Factors (Part 1)

Reading: Bremmer and Keat: Chapters 5,6,7

Assignment(s) Due: First Paper – Advice Note on your client's top political risk factors

Week 4 - Understanding Political Risk Factors (Part 2)

Reading: Bremmer and Keat: Chapters 4,8

Assignment(s) Due: None

Week 5 - Assessing Economic-Driven Political Risk

Reading: World Bank Report: Foreword, Executive Summary, Chapter 1

Assignment(s) Due: Updated Advice Note - Provide an update to company leaders employing the risk assessment approaches and tools you've learned.

Week 6 - Contemporary Accelerants of Political Risk

Reading: [Pew Report on Social Media & The Arab Spring](); [CFR Memo on Pandemic Global Governance](); [EconTalk Podcast Interview with Martin Gurri]()

Assignment(s) Due: None

Week 7 - Forecasting (Part 1)

Reading: Tetlock and Gardner: Chapters 1,2,4 (Extra: Ch. 3)

Assignment(s) Due: TBD forecasting and decision-making project

Week 8 - Forecasting (Part 2)

Reading: Tetlock and Gardner: Chapters 10,11,12, Appendix

Assignment(s) Due: None

Week 9 - Delivering Risk Assessments

Reading: TBD

Assignment(s) Due: None

Week 10 - Delivering Risk Assessments

Reading: None

Assignment(s) Due: Final Project – Details to be announced

Grading

This course uses a [points / percent] based grading schema, as shown below.

Assignment Type	Percent of Grade
Choosing Your Client	5%
1st Advice Note	20%
2nd Advice Note	20%
TBD 3rd Project	20%
Final Project	25%
Discussion & Participation	10%

The grading scale below, based on 100 percentage points, determines your final letter grade. Note: the scale below is based on 100 percent and is the default grading schema in Blackboard's Grade Center.

100 – 93: A	92 – 90: A-	89 – 87: B+
86 – 83: B+	82 – 80: B-	79 – 77: C+
76 – 73: C	72 – 70: C-	69 – 67: D+
66 – 63: D	62 – 60: D-	<59: F

Policies

Instructor Response Time

I will respond to emails within 48 hours. I will return writing assignments within one week, with comments.

Late Work

All assignments are due on the dates indicated in this syllabus and in the course outline. Lateness will not be accepted for a grade. If there is an emergency, which prevents you from submitting work on time, notify me as soon as possible so I am aware of your situation.

Netiquette

Please observe the following rules of netiquette for communicating online:

- Remain professional, respectful, and courteous at all times.
- Remember that a real human being wrote each post and will read what you write in response. It is easy to misinterpret discussion posts. Let's give the benefit of the doubt.
- If you have a strong opinion on a topic, it is acceptable to express it as long as it is not phrased as an attack. Please be gracious with differing opinions.
- When upset, wait a day or two prior to posting. Messages posted (or emailed) in anger are often regretted later.
- Proofread and use the spell check tool when you type a post. It makes the post easier to read and helps your readers understand what you are saying.

I reserve the right to delete any post that is deemed inappropriate for the discussion forum, blog, or wiki without prior notification to the student. This includes any post containing language that is offensive, rude, profane, racist, or hateful. Posts that are seriously off-topic or serve no purpose other than to vent frustration will also be removed.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see: studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity

Copyright Notice

The Copyright Act (17 U.S.C. § 10) governs the rights attributed to owners of copyrighted work. Under certain circumstances, educational institutions may provide copies of copyrighted works to students. The copies may not be copied nor used for any other purpose besides private study, scholarship, or research. Users should not provide electronic copies of any materials provided on this course's Blackboard site to unauthorized users. If a user fails to comply with Fair Use restrictions, he/she may be held liable for copyright infringement. No further transmission or electronic distribution is permitted.

Disability Support Services

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in Rome Hall, Suite 102, on the Foggy Bottom campus to

establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/

Mental Health Services

The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. counselingcenter.gwu.edu/

GWU Libraries

Off campus students have full access to all of the research resources, services, and assistance that the Library offers. The GW community has access to 500+ online subscription databases and to millions of items, electronic and print, in the library catalog.   Off-campus students even have additional privileges because the Library will FedEx print materials to your home. Call the Ask Us desk at 202-994-6048 or visit go.gwu.edu/ask to contact someone at the library to answer any questions. For questions beyond "Do you have this book/article?" and "How do I login?" use the website mentioned to make a research consultation appointment with a librarian. Librarians are there to guide students through any aspect of the research process, from selecting and narrowing a topic, crafting a research strategy to citation management. For additional information please refer to: library.gwu.edu/

GWU Emergency Preparedness

For additional information about the GWU Emergency Preparedness plan for Severe Weather, Violence, and Emergency Communications visit the syllabus section in your Blackboard course or additional resources are available online at Campus Advisories: http://campusadvisories.gwu.edu

GWU Credit Hour Policy

In an 8 week semester, including exam week, students are expected to spend a minimum of 100 minutes of out-of-class work for every 50 minutes of direct instruction, for a minimum total of 14 hours a week. A 3-credit course should include approximately 14 hours of direction instruction and of independent learning. More information about GWU's credit hour policy can be found at:
https://provost.gwu.edu/sites/provost.gwu.edu/files/downloads/Resources/Assignment-Credit-Hours-9-2016.pdf

University Policy on Religious Holidays

Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.