

# Introduction to Digital Political Campaigning - MMC6936

## Instructor

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## Contact

Contact me anytime via email and I will respond within 24 hours, usually way prior. Please don't use Canvas conversation function - email me directly.

## Course Website and Login

Your course is on Canvas (UF e-Learning). Go to <http://lss.at.ufl.edu>. Click the blue e-Learning button. Login with your GatorLink account. Your course will be in the Courses menu on the left navigation. You might have to click All Courses at the bottom depending on how many courses you have taken at UF.

Contact UF Helpdesk <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/> (352) 392-HELP (4357) if you have any trouble with accessing your course.

## Course Description:

This class will serve as an introduction to the cutting edge and growing field of digital political campaigning. Students will be provided with a foundation on which to build as they move through the Master's in Political Communication curriculum. The class will present an overview of the skills and tactics necessary to develop and implement digital strategies for success in today's political environment.

Digital technology has challenged and significantly changed traditional campaign models. Students will be provided an overview of the emerging technologies that are now integral to political campaigns. The course will cover a wide range of issues related to technology's impact on political campaigns and advocacy, including:

- social media, social networks and online advocacy;
- email marketing providers, strategies, and programs;
- websites, content/branding, and SEO (search engine optimization);
- digital media coverage;
- online fundraising, petitions, and surveys;
- digital advertising;
- data providers and data collection for audience/voter analytics and targeting and organizing volunteers;
- what digital political marketing does and doesn't replace vis-a-vis traditional political campaigning;
- working with other political actors (trade associations, lobbyists, special interest groups), allies and supporters; and
- an analysis of the 2016 presidential campaign.

With digital strategies being such a crucial component of contemporary political campaigns, all candidates – local, state or national – need to connect with voters through these new strategies and communication channels. Digital strategies for political campaigns have made it easier to reach targeted audiences at a fraction of both the time and the cost of traditional marketing methods. An abundance of data about voters is available, but *how* it is used will determine the success of the campaign.

## Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Implement key components of a digital political campaign/strategy for a candidate or organization, and describe what digital political marketing does and doesn't replace regarding traditional political campaigning
- Select and utilize most effective email providers and programs – pros and cons and relevant options for a candidate or organization
- Create engaging content for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube and additional niche social networks, as well as other forms of online advocacy
- Coordinate website content and design, branding, and SEO
- Achieve optimal digital media coverage (and traditional media coverage online)
- Conduct digital advertising, online fundraising, petitions, and surveys
- Employ most effective database providers and collect other data for audience/voter analytics and targeting and organizing volunteers
- Work with other aligned groups and supporters

## Course Expectations/Teaching Philosophy:

Success in any online course requires proactively staying on top of assignments, readings, and other activities. It requires self-discipline and excellent study and work habits. This course will contain weekly assignments, including discussion/short essays, quizzes, writing assignments, projects, and exam. When in doubt, please don't hesitate to ask me.

## Ownership Education:

As graduate students and communication professionals, you are not passive participants in this course. All students in this program have a background in marketing, advertising, public relations, journalism, or similar fields. So, I am expecting students to complete work with a high degree of effort and ON TIME.

This class allows you to not only take ownership of your educational experience but to also provide your expertise and knowledge in helping your fellow classmates. The Canvas shell will have an open Q&A thread where you should pose questions to your classmates when you have a question as it relates to an assignment or an issue that has come up at work. Your classmates and I will be able to respond to these questions and provide feedback and help. This also allows everyone to gain the same knowledge in one location rather than me responding back to just one student which limits the rest of the class from gaining this knowledge.

## Required Text:

Because of the fast-moving nature of the political communications field, readings will include current and relevant articles by practitioners, academics and communication experts. The course will also include topical and informative videos and other presentations.

## Prerequisite knowledge and skills:

Being an introductory course, there are no prerequisites. A solid foundation, either through academic or work experience, in political science, public affairs, social media and (traditional) media relations is recommended and desired.

## Course Policies:

### Attendance Policy:

Because this is an online, asynchronously delivered course, attendance in the form of calling roll will not occur; however, students are expected to sign onto the course site at least once each day, Monday - Friday, to check for course updates in the announcements and discussion sections of the site.

### Late Work and Make-up Policy:

Deadlines are critical to this class. All work is due on or before the due date and no extensions – don't ask. *(Extensions for deadlines will only be for pre-approved emergencies - see below)*

**Issues with uploading work for a grade is not an excuse.** If a student is having technical difficulties with Canvas, there are other means to submit completed work. Students may email attachments or links to Dropbox folders to instructor via UF email. Students should compensate for technical difficulties by not waiting until the last minute to submit work.

**Emergency and extenuating circumstances policy:** Students who face emergencies, such as a major personal medical issue, a death in the family, serious illness of a family member, or other situations beyond their control should notify their instructors immediately.

Students are also advised to contact the Dean of Students Office if they would like more information on the medical withdrawal or drop process: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/care/medical-withdrawal-process/> .

**Students MUST inform their academic advisor before dropping a course**, whether for medical or non-medical reasons. Your advisor will assist with notifying professors and go over options for how to proceed with their classes. Your academic advisor is Tiffany Robbert, and she may be reached at [trobbert@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:trobbert@jou.ufl.edu) .

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalogue at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### Coursework Submissions:

All assignments, quizzes, etc. will be submitted electronically through Canvas.

### Deadlines:

This class, like others, involves deadlines. Here is a reminder. The new module week starts on Monday morning and closes at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday. Deadlines include:

Discussion posts:

Initial Post/Short Essay - Thurs. 11:59 p.m.

Responses to two classmates - Sun. 11:59 p.m.

Quizzes, Projects and other assignments - Sun. 11:59 p.m.

## Grading:

Your work will be evaluated according to the following distribution:

1. Quizzes - 20 percent
2. Discussion Posts/Short Essay + Assignments - 50 percent
3. Assignments/Projects - 30 percent

The final grade will be awarded as follows:

A	100%	to	93%
A-	< 93%	to	90%
B+	< 90%	to	87%
B	< 87%	to	83%
B-	< 83%	to	80%
C+	< 80%	to	77%
C	< 77%	to	73%
C-	< 73%	to	70%
D+	< 70%	to	67%
D	< 67%	to	63%
D-	< 63%	to	60%
F	< 60%	to	0%

## Course and Assignment Details

### Weekly Lectures:

A lecture video will be posted for the 15 weeks of the course, along with an introduction to course topics and syllabus video. These videos will vary in length depending on the material. It is your responsibility to watch each of the videos.

Although it is possible to watch the pre-recorded video lectures at any time and at any pace, keeping up with the videos week to week according to the schedule will be easier as many build off the other along with the weekly readings.

### Assignment Details:

**Discussions:** Discussion Boards are a key part of this online course. Review all module content prior to posting. Then familiarize yourself with the discussion board scenario/question and post your initial discussion item. You are also required to read all classmate posts and comment on a minimum of two (per discussion assignment). You must submit your initial post (500 words) before you respond to your classmates' contributions. Take time to ensure your post is complete for submission before you officially post.

Discussion Boards will be graded on the following criteria: Content (25 percent), Contribution of Original Thought (25 Percent), Connection to Course Material (25 percent), and Spelling and Grammar (25 percent).

Deadline: First post (addressing the instructor posed questions) is to be submitted by THURSDAY at 11:59 p.m. (ET) and the minimum two meaningful responses are to be submitted before SUNDAY at 11:59 p.m. (ET).

### **Quizzes:**

Quizzes will be on lectures, readings, and videos; and are to be completed by 11:59 p.m. (ET) Sunday of the module week.

### **Assignments/Projects:**

Projects are due by 11:59 p.m. (ET) on Sunday.

### **Course Schedule:**

Week 1: Introduction to Digital Campaigning and Course Overview

Week 2: Analysis and Review of the 2016 Presidential Election: Digital Reigns

Week 3: Social Media: *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and YouTube*

Week 4: Marketing and Branding your Candidate

Week 5: Website Content & Design and SEO

Week 6: Email - Programs, Strategies and Providers

Week 7: Digital Media Coverage and Media Relations

Week 8: Data Collection, Analytics, and Targeting Voters

Week 9: Digital Advertising

Week 10: Online Fundraising and Working with Aligned Groups & Associations

Week 11: Online Surveys and Petitions

Week 12: Audience Measurement: Radio

Week 13: Audience Measurement: TV

Week 14: Mobile Analytics and Marketing

Week 15: Course Wrap up and the Future of Digital Political Campaigning

## **University Policies**

### **University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities:**

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

Students with Disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) so that reasonable accom-

modations may be implemented. DRC is located in room 001 in Reid Hall or you can contact them by phone at 352-392-8565.

### Netiquette: Communication Courtesy:

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

### Class Demeanor:

Mastery in this class requires preparation, passion, and professionalism. Students are expected, within the requirements allowed by university policy, to attend class, be on time, and meet all deadlines. Work assigned in advance of class should be completed as directed. Full participation in online and live discussions, group projects, and small group activities is expected.

My role as instructor is to identify critical issues related to the course, direct you and teach relevant information, assign appropriate learning activities, create opportunities for assessing your performance, and communicate the outcomes of such assessments in a timely, informative, and professional way. Feedback is essential for you to have confidence that you have mastered the material and for me to determine that you are meeting all course requirements.

At all times it is expected you will welcome and respond professionally to assessment feedback, that you will treat your fellow students and me with respect, and that you will contribute to the success of the class as best as you can.

### Other Resources:

Other are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/> getting-help for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/> 352-392-1575
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please contact your program director and/or student support coordinator at [distancesupport@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:distancesupport@jou.ufl.edu) or visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> to submit a complaint.

### Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>

Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

## University Policy on Academic Misconduct:

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>

The University of Florida Honor Code was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Code: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 352-392-1261.

## Academic Honesty

All graduate students in the College of Journalism and Communications are expected to conduct themselves with the highest degree of integrity. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that they know and understand the requirements of every assignment. At a minimum, this includes avoiding the following:

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism occurs when an individual presents the ideas or expressions of another as his or her own. Students must always credit others' ideas with accurate citations and must use quotation marks and citations when presenting the words of others. A thorough understanding of plagiarism is a precondition for admittance to graduate studies in the college.

**Cheating:** Cheating occurs when a student circumvents or ignores the rules that govern an academic assignment such as an exam or class paper. It can include using notes, in physical or electronic form, in an exam, submitting the work of another as one's own, or reusing a paper a student has composed for one class in another class. If a student is not sure about the rules that govern an assignment, it is the student's responsibility to ask for clarification from his instructor.

**Misrepresenting Research Data:** The integrity of data in mass communication research is a paramount issue for advancing knowledge and the credibility of our professions. For this reason any intentional misrepresentation of data, or misrepresentation of the conditions or circumstances of data collection, is considered a violation of academic integrity. Misrepresenting data is a clear violation of the rules and requirements of academic integrity and honesty.

Any violation of the above stated conditions is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program and will result in revocation of the degree if the degree previously has been awarded.

Students are expected to adhere to the University of Florida Code of Conduct <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>

If you have additional questions, please refer to the Online Graduate Program Student Handbook you received when you were admitted into the Program.

### Evaluations:

Students in this class are participating in a new course evaluation system called GatorEvals. The new evaluation system is designed to be more informative to instructors so that teaching effectiveness is enhanced and to be more seamlessly linked to UF's Canvas e-learning management system. Students can complete their evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, or in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals.

**DISCLAIMER:** This syllabus is subject to change at any time.