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## MMC 6936 - POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS CAPSTONE

SPRING 2020  
3 CREDIT HOURS

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### INSTRUCTOR

**Patrick O'Keefe**

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#### Contact

Email is the best way to reach me. I try to respond to students within 24 hours, or 48 hours at the latest. If for any reason you cannot get a hold of me, feel free to text me and we can set aside a time to chat on the phone.

#### Office Hours

I am available virtually by appointment (Zoom or by phone).

#### Instructor Bio

In my day job, I serve as Director of Customer Success and Outreach for Anedot, one of the leading online fundraising platforms for political campaigns and non-profit organizations. I previously served as the Executive Director of the Maryland Republican Party, Head of Marketing & Growth for an education-technology start-up and have served as the digital marketing consultant for more than three dozen companies.

I received my Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Florida International University and graduated with my Master of Arts in Mass Communication from the University of Florida in the Web Design Specialization.

### COURSE WEBSITE & LOGIN

Your course is in Canvas (UF e-Learning). Go to <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>. Click the orange "Log in to e-Learning" button. Login with your GatorLink account. Your course may appear on your Dashboard. If it is not on the dashboard, the course will be in the Courses menu on the left navigation. Click on "All Courses" on this menu. After clicking "All Courses", you have the option to put the course on your dashboard by clicking on the star to the left of the course's name.

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

## Zoom

We will be using Zoom instruction videos as well as any live video appointments.

## THIS COURSE

### Course Layout

The Capstone course is a 16-week course that will guide you to building a culminating project for the program. This project will bring together all aspects of the degree's coursework into a single, multi-faceted campaign. The student will select a real-life political candidate and build a campaign plan for them with an express focus on communications and advertising.

Each week will build toward the completion of the project, depending on the student's choice for the capstone focus.

### Description

This course for political communication master's students focusing on the integration and culmination of core knowledge across the degree's subfields. Capstone will require the thought development, strategic development, and execution of a full communications strategy, specifically along a political communications track. The semester long development of the project will help to form concrete expert knowledge on building and executing strategies in the field.

### Objectives

The course will take the skills developed throughout the political communications degree track and apply them to all areas of a single communications strategy. It will also require the strategic execution of the developed strategy.

By the end of the semester, students will:

- Drive offline political activity using digital tools
- Maximize political engagement
- Use paid communication to mobilize voters/supporters
- Optimize response channels using social media
- Engage voters, volunteers, and donors

### Course Deliverables

Final list of deliverables to be determined depending on the student's final project needs.

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

### Attendance

Students are expected to engage with the professor during check-ins to review deliverables and the final project.

The attendance policy is consistent with UF's policy, found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

### Accountability

Students are expected to complete assignments and readings/videos/podcasts as detailed.

### Ownership Education

As graduate students, 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. Students in this class are expected to actively engage and ask questions that work towards an excellent final product.

## REQUIRED TEXT

To be determined based on project needs.

## 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 per week to check for course updates in the announcements and discussion sections of the site.

The attendance policy is consistent with UF's policy, found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

### Late Work & Makeup Policy

Deadlines are critical to this class. All work is due on or before the due date, 11:59PM EST of the last day of the week's module. Extensions for deadlines will only be for preapproved emergencies. Minor inconveniences such as family vacation or minor illness are not valid reasons for extensions.

Unless excused, work submitted within 24 hours after the due date will automatically be deducted by 30%. No work will be accepted past 24 hours after the due date.

**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. Student may email .zip files or even 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. In an emergency, please email my personal email, Patrick.okeefe3@gmail.com, from your personal email if UFL's email system is not work.

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up. Contact UF helpdesk (352) 392-HELP.

**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. Email your academic advisor and put “dropping a course” in the subject line. Your academic advisor will reply with the necessary procedures.

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, meetings schedules, and projects will be submitted electronically through Assignments in Canvas.

## Deadlines

This class, like others, involves many deadlines. Here is a reminder. The new lecture starts on Sundays. All assignments, meetings, and projects assigned each week will be due by 11:59PM EST the last day of the week’s module.

## Grading

Student work will be evaluated according to the following distribution:

Course Work Item	Percentage
Check-Ins	25% (250 points)
Mid-Semester Concept Brief	20% (200 points)
Final Project	55% total (550 points)
• Final Paper	• 25%
• Final Video Presentation	• 15%
• Strategy Implementation	• 15%
TOTAL	100% (1,000 points)

Your final grade will be rewarded as follows.

A     100%     to     93.5%

A-	< 93.5%	to	89.5%
B+	< 89.5%	to	86.5%
B	< 86.5%	to	83.5%
B-	< 83.5%	to	79.5%
C+	< 79.5%	to	76.5%
C	< 76.5%	to	73.5%
C-	< 73.5%	to	69.5%
D+	< 69.5%	to	66.5%
D	< 66.5%	to	63.5%
D-	< 63.5%	to	59.5%
E	< 59.5%	to	0%

## 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 accommodations 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 professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-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 <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/> .

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:

*The Honor Pledge: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student Honor Code. 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/%20sccr/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.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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### WEEKLY MODULE DATES

This sixteen-week course begins on January 6<sup>th</sup> and ends on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Weeks begin on a Monday and end on Sunday. Please note the dates by each week below. All assignments are due by 11:59PM EST on Sundays, unless otherwise noted. The final week is shortened.

### COURSE & ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

#### Weekly Lectures

There are no lectures associated with this Capstone course, but students will be expected to check-in with the professor through discussion board updates and live video calls.

#### Assignment Details

**Check-Ins** – Periodically, students will need to check-in with their professor through a discussion board post highlighting the work they're doing on their project. After each deliverable is due, there should also be a subsequent live video review with the professor.

**Mid-Semester Concept Brief** – This minimum 5-page document will be a concept brief memo to help outline your final project. A template is provided in Canvas. This will include initial graphic or digital element creation as concept.

**Final Project** – The final project will be a significantly large communications strategy presentation. This will include not only concept, ideas, varying tactics, and message, but also real-life examples of content in the form social media pages, websites, graphic elements, and more.

- **Portfolio (15+ page memo):** You must provide a written proposal with digital concepts.
- **PPT Presentation (deck):** You must provide a PPT or Prezi deck to support your video presentation.
- **Video:** You will record a Zoom video to present your strategy on video as if you were presenting it to a candidate. Should be no less than 30 minutes long.
- **Real life examples:** Include graphic concepts, social media pages, website design (inclusive of SEO and analytical set up), and/or other mediums.



## Week 1 – What is Capstone? (January 6 – 12)

### Learning Objectives

- Reviewing the course and syllabus. Preparing for the coming semester.
- Begin thinking about your goal and focus for the capstone.

### Assignments

- None

## Week 2 – Identifying your Project (January 13 – 19)

### Learning Objectives

- Identify your core focus of your capstone that will carry out throughout the semester.

### Watch:

- [TED TALK: Start with Why, Simon Sinek](#) (2009)

### Suggested (Not Required) Readings:

- [Start with Why, Simon Sinek](#)

### Assignments

- Respond to the discussion board check-in

## Week 3 – Making a Plan (January 21 – 26)

### Learning Objectives

- Build your outline for your capstone and concept brief.

### Assignments

- None

## Week 4 – Researching Effectively (January 27 – February 2)

### Learning Objectives

- Have your outline and overview ready to share and discuss during a video check-in.

### Assignments

- Have a live video check-in to review your outline and overview.

## Week 5 – Working Week (February 3 – 9)

### Learning Objectives

- Coming out of your video check-in during week 4, complete your tasks and begin your research to formulate your concept brief.

### Assignments

- None

## Week 6 – Working Week (February 10 – 16)

### Learning Objectives

- Continue to work on capstone and concept brief.

#### Assignments

- None

### Week 7 – Working Week (February 17 – 23)

#### Learning Objectives

- Continue to work on capstone and concept brief.

#### Assignments

- None

### Week 8 – Concept Brief Submission (February 24 – 28)

#### Learning Objectives

- Submit your concept brief and review detailed feedback.

#### Assignments

- Submit concept brief
- Have live video check-in to review your concept brief.

### SPRING BREAK (February 29 – March 8)

### Week 9 – Building Your Capstone (March 9 – 15)

#### Learning Objectives

- Continue to work on your capstone and use feedback to incorporate into changes.

#### Assignments

- None

### Week 10 – Changing Gears (March 16 – 22)

#### Learning Objectives

- This week, you will be given a requirement that you must fold into your final project. This is meant to act as a form of rapid response within your planning. This will be directly emailed to each student depending on the course of work for the Capstone.

#### Assignments

- Have a live video check-in to review your project progress.

### Week 11 – First Look at Graphic Elements (March 23 – 29)

#### Learning Objectives

- Have graphic and digital elements for the capstone completed for review and feedback.

#### Assignments

- Submit your graphic elements for your project through canvas for feedback.

## Week 12 – First Draft Submission (March 30 – April 5)

### Learning Objectives

- Submit your first draft of capstone and be prepared for feedback for modifications of the project by live video chat.

### Assignments

- Submit your first draft of capstone and be prepared for feedback for modifications of the project by live video chat.

## Week 13 – First Draft Review (April 6 – 12)

### Learning Objectives

- Review your 1<sup>st</sup> draft to make necessary changes.

### Assignments

- Have live video check-in to review the project progress and receive suggested changes.

## Week 14 – Final Capstone Submission (April 13 – 19)

### Assignments

- Final capstone submission due with all edits applied from feedback.

## Week 15 & 16 – Reflection Activity (April 20 – May 1)

### Assignments

- Reflect on your final project and what the organization may consider doing moving forward in a discussion board post.



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## ASSIGNMENTS

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<b>Assignment</b>	<b>% of Grade or # of Points</b>
Check-Ins	25%
Concept Brief	20%
Final Capstone	55%

Total: 100%