



**NYU**

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

**PADM-GP 4454**

## **Digital Communications for Advocacy and Politics**

**Spring 2021**

### **Instructor Information**

- Professor Amanda Alampi, MPA
- Email: amanda.alampi@gmail.com
- Mobile: (201) 396-6901
- Office Hours: by appointment

### **Virtual Location**

**Wednesdays, 6:45PM -**

Zoom information is located at the end of this syllabus

### **Course Description**

#### **Short Description:**

This course examines digital content marketing and campaigning for nonprofits, NGOs and corporate philanthropy through a practical lens. Through case studies across industries, it explores professional digital marketing, and develops fundamentals for digital professionals including principles of design thinking, strategy, measurement, analytics and more. Our goal in this course is to teach you how to ideate, create, design, execute and measure a digital content marketing campaign for cause whether that's the next big poverty awareness concert, a viral fundraising campaign or explainer video illustrating a global humanitarian crisis.

#### **Long Description:**

This course focuses on building up your tool box with digital marketing, campaigning and communications skills for governmental nonprofit, NGO and charity work. We will focus primarily on how to design digital strategy for advocacy and campaigning. This course is designed for people who give a damn. In order to make lasting policy change, we have to use all the resources available to use - including social media, email marketing, advertising and influencer marketing. Digital Communications for Advocacy and Politics takes students on a journey through the latest techniques in digital marketing using the framework of design

thinking.

The class is taught in three phases. First we will focus on ideation. We'll explore how to come up with creative ideas for digital marketing that will advance your campaign goals and objectives. We'll also spend some time learning about design thinking to expand your ability to brainstorm creative solutions to design problems.

The second phase will focus on concepting and creating a campaign. In this part of the class, we will explore the different platforms like social media, influencer marketing and email marketing that are available today.

The last phase of the course you'll work in teams to conquer a design challenge from a nonprofit or NGO client of your choice. You'll design a digital advocacy campaign and create prototypes of your campaign from Snapchat filters to video storyboards to walk us through your pitch.

This course will draw from interdisciplinary materials to help you come closer to answering the age old question "How can I make this go viral?" This is a very rapidly changing field so we'll use recent examples from the industry and bring in guest speakers who work across public relations, communications and marketing in the cause sector. Past guest lecturers have represented companies and organizations like Amplifier Foundation, Tumblr, Fullscreen, Civic Nation and Grey Advertising.

### **Course and Learning Objectives**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Identify emerging digital platforms and trends
- Draw parallels between existing digital marketing success stories
- Design innovative and compelling digital content
- Create smart effective digital content marketing campaigns
- Integrate digital marketing best practices into their professional work
- Examine the power of social media to promote advocacy, organize and fundraise
- Learn about and apply principles of social media, communication, marketing and branding to nonprofit work
- Understand how marketing and communications can influence policy making

### **Course Expectations and Requirements**

1. Careful preparation for and serious involvement in all seminar sessions. This means reading the materials and thinking about the topic before the session. Try your best to cover all the

readings so that in class, you will be citing from the works that we assigned. In your reading, you are asked to:

- Question the significance of the topic and the analyses you read – is the methodology solid; does the analysis comport with the results?
- Search for what biases (and there are always biases) affect the choice of subject, data and analysis.
- Check yourself: : In what ways do the evidence and analyses conform to your own experience and assessments, and in what ways do they challenge them?
- Consider what institutional and organizational implications can be drawn from the readings, and what types of leadership responses would be most productive.
- Think about what you learn as a leader and manager, policy analyst and advocate for policy change.

2. Class participation – 10%. Class participation is crucial and the quality and thoughtfulness of your involvement will be reflected in your final grade. If speaking in public is difficult for you, please come to see us early on.

3. Exercise Worksheets - 40%. Each of the modules will have accompanying worksheets due the final session.

4. Assume leadership in class activities (alone and as part of a team). There will be a number of opportunities to provide your point of view, share learnings from your own work and showcase your favorite industry examples.

5. Team Strategy Memo on digital campaign - 25%.

6. Team Presentation on digital campaign - 25%.

7. Please submit all written assignments electronically.

8. Please refrain from checking your emails or doing other computer/PDA activity during class other than that which is connected to the class.

9. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. It is intellectual theft!

### **Letter Grades**

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>A</b>	4.0 points
<b>A-</b>	3.7 points

<b>B+</b>	3.3 points
<b>B</b>	3.0 points
<b>B-</b>	2.7 points
<b>C+</b>	2.3 points
<b>C</b>	2.0 points
<b>C-</b>	1.7 points
<b>F</b>	0.0 points

Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- **(A) Excellent:** Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.
- **(A-) Very good:** Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.
- **(B+) Good:** Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.
- **(B) Adequate:** Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but the student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.
- **(B-) Borderline:** Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”

- **(C/-/+)** Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.
- **(F)** Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

### **NYU Classes and Readings**

1. Much of the reading, many announcements, class related documents and other useful class information will be posted at the NYU Classes site so make sure to check that out regularly.
2. Also, check your NYU email regularly for any other announcements.
3. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader in order to view some of the materials. Make sure that you have it installed.
4. Books will be placed on reserve in the library.

### **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](mailto: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.

### **NYU's Wellness Exchange**

[NYU's Wellness Exchange](#) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.

### **Student Resources**

Wagner offers many quantitative and writing resources as well as skills workshops. The library also offers a variety of data services to students.

[quantitative resources](#)

(<https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/advisement/quantitative>)

[writing resources](#) (<https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/advisement/writing-center>)

[skills workshops](#)

([https://wagner.nyu.edu/education/courses/search?search\\_api\\_fulltext=&subject%5B%5D=2343&field\\_course\\_semesters\\_offered=All](https://wagner.nyu.edu/education/courses/search?search_api_fulltext=&subject%5B%5D=2343&field_course_semesters_offered=All)).

[data services](#) (<http://nyu.libguides.com/dataservices>)

### **Pre-Readings and Book Purchases**

Most of the reading will be available online, on Amazon or in the bookstore. The required reading for this course includes:

- The War on Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World, Jamil Zaki
- Hit Makers, Derek Thompson
- Tipping Point, Malcolm Gladwell
- Blind Spot: Hidden Bias of Good People, Mahzarin R. Banaji & Anthony G. Greenwald
- Fyre: The Greatest Party That Never Happened, Netflix
- Batkid, Netflix

This course is intensive and we have so much to cover in one semester. I encourage you to prepare by reading in advance if you can. In addition to the readings listed in the syllabus, I recommend these additional works:

- Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest, Zeynep Tufekci

- This Is an Uprising, Mark Engler and Paul Engler
- The Great Hack, Netflix
- Contagious: Why Things Catch On, Jonah Berger

## Course Sessions

### Part I - Ideate

#### **Session 1: How to Create A Digital Advocacy Campaign**

February 3, 2021, 6:45 PM - 8:25 PM EST

- [Quest For Sustainable Change: Looking Deeper Into Social Media Activism](#), Huffington Post
- [The GaryVee Content Strategy](#)
- [How to Build Your Creative Confidence](#), David Kelley
- [Steal Like an Artist](#)

#### **Session 2: Leveraging Good Bias & Combating Bad Bias in Digital Advocacy**

Guest speaker: Mariya Parodi, Press Officer, Amnesty International

February 10, 2021, 6:45 PM - 8:25 PM EST

- Blind Spot: Hidden Bias of Good People, Mahzarin R. Banaji & Athony G. Greenwald (Chapter 1, 4 6)
- The War on Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World, Jamil Zaki (Chapters 4,5, 6 & 7)
- [Hope Not Fear: A New Model for Communicating Human Rights](#), Medium

- [Be the narrative: How changing the narrative could revolutionize what it means to do human rights](#), JustLabs

### **Session 3: Social Media Strategy, Community Management & Content Planning**

February 17, 2021, 6:45 PM - 8:25 PM EST

- [Far-Right Activists Are Stealing Tricks From YouTubers And It's Going To Get People Hurt](#), BuzzFeed
- [How Battling Brands Online Has Gained Urgency, and Impact](#), The New York Times

## Part II - Design

### **Session 4: Designing and Marketing for Different Audiences**

Guest Speaker: Joel Payne, Strategist & CBS Political Contributor

February 24, 2021, 6:45 PM - 8:25 PM EST

- [How Joe Biden's Digital Team Tamed the MAGA Internet](#), The New York Times
- [Experts are Marketing to Generation Z](#), Business Insider
- BatKid, Netflix

### **Session 5: Going Viral: Why is Storytelling Different in Cause Marketing?**

March 3, 2021, 6:45 PM - 8:25 PM EST

- Hit Makers, Derek Thompson (Chapters 6, 7, 8, & 9)
- Tipping Point, Malcolm Gladwell
- [Why Videos Go Viral](#), Kevin Allocca

### **Session 6: Distribution**

March 10, 2021, 6:45 PM - 8:25 PM EST

#### **A) Demonstrating ROI and Legal 101**

- [Facebook's refusal to fact-check political ads is reckless](#), The Guardian



- [Buckle Up For Another Facebook Election](#)

#### **B) Influencer Marketing for Digital Advocacy**

- Allison + Partners Influence Impact Report, "[Powerful Connections: How Influence, Empathy and Engagement Have Transformed Cause in the Digital Era.](#)"
- [FYRE: The Greatest Party That Never Happened](#), Netflix

### Part III: Execute

#### **Session 7: Design Thinking Workshop**

March 17, 2021, 6:45 PM - 8:25 PM EST

In this design thinking workshop, students will be put together in teams a digital strategy for a client. In the final part of our workshop, each team will have 15 minutes to present their draft concept. We'll work together to workshop the ideas and provide feedback as well as brainstorm new ideas for the final version. After the class is over, students will email their final memo and updated presentation one week after the class.

#### **Design Thinking**

- [Design Thinking Is Fundamentally Conservative and Preserves the Status Quo, Harvard Business Review](#)
- [Why Design Thinking Works, Harvard Business Review](#)

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