



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

Communications Skills for Public Service Spring 2021

Instructor Information

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Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: Wednesdays 4:55-6:35
- Class Location: [Zoom-Communications Skills](#)

Course Description

I would love to call this course “Manipulation, in a good way.” The goal of the course is to help students get the most out of every form of communication: to change minds with the written word, win allies in person, to sway audiences in presentations, and to get what they want out of the various forms of communication most common in the careers of recent NYU Wagner graduates. Students will work both individually and collaboratively on a series of communications deliverables including:

- 1) Memos;
- 2) Oral Presentations;
- 3) Debates;
- 4) Negotiations;
- 5) Press Releases;
- 6) Talking Points;
- 7) One-pagers;
- 8) Audio; and
- 9) A final unified campaign putting much of these forms together to enact a change you are passionate about.

Each work product will be treated as a case study with specific audiences and a well-defined purpose.

Course and Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Write well-reasoned, fallacy-free, clear and effective documents;
2. Speak clearly and effectively in public settings
3. Speak clearly and effectively in pre-recorded videos and podcasts
4. Layout and prepare well-written and aesthetically pleasing presentation slides
5. Edit for clarity, conciseness, grammar and appropriateness of content for a specific audience
6. Effectively offer and receive thoughtful, specific, and actionable feedback to and from class colleagues

Teaching Methods

In addition to short lectures, class discussions and case-based exercises, the course utilizes a writing workshop approach during many sessions. The main difference between a normal class and a workshop is that the foundation of workshop discussion and study is student work. Students will review their peers' work and offer thoughtful constructive criticism in a safe environment. The emphasis is not in just identifying flaws, but also identifying strengths that will help colleagues improve their assignments. The workshop setting also aims to help improve student's ability to give and receive in-person feedback and run effective meetings.

Readings

Readings will be posted on NYU Classes. I change supplemental reading based on issues I see in your writing and communication skills. When a reading is assigned, please bring a printed or digital version of it to class in case it is referred to directly. (It always is.) You should also purchase a clean composition notebook—I prefer the ones with perforated, removable pages for in-class assignments.

A comprehensive dictionary is also required. If you don't already own one, Merriam Webster makes a good one: **Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary**. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam Webster, Inc.

If you prefer a web-based resource instead, you can get by using your online access to the inexhaustible Oxford English Dictionary through NYU's LibraryWeb, under the Databases link. The OED is a little less user-friendly than Webster's. It is not necessary to bring a dictionary with you to class, but I will expect you to know meanings of all words that appear in all the texts we read, (including the student-written texts and especially your own work.) If you don't know it, look it up. I may put you on the spot in class!

Assessment and Grading Policy

Student grades will be based on the assignments below. I am not a gotcha grader. My rubric is attached. I no longer have a "participation" grade. Any assignments worth less than 10% of your final grade will be graded mostly on completion and clarity. Yes, these percentages add up to 103%. Maths is hard, you're welcome:

- Email introduction 3%
- KKI Memo Final Revision - 10%
- Module 2 Reflection 5%
- Debate 20% (Talking points 5%, Debate 5%, Critique 10%)
- MedLee Negotiation 15% (Talking points 5%, Memo 10%)
- Edited Audio Interview 5%
- Unified Campaign Presentation 10% (presentation 5%, Film study reflection 10%)
- Final Campaign 35% (Document 15%, Podcast 20%)

Grading

- A+: Reserved for highly exceptional achievement—I have given three in 13 years.
- A: Excellent. Outstanding achievement.
- A-: Excellent work, close to outstanding.
- B+: Very good. Solid achievement expected of most graduate students.
- B: Good. Acceptable achievement.
- B-: Acceptable achievement, but below what is generally expected of graduate student

A General Writing, Thinking and Presenting Rubric:

Element	A - Excellent	B - Good	C – Below Standards	Not Acceptable
Argument or Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and specific argument easily identifiable by intended audience. • Major points and research reinforce the argument throughout the piece. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A solid argument identifiable by a reader though not perhaps to the intended audience. • Most points reinforce the argument throughout the piece. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalized or vague argument not identifiable by a reader. • Some points reinforce the argument, but many fail to reinforce or relate to the argument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No identifiable argument. • Individual points lack cohesion and fail to express a uniform idea.

Element	A - Excellent	B - Good	C – Below Standards	Not Acceptable
Critical Thinking and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear presentation of critical thinking related to the issues, substance, central argument and research. Easily understood by intended audience. • All facts, figures and supporting research relate to the central argument or thesis and are effectively contextualized and analyzed for intended audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates effective critical thinking, but some points could be more fully developed. May not be easily understood by intended audience • Supporting research relates to the central argument and is mostly contextualized and analyzed for a reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall shallow analysis of topic. Need to delve deeper into subject. • Supporting research is either absent or is not contextualized and analyzed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little analysis. • Discussion is entirely opinion based without supporting, contextualizing or analyzing any research
Development of Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas are fully developed. Overall the piece is thought provoking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most ideas are fully developed and thoughtful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas are briefly explained, but information and analysis may lead to confusion by a reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to understand the ideas in the piece.

Element	A - Excellent	B - Good	C – Below Standards	Not Acceptable
Application of Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theory and research clearly reinforces the central argument and major ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates understanding of how theory and research is used to reinforce the argument and major ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates some understanding of how theory and research should reinforce the major ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fails to demonstrate an understanding of the theory and no clear use of research to reinforce argument or major ideas
Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of terminology is correct in all instances. Dead and tired clichés and metaphors are avoided. Strong use of simple, precise and effective language easily read and understood by intended and potential audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional use of inappropriate jargon, acronyms or imprecise terms. Minimal usage of dead and tired clichés and metaphors. Minor issues with wordiness, repetition. Easily understood by intended audience, but perhaps not by other potential audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many mistakes in terminology. Frequent use of dead and tired clichés and metaphors. Some issues with wordiness and repetition. Mostly understandable to intended audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imprecise terminology and heavy usage of jargon and acronyms. Wordy and repetitive.

Element	A - Excellent	B - Good	C – Below Standards	Not Acceptable
Organization and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective use of formal structure such as subheadings and conventional formatting. • Thoughts follow a clear internal logic reinforced by the formal structure • Overall structure is strong and contributes to the effectiveness and clarity of the piece. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly effective use of formal structure. Subheadings could be more descriptive or formatting could be improved. • Thoughts mostly follow an internal logic reinforced by the formal structure • Overall structure is acceptable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas difficult to follow. • Lack of internal logic. Unclear formal structure • Overall structure distracts from the meaning of the piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely illogical • Unstructured, disorganized
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few if any grammatical errors. Any errors do not affect meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor errors cause momentary distraction for readers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Errors do not cause the writing to be unclear, but weaken the effectiveness of the communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemic errors that make the writing difficult to read.
Academic Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research is properly cited for the medium of the piece. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some missing citations or a few improperly cited sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research is inconsistently cited. Uncited facts, figures and passages bring about questions of plagiarism in reader's mind. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No citations. Clear violations of rules of plagiarism.

A NOTE ON ATTENDANCE AND ITS EFFECT ON GRADES:

This semester is likely going to be weird and I am going to make sure the experience for people on-line matches that of folks who are sitting with me in Rudin. Normally my rule is two absences can be excused with prior notification to the professor for no penalty. Barring true emergencies, each unexcused absence will subtract 1/3 of a letter grade from your final grade (i.e. an A+ would become an A.) **Students who attend all classes will receive a 1/3 grade bump in their final grade**, (i.e. a B+ would become an A-.)

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

Detailed Course Overview

Module 1 (February 3): Some thoughts about writing and communicating and the Kennedy Krieger Case

Great readings, discussion in class, why we are doing this? What will you be able to do well at the end? Write emails. Give and receive feedback. Prepare talking points for synchronous communications (negotiations, debates, meetings)

Reading:

[Ben Yagoda, When you catch an adjective, Kill it: Intro](#)

Notes: This is my favorite discussion of grammar and the arguments that happen all the time between people like me who believe that communication is an act of conveyance as well as identity building and many people of authority, including managers, professors, (you?) who use grammar as a crutch and stand-in to describe good writing and good thinking. Even worse, some people believe in a kind of

prescribed idea of the perfect sentence: deviation from which means you are inarticulate. The truth, which we will discuss in class, is that you get away with what you can get away with as a writer and communicator. That is very much about flexing to your audience and much less about grammar.

Joan Didion, The White Album: Bureaucrats

Notes: I love Joan Didion. She's a bit of a shit-kicker and man did she hate HOV lanes in 1976. In a few weeks you will have the option to consider HOV/HOT messaging, but for now I wanted you to see as Joan goes in and interviews smart data-driven policy specialists like you. These decision-makers are terrible at communication, unlike you I hope! They are also pretty awful at telling the truth.

Saul Alinsky, Rules for Radicals: Communication

Notes: You've probably read parts of Alinsky's Rules for Radicals because a bunch of your professors through the years idolize Alinsky. Not me. But I love what a clear communicator he is and what he has to say about community organizing is applicable in literally any situation. Communicating with people requires having some kind of shared experience. Find that experience and flex to it and there is your common ground.

George Orwell, Politics and the English Language

Notes: I know, this is an old British essay, but wow is it great! I wish I could get everyone to read this and not just his six rules of great writing which are consistent with everything else you will learn in this course, but also about the way tired old cliches and side speak can bring down governments, moral authority, and our willingness to hold powerful people accountable. This is very appropriate right now.

Assignment: Email Introduction

Read these four pieces. Write me a pretend email (uploaded to classes as an assignment)

Subject line: Communications Skills Email Introduction.

Introduce yourself to me and pretend you are on the waitlist hoping to get a seat in the class. (Ha! A waitlist for my class! I know.) You have read the first four assigned readings, tell me if something in one of them got you to thinking about your own life or career or past communications and how it made you want to stay in the class.

Why I assign this: I assign it to be turned in before class because these small assignments improve class discussion. Also: I want to see how you write the most common form of professional written communication: an email. I want to have something to remember you by. I want to hear your thoughts on one of these pieces of writing that I love, even if you don't love them! I also use small assignments like this to give you feedback way before you turn in longer pieces.

Module 2: Figuring out where your comfort and discomfort lies in Communicating in teams and collaborating

Pre-Class Self-assessment

Notes: You have done many of these before. I like this one because it offers a good conversation starter for the in class work. If you let these results reshape your identity you are doing it wrong and I apologize.

Read the appendix for your “type”:

Notes: I know, this reads a bit like a horoscope, but the writers behind these are excellent at prepping for social interactions and thinking about those interactions as professional social challenges. We will too!

Listen to last semester’s Unified Campaign Podcasts

Read the KKI Case. We’ll unpack that at the end of the session.

Assignment: Module 2 Reflection

Write 200-300 words max answering one of the following prompts:

Choose 1:

- 1) Critical Incident Reflection: think about the critical incident exercise in class. Tell me about someone else’s critical incident and how their story might inspire you to improve your own communication. Base this on someone else’s story you heard in class; or
- 2) Social Styles Reflection: Tell me how this or a past self-assessment has added to your self-awareness as a communicator and how might you act on that self-awareness to improve your communication in the future.
- 3) The last several months have seen a migration to online collaboration, learning, and work. Tell me how this new reality in professional and academic communications changes the way you communicate with people. What is lost as we move to a more virtual nearness? What is gained? What communications and professional issues are you most worried about due to these changes? How do you plan to overcome those issues?

Why we do this: With these reflections, we are closing the loop. I want you to use the writing of this as a self-guide to improve at least one aspect of your communication skills.

Module 3: Lead Poisoning; Giving feedback, being heard, using feedback, Memos and the SCQR action introduction method.

Giving feedback in groups, how to be heard in groups and how to listen, email conventions, the best email you'll ever write.

Reading:

Weeks, Holly. "The Best Memo You'll Ever Write." Harvard Management Communication Letter. Article Reprint No.: C0504C

Notes: the way I see it, SCQR is your default formula for writing emails and great introductions to memos and briefs. Super applicable in all formal professional writing. It provides a framing logic model for every situation.

Nancy Sommers Responding to Student Writing—

Notes: This contains much of my philosophy of teaching narrative and persuasion. Lots of good pedagogy in here that I want you to connect to any situation where you are informally teaching, managing or collaborating. Do you want people on your team to do things a little different? You gotta put in the work. Oddly enough, liking people and seeing their innate potential is a big part of this.

Tannen, D. The Power of talk: Who Gets Heard and Why. Harvard Business Review, Sept.-Oct. Reprint #95510

Notes: I assign this to show you some data support for things you probably already know, but maybe not how to deal with especially related to gender in the workplace and how people hear and support each other in meetings and group situations. Such as the workshop we're doing today, the debate prep coming up, the negotiation prep coming up, really everything in this course.

Case: Kennedy Krieger

Notes: You cannot do the assignment or participate in class if you have not read the case. Read the case! It's fascinating.

Assignment: KKI Memo

Draft 1—Bring 3 printed copies to class: If you are online be ready to share the files with a small group. Using the SCQR Introduction method write a "What we should have done" memo advising the Kennedy Krieger Institute about what they should have done regarding their lead study.

Memo Setup: Johns Hopkins is building a knowledge bank for continuing education of its research professionals. They ask you to take a look at what happened with the lead abatement study and what they should have done.

Memo Structure:

- 1) Introduction (SCQR) what happened, what did Kennedy Krieger Institute or JHU do wrong and when/what should they have done differently
- 2) Background: (the context of the Kennedy Krieger study)
- 3) Critical turning point: What did they do wrong and when should they have changed what they were doing? What should they have done? What were some rational reasons they had at the time to not change?
- 4) Retrospective Recommendation: At the turning point above, what should KKI have done? What would have been the ramifications (financial, scientific, public health, ethical) if they had done your suggestion then without the knowledge of foresight?
- 5) Lessons for today: Ultimately what lesson should JHU and KKI employees take away from this experience to apply to current research at the university?

Revision Due before next class: Upload to Classes in one PDF document: 1) A 50-150 word cover letter explaining how you revised your memo and what feedback was most helpful for that revision

process. 2) your revised memo; and 3) your original memo.

Why I assign this: I love this assignment because it is one of the most important public policy cases since 2000 or so with implications for researchers and universities. But most people do not know anything about it and the catastrophe of lead poisoning in Michigan and other places overshadows it in terms of lead impact so much that even epidemiologists do not teach it that much.

Module 4—Debate Small Business Jobs Survival Act [Subject to change depending on class size]

I will record the audio from these debates so you can listen after class to complete the post-debate assignment.

Debate: The Small Business Jobs Survival Act—Proposition: City Council should enact the Small Business Jobs Survival Act

The two sides will be:

- 1) Yes, city council should enact the SBJSA or something like it.
- 2) No, SBJSA should not be enacted nor should anything like it.

The SBJSA was still under consideration by city council at the start of the semester. It was endorsed or at least vaguely supported by all 23 candidates for public advocate including the currently elected advocate. The Small Business Jobs Survival Act was first written and advocated for in the 1980's by a small consortium of mom and pop businesses, most of which have since gone out of business. It has received support from lots of groups over the years and finally in December 2018 received a hearing in City Council. It is primarily opposed by REBNY—the Real Estate Board of New York—and the Council of New York Cooperatives and Condominiums. Some people call it rent control for commercial businesses, some argue it is little more than nostalgia in a city like New York.

Before Class: You will be put into a group. I will not tell you until the day of what side you are supporting so you will need to prepare equally for both sides.

You will need to prepare a shared **talking points memo** on Google Docs. Do not use too many complete sentences in your talking points memo. Outline only. Use comments to collaborate with each other. Assign research roles. I will share it with you and will check in occasionally and respond pretty quickly if you @thomblaylock@nyu.edu me in one of your comment blocks. Structure of the talking points memo:

- 1) Opening statement/position
- 2) Important facts or points you want to make during the debate. I will flip a coin and then each team will have 20 minutes to prep for the debate with former MSPP students who know the case fairly well.

Suggested Reading for Debate

Note: The world is your oyster you can read these pieces or others. Find the information that will help you make the most salient points in the debate. Also anticipate what the other side might say. What does this bill do or aim to do? Is that a good thing? Who do you see this bill affecting? How? Who does it hurt and who does it help?

-2015 move to get a hearing

<https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20150724/bed-stuy/landlords-who-harass-commercial-tenants-would-be-penalized-under-new-bill/>

-2018 hearing

<https://ny.curbed.com/2018/10/23/18013348/small-business-jobs-survival-act-mom-pop-nyc-council>

-2017 the death of mom and pops in NYC
<https://ny.curbed.com/2017/10/31/16571958/new-york-retail-independent-businesses-solutions>

-Anti SBJSA Org. REBNY chairman graded:
<https://commercialobserver.com/2019/01/first-year-grades-for-rebny-chairman-william-rudin/>

-Acting Public Advocate Corey Johnson supports SBJSA and argues with REBNY over it
<https://therealdeal.com/2018/10/22/john-banks-clashes-with-corey-johnson-over-commercial-rent-bill-at-marathon-hearing/>

Why we do this: The hardest thing in communications is occupying the mind and perspective of others. Debates force you to anticipate perspectives. To prepare for other ways of thinking and being. It is lightly adversarial, but similar to many other non-adversarial situations such as win-win negotiations, professional meetings, and collaborative team exercises. Persuasion is never one sided. In fact, the collaborative element of writing the talking points this week requires that same kind of persuasion and occupying perspective of your non-adversarial colleagues. I chose this policy precisely because it is not a hot topic. You likely did not have a position on it before today. In the past I have used raw milk policy in Wisconsin, zoning regulations for air conditioning in Appalachia, and proposed changes to the look of SNAP cards.

Assignment: Debate Critique

Uploaded to Classes before next session.

Listen to your debate. Pretend this was only practice before the real debate next week. In a 200-400 word memo and using an SCQR introduction, advise your team on what they did well and what they need to do better before the real debate. Be sure to work in any surprising observations you had based on listening after the fact that you did not notice in the moment. Cite at least three specific moments using time stamps to illustrate a point. For example: Thom, you really responded great to the question of financing a social media campaign (08:30~10:15). I think we should consider adding this point to our opening statement and do a bit more research about it because it ended up being one of our most persuasive points and it was an off-the-cuff response.

Why we do this: Reflective practice is the secret sauce to improving your skills long term. And now you should be mastering the SCQR memo and offering evidence and examples as proof to the points you are making. Here it will be citing minutes and seconds in the recording, in other pieces it will be data about subway ridership or something.

I like this memo in particular because the audience is clearly defined (your team) and the purpose is obvious (get better so we can win during the real debate to come.) It is also tricky because it requires you to delicately balance dynamics of a team. If you just say, "Thom is terrible, we need to chuck Thom before the real debate," you have done the assignment wrong. Thom will not respond well to that kind of criticism. We will be workshopping writing a few weeks and this will be important then as well.

Looking forward: You will be producing a Unified Campaign for an organization that will include two pieces of writing and an audio cast. The organization could be a non-profit, government department, a business, lobbying group, a community group of any kind, or affiliated social movement organization. Examples would be: Friends of Prospect Park, Black Lives Matter, Community Board 11, 92nd St. Y, NYU Wagner, SEIU local 15, etc. Beginning in a few weeks you will start having deliverables for that project due. For instance, you will need to record two interviews: one stakeholder and one expert. Look ahead! These can be recorded video (big ask) or recorded audio (smaller ask.) These interviews will eventually be used as either a short video spot that you produce and edit, or a podcast that you produce and edit. I suggest audio just because interview subjects who are not used to being recorded tend to answer more honestly and naturally when it is an audio recording. But great videos have been produced for this assignment in the past.

Module 5—collaborate on Negotiation prep MEDLEE

Read the case

Watch negotiation videos and lecture

Run MedLee Case in Class Associated Readings/videos/etc

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llctqNjr2IU>

Closs—let them say no to what you want

Assignment: Negotiation Talking Points

In much larger teams prepare talking points memo on Google Docs. Be sure to include your walk away conditions. I will share it with you and will check in occasionally if you @ thomblaylock@nyu.edu me in one of your comment blocks.

Grading: 2.5%

In Class: Run the negotiation.

Debrief: Return to your teams and score yourselves. Did you win? Present interesting moment from each debate. Scoring: -1, 0, or +1 for each 1-on-1 negotiation for each part of the negotiation: 1) profit, 2) Staffing, 3) decision-making, and 4) conflict resolution. If everyone in your team achieved their goals in every aspect of the negotiation you would have +4 points for each member. It is possible on many points for both sides to feel as though they won or both feel as though they lost. Pick one speaker for your group. Speaker reports back. What could you have done better? Discuss in groups. New Speaker reports back. What is one piece of advice you would give to students in Spring 2020 doing this debate?

Why do we do this: I want to reinforce the preparation required for verbal communication challenges, but collaboration in large groups gets harder. I also want you to feel more comfortable in negotiation situations and just to think of them as communication challenges. You are persuading, but mostly you are here again trying to occupy perspective to figure out what you will need to give to get what you want. Purpose, Audience, Intent?

Assignment: MEDLEE Memo

350-450 word memo: Uploaded to Classes.

This memo is for next year's communications' skills students. Advise either team Armstrong or team Lee for next semester's negotiation. The title is General advice that would have helped me Negotiate Better. You choose what the most effective structure and content for the advising memo. Just make it so it would have been helpful to either you or the person you negotiated against this year. .

Why we do this: This is the last reflective practice memo we will write. You have free rein on making the structure match your goals of advising. I have seen lots of different successful approaches to structure on this.

Module 6

This is your first Audio assignment—Interview someone who interests you. Limit the time to 15 minutes. Use Zencast for audio recording. You may also use to a video chat if you feel more comfortable seeing their face.

In class we will work on it as an audio studio editing session. I will walk you through some of the most important tools of professional an amateur audio editing including noise reduction; cleaning up speech tics, the ethics of audio editing; multi-track dubbing, audio normalization and basics of podcast narrative building.

Before class

- 1) Interview someone who interests you
- 2) Download/install Audacity on your computer
- 3) Watch the three how-to videos on Classes.

After Class:

- 1) Edit your interview down to 5 minutes
- 2) Add open source sound
- 3) Export to MP3
- 4) Upload to NYU Stream
- 5) Submit a link to your interview on Classes by October 13, 11:55pm

Module 7—Informal Presentations: Unified Campaign —Quick Dirty Audacity Sound editing crash course**Longterm goal of the Unified Campaign**

By the end of the semester you will turn in a final draft of an intellectual foundation document (either a memo or an op-ed) written to or for your chosen organization. You will create, edit and produce a podcast that could be hosted on the webpage or digital space of your chosen organization. And finally you will give a formal, filmed presentation to the class that presents the policy recommendation from your intellectual document.

Chunking out the Campaign

We will make this into bitesize pieces. Starting with an informal presentation during module 7 that will require you to research a policy area you already care about and an organization that actively works in that area. From there you will have a series of draft deliverables that will inform the final products. Get started on the pieces early.

Informal Presentation: Pick a non-profit, political campaign, or a social/policy/advocacy organization that is addressing an issue area you are passionate about. This is the organization you will create your unified campaign for. In class be prepared to discuss: 1) The policy area you are interested in 2) An organization that is doing work on/in that policy area 3) A data source that could be analyzed to help answer some kind of question in the policy area (you will not do this analysis this semester except for possibly minor descriptive analyses) 4) The names of two experts in the policy area that you could possibly interview 5) The names of two stakeholders that you could possibly interview.

Module 8-9-10 First Draft Intellectual Document Workshops**Assignment: Intellectual Document**

You will need a document to guide you in your unified campaign. This piece must identify a problem, contextualize it, discuss at least three possible approaches to address the problem, advocate for and defend a “best” way to solve it or work toward solving it. The structure will vary depending on the form you choose. It may either be:

- 1) an op-ed intended for a specific publication (think of the op-ed event in Intro to Public Policy; or
- 2) A memo that would live somewhere on your organization’s webpage. So it would have a wide non-technical audience, but readers will be people who would intentionally click on a link to a memo.

Breakdown of the assignment.

Problem: This is the thing you hope to solve or work toward solving. It could be as far-reaching and nebulous as ending a culture of white supremacy; or as focused as the bike lane on Navy Street is

dangerous and scary. Just remember it is harder to suggest cure-all solutions to big societal problems.

Contextualize: Help your reader understand the scope and scale of the issue. Who are the people affected by the problem? What is the community we are talking about here? Approaches to addressing it: What are some things that could be done about it? If you can talk about policies and initiatives other organizations are pushing.

Best Way: What do you think should happen and why is that the best option? There are many possible ways to argue why something is 'best' including ethical considerations, financial, political feasibility etc. Make sure your reader knows what the terms of your argument are. In this section you will need to include at least one example of quantitative analysis that helps your option.

Here is a silly example:

P: I do not have health insurance and cannot see a doctor.

C: Millions of Americans do not have health insurance or enough money to see a doctor and that costs the nation millions of dollars. Also, I have recently graduated, lost my parents' insurance and have had only one job interview.

A: There are lots of ways I personally could get insurance or enough money to see a doctor: 1) family helps, 2) Medicare for all passes and is signed into law, 3) I get a job with the federal government that does not shut down and access to sweet medical security. B: Getting a job is best because I also have to pay my rent and that seems more feasible than swift passage of sweeping healthcare reform. And I do not want to worry my family by asking them to help. Also, they are not doing so great right now.

Assignment Intellectual Document Comments: We will workshop these in class all together 3-4 per week for 3 weeks. You must print each workshop submission, mark it up with a pen and then write short email to the writer (cc me) explaining your notes and the the 1-2 things you like the best in the person's piece and the 1-2 things that need to be improved most. If you are on-line we can talk about other ways of doing the equivalent of pen/paper mark up. I use an iPad with notability for my mark ups and it is exactly the same thing. I do not love suggested edits in collaborative documents for this kind of thing. We'll talk about my general thoughts on this in class.

Assignment: Revised Intellectual Document

Revise your draft based on notes from me and your classmates.

Feedback Audio During the last week of workshops: To get us ready and get some practice on editing audio you will be providing 4-5 minutes of edited audio feedback for the documents we are workshoping the final week. What are some themes you are seeing, what general advice you can give that applies to some or all of the pieces. What are things you might try to incorporate into your own work that you read for that week. You should prepare a 200-300 word script (will not be turned in) and record yourself giving that feedback. You must then edit your comments in audacity to take out unnecessary sound ("ums" long pauses, etc.

Why we are doing this?

This is great reflection. It requires you to consider work critically three times. Once when you read. Second when you prepare the "script" and third when you record yourself. It also will help you learn to edit sound and because you will do one of these each week, you will get very quick at sound editing.

Module 11 Presentations: Policy Issue and the organization you will focus on

Assignment: Unified Campaign Issue Presentation

5-8 minutes:

Pick a non-profit, political campaign, or a social/policy/advocacy organization that is addressing an issue area you are passionate about. This is the organization you will create your unified campaign for.

Presentations should include: an overview of the issue how it is currently being addressed and a critical

description of its current communications initiatives. You will be filmed and we will do a film study session the following week.

Module 12 Film Study and Class reflections on Sound Editing Techniques while recording the feedback audio notes

Watch the film of presentations. Take notes on things you thought were excellent. What do you want to steal from other people's presentations? What things need to be improved that you saw over and over across presentations? I will lead the in class feedback session and following discussion.

Assignment: Film Study Memo

Write a memo 200-400 words

As though you are the professor. Give yourself advice on improving your presentation content and technique. Point to examples of other people's presentations who did something well that you struggle with. Use exact time codes as reference points. For example: . . .

“ . . . You will need to pare own your slides considerably. On your second slide I counted 95 words and while I was counting I was not able to focus on what you said. At about 8:34 Akshay's slides provide a great example of how to break down complicated, multifaceted data issues and spread out visuals over multiple slides . . .”

Module 13 Asynchronous Week Super Expanded Office Hours 45 minute; One-on-One meetings required.

This is the time for nitty gritty help and advice on you final deliverables but most specifically on your podcast. Set up a time to speak/meet with me.

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/selfsched?sstoken=UUVINnRoMldveVhJfGRIZmF1bHR8ZmQ0MTQzMjk0ODE4MDE2MmIxMjY2YWVmMGI0YzU4ZDU>

December 10: Final Audio Listening Party