

College of Professional Studies

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Masters of Political Management

The Graduate School of Political Management

PMGT 6410: Grassroots Engagement

(3 Credits)

Basic Information & Resources

Instructor: Sean Gagen

About Sean Gagen

Sean Gagen is a principal at [Grassroots SG, LLC](#). Sean has worked as an organizer, campaign manager, advocacy strategist, recruiter, and executive director since 1992. Sean has developed nationally-recognized organizing techniques and programs that are built on teaching people to engage targeted groups of voters or decision makers with well-thought out and concise messaging. Whether advocating for an issue, planning a campaign's field or paid canvass program, or training activists/students for a future run for political office, a well-planned organizing program can be the difference between winning and losing.

Sean developed the original Campaign Camp and Camp Wellstone training programs. Since Campaign Camp's conception, Sean has overseen the training of nearly 18,000 aspiring political professionals, advocates, and campaign staffers in 35 states across the country. Sean has won three Pollie Awards for his development of national cutting-edge advocacy and campaign training programs.

Sean started his career in 1992 as the Executive Director of Participation 2000, a progressive grassroots organization dedicated to empowering young people in politics. The Honorary Co-Chairs of Participation 2000 were U.S. Senator Bill Bradley (NJ); former Governor of Ohio, Richard F. Celeste; and former Governor of Texas, Ann Richards. Sean also served as the Executive Director of the Missouri Democratic Party from 1997-1999 before joining the Bill Bradley for President Campaign in June of 1999. He was the National Director of Organizing, managed the Ballot Access Teams, and served as Deputy Director at the Iowa Caucuses. Sean has worked on campaigns for state and federal offices across the country, including Russ Carnahan for Congress (2004-12), Bill Richardson for Governor (D-NM), and Judi Dutcher for Governor (D-MN).

Sean has served as an Adjunct Professor at the Graduate School of Political Management at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., since 2004. Sean has taught traditional and online courses focusing on grassroots organizing and campaign strategy.

Contact Information

Phone Number: (703) 956-3037

Email Address: Seangagen@hotmail.com

Office Hours: Thursdays, 7pm EST

Course Details

Course Description and Overview

This class will be an online study of grassroots organizing and campaign management.

We will review and explore an overview of a campaign plan and how it is developed. We will talk about the various components including a budget outline, various goals of the organizing effort, menu options available based on a landscape assessment, and potential resources to enact a successful campaign effort.

During the first several weeks of the class, we will deal with "getting started" and the assessment phases of a campaign organizing effort. We hope to lay the framework for a campaign plan during this phase.

Over the last several weeks, we will discuss grassroots organizing and the tools to victory. We will look at the different types of organizing methods by comparing and contrasting large campaigns (e.g., running for President vs. running in a state legislative race). We will talk about the need for targeting and use of new techniques to narrow the base and persuasion efforts of a campaign's objectives. We will also investigate the direct voter contact and earned media strategies to echo the campaign's message to targeted voters. We will include planning fundamentals such as timelines, tracking, and allocation of resources. This phase will deal with building the walls of the campaign structure and starting the plan. For more information, please review the course syllabus.

Each week, you will complete one unit. Each unit contains readings, a lecture, and a discussion assignment. Initial discussion posts are typically due each Wednesday, and you will need to respond to your classmates' posts by each Sunday. All unit assignments are due on Sundays.

Program Objectives

A Political Management degree prepares students to win campaigns for elective office and policy positions, and to do so in a manner that benefits democracy and society as well as their organization and clients. In completing the degree, students will be able to:

1. Assess a political environment, develop a strategy to achieve specified goals, and execute that strategy
2. Draw upon a repertoire of effective campaign communication skills
3. Collect, evaluate, and incorporate empirical evidence to shape and optimize the strategy
4. Find, engage, and motivate the right leaders, professionals, and citizens
5. Recognize and work through recurring political dilemmas in a manner that upholds ethical standards and professional conduct.

Course Learning Objectives

As result of completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Recognize, defend, and apply strategic grassroots engagement in a campaign, including targeting voters, messaging, field organizing, fundraising, candidate or issue campaigns,

earned media, GOTV - including vote by mail and early voting - managing a budget, and coalition building.

2. Demonstrate how the use of data, technology, and social media can impact the outcome of a campaign.
3. Develop a field engagement plan integrating all of the above.

Required Text and Learning Materials

Books listed below form the basic required readings for this course. They will assist you in your assignments and will become valuable resources for your campaign planning bookshelf.

- Heilemann, J. & Halperin, M. (2010). *Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin, and the Race of a Lifetime*. HarperCollins. ISBN-13: 978-0061733635.
- Malchow, H. (2008). *Political Targeting*. Washington, DC: Campaigns and Elections Magazine. ISBN-13: 978-0615184616.
- Weston, Drew. (2007). [The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation](#). Public Affairs. ISBN-13: 978-1586484255. [e-book]

The following texts will be provided as a PDF (links provided in weekly folders when assigned):

- Grassroots Solutions. (2008) The Campaign Camp Training Manual.

Supplemental/Recommended Texts

- Allen, J. & Parnes, A. (Apr 18, 2017). *Shattered: Inside Hillary Clinton's Doomed Campaign*. Crown Publishing. ISBN: 978-0553447095.

*Other supplemental texts will be provided on Blackboard.

Evaluation and Grading

Assessments will contribute toward the student’s grade based on the following chart:

Assignment Category	Weight
Weekly Discussions (<i>Weekly</i>)	10%
Written Assignments <i>Assignment 1.1: The Primary Campaign</i> <i>Assignment 2.2: Campaign Budget Simulation</i> <i>Assignment 3.1: Swing Voters</i> <i>Assignment 3.2: Using Targeting Data</i> <i>Assignment 9.1: Social Media Tracking (starts in Week 7)</i>	20%

Assignment Category	Weight
Group Assignments <i>Assignment 4.1: Phone Bank Scripts</i> <i>Assignment 5.1: Campaign Message</i>	10%
Ongoing Twitter-based Discussions (six total) <i>Campaigning with Twitter Assignments, Week 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.</i>	10%
Final Project Proposal (Assignment 2.1)	5%
Final Campaign Outline (Assignment 8.1)	5%
Final Campaign Organizing Plan (Assignment 10.1)	40%
Total	100%

This course will include the following types of assessment:

Campaigning with Twitter Discussions

Social media, especially Twitter, has become an important part of campaigning. Your Twitter assignments will ask you to post and analyze campaign messages – your grade for these assignments will be based upon your participation (100 points each). You must tweet at least once per assignment prompt, though you are encouraged to post further to keep the conversation going throughout the week. For these assignments, you will need to make the following preparations:

1. Create a Twitter account at www.Twitter.com and follow the step-by-step instructions provided. (If you already have a Twitter account, you may wish to create a new one that is just used for this class)
2. Once you have created an account, you will be ready to Tweet. Make sure all of your tweets have the hashtag [#PMGT6410](#) so that your tweets will show up in the class feed. You can access the class feed on the Blackboard navigation bar.
3. Follow your instructor's Twitter feeds ([@seangagen](#)) and facilitator (Twitter handle to be provided in your course section.).

Discussion Rubric

Criteria	Points
First contribution by deadline.	20
Post is substantive and advances discussion.	40
Thoughts are expressed clearly and succinctly.	20
Post reflects reading assignments and some outside awareness of the topics.	10
Total	90
At least 1 response to other posts by deadline (if required).	10
Discussion Total	100

Written Assignments

The following rubric will be used to assess your 1-page short essays or reports and your individual exercises.

Criteria	Points
Timeliness: Submitted by due date.	10
Responsiveness: Responds to assignment instructions.	10
Style: Thoughts expressed clearly and succinctly.	10
Information: Reflects a clear understanding of a potentially successful strategy or the topic at hand.	20
<p>Quality of Analysis: Understands what is being taught.</p> <p>For short essays or reports, the student should demonstrate that he or she has read and has an understanding of the materials, that the analysis of the readings is reliable, and connections between the assignment and course topics are clear.</p> <p>When indicated, the student should present a clear strategy that is well thought out and well explained.</p>	50
Total	100

Group Assignments

Two assignments will be done in small groups of 3-4 members. The grading will include a peer and self-evaluation component to ensure that all students are assessed more fairly for their effort.

Criteria	Points
Timeliness: Submitted by due date.	10
Responsiveness: Responds to assignment instructions.	10
Style: Thoughts expressed clearly and succinctly.	10
Information: Reflects a clear understanding of a potentially successful strategy.	20
Quality of Analysis: Understands what is being taught. The group should present a clear strategy that is well thought out and well explained.	25
Peer and Self Evaluation: Average of the points from evaluations given by group members.	25
Total	100

Campaign Organizing Outline

Criteria	Points
Timeliness: Submitted by deadline.	10
Responsiveness: Responds to assignment instructions.	10
Information: Reflects the topics that will be required in the final project.	20
Style: Thoughts expressed clearly and succinctly; free of grammar, punctuation, and other errors; cites sources using APA style guide requirements.	10
Quality of Analysis: Understands the scope of the final project and the components of an issue or campaign plan (i.e., does not need special instruction as guidance before writing the final project); everything in plan is for a quality project.	50
Total	100

Campaign Organizing Plan

Criteria	Points
Timeliness: Submitted by date required.	10
Responsiveness: Responds to assignment instructions.	10

Criteria	Points
Style: Thoughts expressed clearly and succinctly; free of grammar, punctuation, and other errors; cites sources using APA style guide requirements.	10
Information: Content reflects an understanding of the topics that will be required in the final project. Has the necessary components of the plan and those components are well discussed. Includes dates and timelines for action. Includes a strategy that is likely to help reach the goals of the plan.	35
Quality of Analysis: Organizing plan includes sections on messaging, earned media and communications, setting clear goals, fundraising, grassroots field organizing, targeting, social media, coalition building, strategy, messaging, etc. Has a timeline and budget attached. Understands and explains each component well. The plan helps the campaign a make a case for the path to reach set goals. Incorporates feedback from the instructor and/or teaching assistant(s) on the assessments papers to make a better plan. Plan can be engaged and is a useful tool to reach the goals of a candidate or advocacy group.	35
Total	100

Grading Scale

Following is the grade scale for all CPS classes:

Grade	Range	Grade Standard
A	94-100	Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.
A-	90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.
B+	87-89	Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.
B	83-86	Good work, but needs reworking and more effort.
B-	80-82	You've completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.

Grade	Range	Grade Standard
C+	77-79	Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.
C	73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.
C-	70-72 (lowest grade to pass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F	Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

Tentative Course Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar. Final dates and details will be found on the Blackboard course site.

Unit	Learning Objectives	Topic	Textbook Readings	Assignments
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify the key areas of a campaign plan. ○ Complete a draft budget from a sample exercise. ○ Analyze campaign organizing in context. 	Getting Started and Understanding Grassroots Organizing & Planning	Grassroots Solutions, The Campaign Manual, Chapters 1 & 2 Heilemann & Halperin, Chapters 8-10, 15, & 16	Discussion 1.0: Self-introduction Discussion 1.1: My Grassroots Experience Assignment 1.1: The 2008 Primary Campaign. Assignment 1.2: Campaigning with Twitter Part 1
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify the fundamentals of a field organizing program. ○ Compare methods used by large campaigns (e.g. president vs. state legislature) 	Understanding Planning, Targeting, and Organizing Lesson 2.1: Field Planning and Organizing	Grassroots Solutions, The Campaign Manual, Chapters 7 & 8	Discussion 2.1: Community Influentials and Volunteer Recruitment Assignment 2.1: Final Project Proposal Assignment 2.2: Campaign Budget Simulation Assignment 2.3: Campaigning with Twitter Part 2

Unit	Learning Objectives	Topic	Textbook Readings	Assignments
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Define targeting and explain how targeting is used. ○ Analyze district data to establish a targeting plan. 	<p>Targeting</p> <p>Lesson 3.1: Targeting 101</p>	<p>Malchow. Hal. <i>Political Targeting</i>, Chapters 1, 2,3, 4 & 16</p> <p>Lendor, E. (2014, Oct. 22). “Yes, Independent Swing Voters Are Real. Any May decide Who Wins Elections.” The Daily Beast.</p> <p>Political Polarization in Action. Pew Research Center, Oct. 17, 2014.</p>	<p>Discussion 3.1: Targeting</p> <p>Discussion 3.2 Creating a Win Number</p> <p>Discussion 3.3: Swing Voters</p> <p>Assignment 3.2: Using Targeting Data</p> <p>Assignment 3.3: Campaigning with Twitter Part 3</p>
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use coalition building to expand your base of support. ○ Investigate direct voter contact and earned media strategies to echo the campaign’s message and targeted voters. 	<p>Tactics and Coalition Building</p> <p>Lesson 4.1: Tactics and Coalition Building: Going Door-to-Door; Volunteer Recruitment, Engagement, and Mobilization; and Coalition Building</p>	<p>Warren, M. (2001, Jan 1). Building Democracy (Faith-Based Community Organizing). <i>Shelterforce</i>.</p> <p>Schmitt, M. (2008, Feb 6). Building a Coalition, Building a Party. <i>The American Prospect</i>.</p> <p>Weston, The Political Brain, Chapters 1-5</p>	<p>Assignment 4.1: Phone Bank Scripts (Group)</p> <p>Discussion 4.2: Coalitions</p> <p>Assignment 4.2: Campaigning with Twitter Part 4</p>
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify the components of a campaign message. ○ Develop a message box and defend your campaign message. 	<p>Messaging</p> <p>Lesson 5.1: Message Development</p>	<p>Grassroots Solutions, The Campaign Manual, Chapter 4</p> <p>Weston, The Political Brain, Chapters 5-10</p>	<p>Discussion 5.1: Defending your Campaign Message</p> <p>Assignment 5.1: Campaign Message (group project)</p> <p>Assignment 5.2: Campaigning with Twitter Part 5</p>
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describe the fundamentals of paid media and direct mail. ○ Develop an informed message to deliver to voters via a press release. 	<p>Earned Media and Paid Media</p> <p>Lesson 6.1: Earned and Paid Media</p>	<p>Grassroots Solutions, The Campaign Manual, Chapter 5</p> <p>(Optional): Heilemann & Halperin, Chapters 15-19</p>	<p>Discussion 6.1: Supporting your Press Release</p> <p>Assignment 6.1: Press Release</p> <p>Assignment 6.2: Campaigning with Twitter Part 6</p>
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understand how and when to use specific social media strategies. ○ Analyze the effectiveness of social media in context. 	<p>Social Media</p> <p>Lesson 7.1: Social Media</p>	<p>Weston, The Political Brain, Chapters 11-15</p>	<p>Discussion: Begin Tracking Your Candidates</p> <p>Begin Assignment 9.1: Social Media Tracking.</p>

Unit	Learning Objectives	Topic	Textbook Readings	Assignments
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understand how campaigns generate fundraising for grassroots efforts. ○ Create a fundraising goal and plan and apply fundraising tools. 	Fundraising Lesson 8.1: Fundraising	Grassroots Solutions, The Campaign Manual, Chapter 3.	Discussion 8.1: Fundraising Script Assignment 8.1: Final Campaign Plan Outline
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explain the importance of ongoing GOTV efforts. ○ Recognize the components of a GOTV plan. ○ Implement a convergence of activities to increase the effectiveness of GOTV. 	Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Lesson 9.1: GOTV	Grassroots Solutions, The Campaign Manual, Chapter 9 Malchow, H. <i>Political Targeting</i> , Washington, DC. <i>Campaigns and Election Magazine</i> , Chapters 13 & 19.	Discussion 9.1: Recruitment for GOTV Assignment 9.1: Social Media Tracking
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a field engagement plan integrating your knowledge from previous assignments, readings, and each week of the course. 	Final Campaign Plan Preparation Lesson 10.1: Final Campaign Plan Preparation	None	Discussion 10.1: Your Campaign Organizing Plan Message Assignment 10.1: Final Campaign Plan

Expectations and Responsibilities

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site regularly throughout the semester to review weekly course content, view announcements, and submit assignments. Students can access the course site through [GWU Blackboard](#).

Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or the [IT Blackboard web page](#).

Please note that your access to this course on Blackboard will end when the course ends after 10 weeks. In the campaign world, it is very important to complete your assignments on time and at deadline.

Technology Requirements

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the required technology to fully participate in this course. The minimum technology requirements for learning online at GW are outlined on the [Technical Requirements and Support](#) web page.

If you have any problems with the technology in this course, you can seek technological support from GW in a variety of ways, outlined on the [IT Support](#) website.

GW is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment that is accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities.

The following links provide more information about the accessibility of technologies used in this course:

[Blackboard accessibility](#)

[Microsoft Office accessibility](#)

[Adobe accessibility](#)

If you have any issues regarding the accessibility of the technology used in this course, please contact your instructor. You may also explore the [Disability Support Services](#) website.

Technology Expectations

Regarding technology skills, you should be able to:

1. Create documents and presentation slides
2. Creating a Twitter account and respond to questions using Twitter technology
3. Be open to learning and registering for new technologies
4. Be flexible when technological glitches happen (which is a given)
5. Seek technological help when necessary by contacting the Division of Information Technology

If you have any problems with the technology expectations in this course, please contact your instructor.

Getting Started

Everything you need to get started in the course is contained within the Blackboard course site. You can use the menu links on the left side panel to view different components. The content for each learning unit is divided into folders—one for each week. More unit folders will unlock as weeks in the course progress.

Participation Policy

All students are expected to learn and contribute by being a positive participant in discussions, activities, presentations, and assignments. If you have an unavoidable conflict or become ill, in a way that will affect your participation in a given week, please notify your instructor immediately. Netiquette

Please observe the following rules of netiquette for communicating online:

1. Remain professional, respectful, and courteous at all times.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. When upset, wait a day or two prior to posting. Messages posted (or emailed) in anger are often regretted later.
5. 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.

Your instructor reserves 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.

Credit Hour Policy

For this **10-week, 3-credit course** there will be an average of **9-10 hours** of combined direct instruction and independent learning per week. More information about GWU's credit hour policy can be found at [the Office of the Provost's Policies](#) web page (Under: Assignment of Credit Hour Policy).

University Policies & Services

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 details and complete code, see [GW's Code of Academic Integrity](#).

Copyright Statement

Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants only. The recording and rebroadcasting of such material, by any means, is forbidden.

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.

University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays

In accordance with University policy, 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. For details see the current religious holiday policy on [the Office of the Provost's Policies](#) web page.

Disability Support Services (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services. They can be contacted by phone at 202-994-8250 or in person at Rome Hall, 801 22nd Street, NW, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information visit the [Disability Support Services](#) website.

Counseling and Psychological Services

GW's Colonial Health Center offers counseling and psychological services, supporting mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges and difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, and personal success. For additional information call 202-994-5300 or visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) website.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is located in Gelman Library at 2130 H St NW in Suite 221 and they can be reached at 202-994-3765 or via email at gwriter@gwu.edu. You can [schedule writing center appointments](#), both in-

person or by phone, in advance. Daytime and evening hours are available. Check for this semester's hours at the [writing center contact page](#). The Writing Center does offer Summer hours.

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. For more information visit the [GW Libraries](#) homepage.

Call the Ask Us desk at 202-994-6048 or [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.

Safety and Security

In an emergency: call GWPD at 202-994-6111 or call 911

For situation-specific actions: review the [Emergency Response Handbook](#)

In an active violence situation: [Get Out, Hide Out or Take Out](#)

Stay informed: review [notification tools for staying informed during emergency and safety related situations](#)