M.P.S. in Political Management
Fall 2021
September 30 – December 9, 2021

Crisis Management in American Politics
PMGT 6458.10
3 Credits
Thursdays 6:10 – 8:00pm ET

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Instructor
Michael D. Edwards

Contact Information
Phone Number: 202-770-7302
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Communication
Professor Edwards will gladly make himself available for consultations with students during the week. In addition, students should feel free to call him with questions or concerns. He can be contacted by text or telephone at 202-770-7302 or via email at Edwardsm@gwu.edu.

Blackboard Site
A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site regularly, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructor and the students. Students can access the course site at https://blackboard.gwu.edu. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or IT Blackboard Webpage. Please note that access to this course on Blackboard will continue for one month after the course ends. If you wish to keep any work or materials, you must download or save them before the course closes.

Attendance Policy
Preparation for, attendance at, and participation in all classes are essential elements in this course. Students are expected to be present at each class and to participate in asynchronous assignments and discussions throughout the week. Course participation counts for 20 percent of each student's grade. Should a student not be able to attend a session, he/she should notify Professor Edwards in advance and make appropriate arrangements to familiarize himself/herself with the material covered, to submit any assignments due at that time, and to receive any additional assignments that might be forthcoming from that session.

Out-of-Class/ Independent Learning Expectation

Over the course of the semester, students will spend approximately three hours per week in combined online class meetings (synchronous learning) and engaged in asynchronous instructional learning activities (done weekly on one's own time) over the 10 week term. In addition to these required asynchronous and synchronous activities, reading for the class meetings, online discussions, and written response papers or projects are expected to take up, on average, 8¼ hours per week. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 30 hours in instructional time (asynchronous and synchronous) and 82.5 hours preparing for class for a total of 112.5 hours

University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays
- Students must notify faculty as early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the absence, of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. If the holiday falls in the first three weeks of class, the students must inform the faculty within the first week of the semester they are enrolled in the course.
- To the greatest extent possible, faculty must continue to extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
- Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday must arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.
- For the full text of the policy and calendar of religious holidays, please see the Office of the Provost's Policies web page (Religious Holidays document).

Academic Integrity
All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. 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." Copying information and pasting it into a paper without a quotation and citation is an act of plagiarism. Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. For the first offense, the student will receive an "F" for the assignment and formal charges will be filed with the Office of Academic Integrity. For the second offense, charges will again be filed and the student will receive an "F" for the final course grade. Penalties for academic dishonesty are not negotiable. You will not be offered a "do-over" or resubmission. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity

Online Classroom Conduct Policy
You should behave in class as if you are in a professional setting. Unless you are having connection difficulties, you are expected to activate your camera and to be present, attentive, and engaged during online course meetings. Please do not attempt to multitask, as it is almost impossible to read something while simultaneously listening to something else. 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.

Professor Edwards 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.

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 that may be used in this course:
- [Blackboard accessibility](#)
- [Microsoft Office accessibility](#)
- [YouTube accessibility](#)
- [Zoom accessibility](#)
If you have any issues regarding the accessibility of the technology used in this course, please contact Professor Edwards. You may also explore the [Disability Support Services](#) website (see above).

Technology Expectations
Regarding technology skills, you should be able to (
- Create documents and presentation slides
- Upload files, including recordings and images
- Be open to learning and registering for new technologies
- Be flexible when technological glitches happen (which is a given)
- 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.

Use of Electronic Course Materials and Class Recordings
Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Please contact Professor Edwards if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions. Please contact [Disability Support Services](#) if you need additional accommodations for accessing electronic course materials.

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.

Support for Students with Disabilities
GW's Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Please notify your instructor if you require accommodations. Additional information is available at https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/.

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.

Title IX: Confidentiality and Responsible Employee Statement
The George Washington University (GWU) and its faculty are committed to helping create a safe and open learning environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. GWU strongly encourages all members of the community to take action, seek support and report incidents of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Office. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty members are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Mental Health Services through Colonial Health (counselors are available 24/7 at 202-994-5300 or you can make an appointment to see a counselor in person.). For more information about reporting options and resources at GWU and the community, please visit https://haven.gwu.edu/.

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 offers 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

Course Evaluation
At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW's online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Dr. Todd Belt
Director, Political Management Program
tbelt@gwu.edu | 202-994-4363

Suzanne Farrand
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309

THE COURSE

Political Management 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.

Graduate School Expectations
Students enrolled in a graduate program should take their academic responsibilities seriously and be prepared to meet the following expectations:

1. Utilize effective time management skills so as to complete and submit their assignments on their required due dates and times.
2. Have attained a mastery of written communication skills including proper sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and word usage.
3. Understand how to properly format in-text citations and references for resources and information integrated into their written assignments.

GSPM prepares students for careers in the professional political world. In politics, words and deadlines matter. Excellent written communication skills are essential for success. Every word used, whether it is in a television or radio ad, direct mail piece, social media, or a press release, will be scrutinized. Similarly, deadlines are important. Election Day does not get postponed because a candidate and their campaign are not prepared. There are no "do-overs" because a direct mail piece did not arrive to its intended recipients until after the election was concluded. Students will be best positioned for success in the practical political world if they have developed and exercise excellent written communication and time management skills.

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CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN AMERICAN POLITICS

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This course examines the management of crisis situations, turning points, and defining moments in contemporary electoral, legislative and public policy campaigns, in governmental decision-making, and in corporate affairs. It is designed to help students develop the tools and techniques necessary to predict, identify, isolate, avert, manage and even capitalize on such situations. The course will be conducted as an online seminar emphasizing in-depth class participation and discussion. Through examination of case studies and the use of simulation exercises, it explores both the theoretical and practical aspects of crisis management in today's world.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Understand, recognize and assess crisis situations in electoral, legislative and public policy campaigns, in governmental decision-making, and in corporate affairs.
2. Master tools and techniques for the effective management of crisis situations.
3. Discern the reputational and electoral consequences of scandal, and develop the appropriate strategies to minimize negative effects.
4. Understand and deploy ethical standards, judgment and behavior in addressing preventing, isolating, and managing crises.

Course Requirements

Students will be required to complete two comprehensive research, analysis, and writing assignments; one short assignment related to crisis identification and a second short assignment on ethical issues in a specific crisis situation. Details about these assignments will be distributed at the second class of the semester. The components of the final class grades will be as follows: individual research and analysis projects (30% each); general preparation for and participation in synchronous and asynchronous class discussions (20%); crisis identification assignment (10%), ethics assignment (10%).

Evaluation and Grading

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed	Due Date	Weight
Crisis Identification Memo	• Understand, recognize and assess crisis situations in electoral, legislative and public policy campaigns, in governmental decision-making, and in corporate affairs.	Oct 21	10%
Ethics Memorandum	• Develop and employ ethical standards, judgment and behavior in addressing crises	Nov 4	10%
Crisis Management Case Study	• Understand, recognize and assess crisis situations in electoral, legislative and public policy campaigns, in governmental decision-making, and in corporate affairs. • Master tools and techniques for the effective management of crisis situations. • Develop and employ ethical standards, judgment and behavior in addressing crises.	Nov 18	30%
Crisis Management Analysis Paper	• Understand, recognize and assess crisis situations in electoral, legislative and public policy campaigns, in governmental decision-making, and in corporate affairs. • Master tools and techniques for the effective management of crisis situations. • Develop and employ ethical standards, judgment and behavior in addressing crises	Dec 9	30%
Attendance and Participation			20%
Total			100%

Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

Grade*		Grading 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	Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort. Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a "B" is viewed as unacceptable.
B-	80-82	You've completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.
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.

*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

Required Text and Learning Materials

- Steven Fink, <u>Crisis Management: Planning for the Inevitable</u>, iUniverse, 2000

- Laurence Barton, <u>Crisis Leadership Now - A Real World Guide to Preparing for Threats, Disaster, Sabotage and Scandal</u>, McGraw-Hill, 2008

- <u>Harvard Business Essentials: Crisis Management</u>, Harvard Business School Press, 2004

Additional readings will be available on reserve at the George Washington University Library or distributed by the instructor.

All reading assignments should be completed at a reasonable pace throughout the term with the caveat that students should be prepared to discuss each assignment at the class at which it is scheduled for discussion.

Students should also be familiar with recent American political history and are encouraged to review books and related materials regarding U.S. Presidential campaigns in the post-World War II era.

Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials

- Harvard Business Review on Crisis Management, Harvard Business School Press, 2000

- Steven Fink, Crisis Communications, McGraw-Hill, 2013

- Ian Mitroff, Christine Pearson, L. Katharine Harrington, The Essential Guide to Managing Corporate Crises, Oxford University Press, 1996

- Ian Mitroff, Managing Crises Before They Happen, AMACOM, 2001

- Ian Mitroff and Thierry Pauchant, We're So Big and Powerful Nothing Bad Can Happen To Us, Birch Lane Books, New York, 1990

- Larry Sabato, Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Journalism Has Transformed American Politics, Lanahan Publishing, 2000

- Alan Schroeder, Presidential Debates: Forty Years of High-Risk TV, Columbia University Press, New York, 2000

Tentative Course Calendar*

*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.

Preliminary Fall 2021 Class Schedule

Week 1: September 30

Overview -- Crisis Management in American Politics

Introduction to crisis management in the electoral, legislative, and issue management arenas. Overview of the material to be covered. Discussion of the required readings, assignments, and course projects.

Week 2: October 7

Anatomy of a Crisis

Overview of the theoretical and practical aspects of crises and crisis management in the political world. Exploration of the differences between crises and turning points in the political realm and those in corporate, international, and public policy settings. Discussion of the dynamics of crisis management including the nature and stages of crises, participant behavior in crisis situations, and the impact of the crisis environment on decision-making in campaigns and in legislative advocacy. Examination of the potential opportunities and benefits presented by crises.

Crisis Identification Memo assigned.

Week 3: October 14

Scandal

An examination of scandals in American politics and their impact on governing institutions, parties, elections, and those participants embroiled in scandal. Understanding the role of the media in scandals, discern the types of scandals, and gauging the varying severity of their likely effects. Exploration of potential strategies to minimize, exploit, or manage a scandal. Consideration of the ethical dimensions associated with political scandals.

Read (on Blackboard):

- John B. Thompson, "What is a Scandal" in Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age, Polity Publishing, 2000, pp: 11-30.
- Lara M. Brown, "It's Good to Be An Incumbent: Scandals, Corruption, and the 2006 Midterm Election," in *Extension of Remarks*, vol. 30, no. 1 (January 2007).
- Alison Dagnes and Janet Smith, "The Politics, Geography, and Constituencies of Political Sex Scandals," in Sex Scandals in American Politics, edited by Alison Dagnes, Continuum Publishing, 2011, pp: 62-93.

Week 4: October 21

Decision-Making in a Crisis Environment (1)

Exploration of the organizational dynamics and decision-making processes in the legislative/political environment. Practical and theoretical approaches to participant behavior in crisis situations. Examination of organizational dysfunction during crises.

Crisis Identification Memorandum due.
Ethics Identification Memorandum assigned.

Week 5: October 28

Decision-Making in a Crisis Environment (2)

Discussion of internal operations and structure, stakeholder relationships, internal information flow, and response capabilities. Exploration of adversarial responses to crisis situations and actions. Approaches to risk assessment and crisis planning.

Individual Research & Analysis paper topic due.

Week 6: November 4

The Ethics of Crisis Management

An exploration of the ethical issues raised in confronting crises. Developing a framework for ethical decision-making and behavior in crisis situations. Approaches to addressing dilemmas in crisis management in ways that uphold ethical standards.

Ethics Identification Paper due.

Prior to Class:

Read: (on Blackboard):

- Bill Zimmerman & Marilyn Katz "How Harold Washington, Against the Odds, Became the First Black Mayor of Chicago".Campaigns & Elections
- AAPC Code of Ethics
- PRSA Code of Ethics
- GWU Code of Ethics

Watch: the film *Wag the Dog* (here's the trailer: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNo0BicRM8k) and read/consult the screenplay at: http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Wag-the-Dog.html

Week 7: November 11

The Media and the Crisis

Discussion of the mass media and crisis management in the political and corporate worlds. How the media covers crisis situations and affects the crisis environment. Examination of the increasing personalization of politics by the media. Problems of episodic coverage. The rise of fake news and its consequences. Discussion of how social media is changing the communications landscape. The impact of the media on crisis management strategies and tactics. Exploration of communications, public relations, and social media tactics and strategies in crisis -- and potential crisis -- situations. Discussion of crafting of communications action plans; message development and delivery; advertising approaches; government and community relations activities; media, press and public relations efforts.

Week 8: November 18

Debates

Discussion of the role candidate debates play as a turning point in electoral campaigns, the impact of media on debates, debate preparation and follow-through. Negotiating the terms and conditions of political debates

Crisis Management Research paper due.

Week 9: December 2

Negative Advertising

Examination of the dynamics and impact of negative advertising in electoral politics today. Discussion of effective strategies to respond to negative advertising

Week 10: December 9

Planning for the Inevitable

Examination of the tools and techniques for identifying, preventing, managing, and capitalizing on crisis situations. Discussion of strategic planning and crisis forecasting, crisis management plans, organizational structure, crisis aversion and response tactics. Exploration of the changing dynamics in American electoral politics and public advocacy and their implications for future crises and crisis management.

Crisis Management Analysis Paper due.

Read (On Blackboard):

- Michael Edwards, "The Essentials of Crisis Management, " Campaigns and Elections, November 15, 2013