Course Instructor
Kylah J. Hedding
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Phone: (319) 335-3415
Email: kylah-hedding@uiowa.edu
Drop-in Hours: By appointment via Zoom

Academic Course Home
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences – School of Journalism and Mass Communication
DEO: David Ryfe
Phone: (319) 335-3486
Email: david-ryfe@uiowa.edu

Course Details
Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30-1:45 pm
AJB W336 for in-person sessions

To access the course site, log into Iowa Courses Online (ICON) using your Hawk ID and password. http://icon.uiowa.edu/index.shtml

Prerequisites
JMC:2010 with a minimum grade of C- and JMC:2020 with a minimum grade of C-. Non-journalism majors may sign up with instructor’s permission.

Course Description and Goals
In this course, you will learn how the strategic communication campaigns of advocacy groups, non-profits, and corporations influence elections and public policy issues. You will learn how to make persuasive arguments to a variety of audiences using digital media strategies, traditional media relations, and grassroots mobilization to support the political and policy goals of an organization. You will also have the opportunity to experience political PR in a real-world setting with a local political organization.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Conduct research, identify credible sources, and constructively discuss and debate policy issues
- Identify and develop targeted messaging for strategic publics
- Employ a variety of strategies and tactics that further the political and policy goals of an organization or electoral candidate
SJMC Learning Objectives

The SJMC takes curricular assessment seriously. This course contributes to the SJMC assessment plan by reinforcing and helping students attain proficiency in several learning outcomes. These include:

**Writing & Storytelling:** Understand that clear, concise, correct writing is at the heart of journalistic expression and that reporting and communicating it effectively requires a knowledge and achievement of the highest, professionally-accepted standards in all work. *The ability to craft a compelling story about a policy issue better than your opponent is the crux of political PR.*

**Multiculturalism:** To demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups (including communities defined by gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion and sexual orientation) in a global society in relationship to communications. *To be successful at political PR, you must be able to work with and communicate to a wide variety of people and audiences, including those with whom you may not agree.*

**Law & Ethics:** Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press in real space and cyberspace, and demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and their historical development. *In an age of viral disinformation and misinformation, it is more important than ever for political PR professionals to adhere to ethical standards in all communications.*

[Click here](#) for the complete SJMC Assessment Plan.

**Required Textbook/Media**

There are no required textbooks for this class. All assigned readings, videos, and podcasts will be made available through ICON. All content will be available at least one week before the content response is due.

In addition, you will be required to keep up with current events. As a University of Iowa student, you have access to the New York Times. I will also provide various e-mail newsletters, podcasts, and other sources you may use.

Because many organizational style guides are based on AP Style, you will be expected to use it for this class. The University of Iowa provides access to the AP Stylebook Online for students through the Journalism and Mass Communication subject guide at the University of Iowa Libraries website: [http://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/jmc](http://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/jmc).

**Course Structure**

You will be assessed as follows.

**Course Work**

**Participation/Discussion:** Participation is key to this class. We will discuss many issues related to political communication and current events in the news. I expect you to come to class prepared to participate in class discussion. There will be opportunities for you to participate in class discussions both online and face-to-face. You will also be asked to assess the participation of your group project members, which will factor into this assessment.

**Content Responses (approximately 200-300 words):** You will be required to complete 10 of the 12 assigned content responses during the course of the semester. I will provide a discussion forum prompt based on the required readings and other content for that week, and you will be required to respond to the discussion prompt by Monday of that week. You should also pose one or two questions you have about that week’s content or current events (this does not have to be related to the discussion prompt, though it can be).

Content responses will be graded on a 0-3 scale where 0 = not done; 1 = summarizes but does not critically engage with the content and prompt, questions are missing or surface level; 2 = well thought out response that attempts to critically engage with the content and prompt, however questions are missing or surface level; 3 = well thought out response that
critically engages with the content and prompt, questions demonstrate an attempt to understand the module concepts
and/or a current political PR event. You are still responsible for completing the Content Response on time even if you
won’t be in class that week, unless you contact me to make other arrangements. Please note that your content
responses will be based on quality – i.e. more words DOES NOT EQUAL a better grade. However, make sure you are
addressing the discussion prompt adequately.

Learning Exercises: You will be required to complete 10 of the 12 learning exercises during the course of the semester.
These will vary depending on class topic, but generally you will have to turn something in at the end of each week. These
learning exercises are designed to help you better understand how to apply the concepts we’ve discussed in class. You
may discuss learning exercises with your colleagues; however, I want everyone to turn in their own work.

Learning Exercises will be graded on a 0-3 scale where 0 = did not turn in the work; 1 = work shows below average to
average effort and/or does not effectively apply lessons learned in class; 2 = work shows average effort and a basic
ability to apply lessons learned in class; 3 = work shows strong effort and effectively applies the lessons learned in class.
You are still responsible for turning in the Learning Exercises on time even if you aren’t in class, unless you contact me to
make other arrangements. Please note that Learning exercises will be based on quality – i.e. more words DOES NOT
EQUAL a better grade. However, make sure you are addressing the exercise adequately.

Group Assignments: You will work on several group assignments that will have you developing messaging and
communication plans for an external client. Each assignment will be related to that module’s topic and will vary
depending on the topic. For each assignment, you will receive a template and/or grading rubric so your group will know
exactly what is expected. See Graded Assignments under Course Policies for my policies on making up missed/failing
assignments.

Individual Assignments: You will be asked to complete several individual assignments over the course of the semester.
These will be completed on your own time and will require applying the concepts we lean in class to real-world
situations. For each assignment, you will receive a template and/or grading rubric so you will know exactly what is
expected. See Graded Assignments under Course Policies for my policies on making up missed/failing assignments.

Grading Criteria
Final course grades will be assessed based on your performance in the following areas:

% of Final Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation/discussion</th>
<th>10%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Responses (10)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Exercises (10)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Assignments (3)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Assignments (3)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Final course grades will be assigned as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A / A-</th>
<th>B+ to B-</th>
<th>C+ to C-</th>
<th>D+ to D-</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>100 - 90</td>
<td>89-80</td>
<td>79-70</td>
<td>69-60</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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Course and University Policies

**Course Policies**

**Class Discussion/Participation:** I expect you to come to class familiar with the content and concepts for that week and prepared to participate in class discussion. Occasionally, we may discuss sensitive and/or controversial issues in class. While I do encourage disagreement and discussion (with each other and with me), I ask that we remain civil and respectful.

**Graded Assignments:** All assignments must adhere to the appropriate format. I will provide guidance for each assignment, including scoring rubrics, templates, or examples where appropriate. Assignments are due at the time specified on ICON. Late assignments will receive a reduced grade unless you and I agree before the assignment is due that it can be late. Assignments will go down by a full letter grade each day that they are late. For example, an A assignment due at the end of class (EOC) received later that day will earn a B, a C the day after, and a D the day after that. (BOC = Beginning of Class; EOC = End of Class; EOD = End of Day, or 11:59 PM)

I allow students to re-submit failing work (less than 70 percent) within two weeks of receiving graded assignments. For group work, the entire group must commit to the revision. New assignments will be re-graded as long as you meet with me at least a week before the revised work is due and substantially revise the original work. There is no guarantee you'll receive a better grade on a re-submitted assignment. Your final grade for the assignment will be an average of the two grades.

**Attendance:** Class attendance is imperative. However, given the unique circumstances of this semester, I won’t be using attendance for assessment.

*If you find that a serious health or other problem is affecting your work, please talk with me—sooner rather than later—about how to handle course obligations. Also see me if a class meeting interferes with a religious observance.* Also see the University/CLAS policies on attendance.

**Online Communication:** I am always happy to answer any e-mails with questions, comments or concerns. However, they should be sent through your Hawk e-mail account, as outlined in the CLAS policy. PLEASE INCLUDE JMC3430 IN THE SUBJECT OF THE EMAIL. I will respond to your e-mail in a timely manner (within approximately 24-48 hours). DO NOT EMAIL ME THE NIGHT BEFORE AN ASSIGNMENT IS DUE AND EXPECT A RESPONSE. I expect to see proper e-mail etiquette.

**Plagiarism:** Make sure you cite your sources. Sometimes you can unintentionally copy another’s work. However, since I cannot assess whether plagiarism is intentional or unintentional, all work that improperly copies others’ words will be considered plagiarized and will receive an automatic zero. *(Note: The exception to this rule is information you may take from your client’s material as you develop marketing and communication tools).*

**Workload:** The CLAS student workload guidelines advise that each semester hour of class time should entail around two hours each week of outside preparation for the average student. This means that in a 3-semester-hour course like this one, students should expect 6 additional hours of work, for a total of 9 hours of work each week.

**University/CLAS Policies**
For the most up-to-date policies, see https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-syllabus-insert.

**THE IOWA DOZEN**

We learn to: (1) write correctly and clearly; (2) conduct research and gather information responsibly; (3) edit and evaluate carefully; (4) use media technologies thoughtfully; (5) apply statistical concepts appropriately.

We value: (6) First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups; (7) a diverse global community; (8) creativity and independence; (9) truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.
We explore: (10) communication theories and concepts; (11) media institutions and practices; (12) the role of media in shaping cultures

### Course Calendar

This is a tentative course outline. Throughout the semester, changes **LIKELY WILL HAPPEN**. Any changes will be announced ASAP on ICON and in class.

#### Week 1 | Module 1: Introduction Political PR (August 25, 27)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objectives:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the Class Assignments and Expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to political public relations and the principles of influence</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Due Dates:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REQUIRED Learning Exercise #1 – 8/28 EOD</td>
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<tr>
<th>Readings and Other Content:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REVIEW syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>WATCH Intro video</td>
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<tr>
<th>Online Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events</td>
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<tr>
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#### Week 2 | Module 2: Message Development - Making Persuasive Arguments (September 1, 3)

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<tr>
<th>Learning Objectives:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Developing messages that will have impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to make persuasive arguments for targeted audiences</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Due Dates:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Response #1 – 8/31 EOD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Exercise #2 – 9/4 EOD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction of Group Assignment #1</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readings and Other Content:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WATCH Strategic Messaging</td>
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<tr>
<td>READ Speaking American</td>
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<tr>
<td>REVIEW Hawk the Vote website</td>
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<tr>
<th>Online Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Client Introduction, Tuesday, 9/1 (<em>please log-on to Zoom at 12:30 if you are not scheduled in-person that day</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events</td>
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<td>WORK ON Learning Exercise</td>
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</table>
### Week 3 | Module 2 (WORK WEEK): Message Development: Making Persuasive Arguments (September 8,10)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Developing messages that will have impact
- How to make persuasive arguments for targeted audiences

**Due Dates:**
- Content Response #2 – 9/8 EOD
- **Group Assignment #1 – 9/11 EOD**

**Readings and Other Content:**
- READ *The Real Challenge to Voting by Mail; We Should Never Vote in Person Again*
- READ *Voting by Mail is Crucial to Democracy; A Vote by Mail Nightmare; An Autopsy of New York’s Mail-Vote Mess*

**Online Activities**
- PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Group Assignment

**Face-to-Face Activities:**
- PARTICIPATE in discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Group Assignment (optional in-class attendance)

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### Week 4 | Module 3: Crisis Communication - Who Needs to Know What When (September 15, 17)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Key concepts for crisis communication
- Developing successful crisis communication plans

**Due Dates:**
- Content Response #3 – 9/14 EOD
- Learning Exercise #3 – 9/18 EOD
- *Introduction Group Assignment #2*

**Readings and Other Content:**
- READ *Defining Crisis Communication*
- READ *Crisis Communication Guide*
- Other content TBD

**Online Activities**
- PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise

**Face-to-Face Activities:**
- PARTICIPATE in discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise

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### Week 5 | Module 3 (WORK WEEK): Crisis Communication - Who Needs to Know What When (September 22, 24)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Key concepts for crisis communication
- Developing successful crisis communication plans

**Due Dates:**
- Content Response #4 – 9/21 EOD
- **Group Assignment #2 – 9/25 EOD**

**Readings and Other Content:**
- LISTEN or READ *Mark Zuckerberg Interview (7/18/18)*
- READ *Delay, Deny, and Deflect*
- Other content TBD

**Online Activities**
- PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Group Assignment

**Face-to-Face Activities:**
- PARTICIPATE in discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Group Assignment (optional in-class attendance)
### Week 6 | Module 4: Media, PR, and Politics - One Happy Dysfunctional Family (September 29, October 1)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Effective media strategies in a fragmented media environment
- How social and digital have changed political PR
- Understanding misinformation/disinformation campaigns

**Readings and Other Content:**
- READ *The Art of Information Warfare* (Pfeiffer)
- LISTEN *The Bulwark Podcast* (8/5/20)
- Other content TBD

**Online Activities**
- PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise

**Face-to-Face Activities:**
- PARTICIPATE in discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise

**Due Dates:**
- Content Response #5 – 9/28 EOD
- Learning Exercises #4 – 10/2 EOD

*Introduction of Individual Assignment #1; Group Assignment #3*

### Week 7 | Module 4: Media, PR, and Politics - One Happy Dysfunctional Family (October 6, 8)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Effective media strategies in a fragmented media environment
- How social and digital have changed political PR
- Understanding misinformation/disinformation campaigns

**Readings and Other Content:**
- READ *Tweeting While Rome Burns*
- READ *Twitter-Media Relationships*
- Other content TBD

**Online Activities**
- PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise

**Face-to-Face Activities:**
- PARTICIPATE in discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise

**Due Dates:**
- Content Response #6 – 10/5 EOD
- Learning Exercise #5 – 10/9 EOD

### Week 8 | Module 4 (WORK WEEK): Media, PR, and Politics – One Happy Dysfunctional Family (October 13, 14)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Effective media strategies in a fragmented media environment
- How social and digital have changed political PR
- Understanding misinformation/disinformation campaigns

**Readings and Other Content:**
- WATCH *Conspiracy Theories*
- LISTEN *Processing Plandemic – Pantsuit Politics* (5/8/20)

**Online Activities**
- PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Group Assignment

**Face-to-Face Activities:**
- PARTICIPATE in discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Group Assignment (optional in-class attendance)

**Due Dates:**
- Content Response #7 – 10/12 EOD
- Group Assignment #3 – 10/15 EOD
### Week 9 | Module 5: Everyone’s Lost Their Minds – Advocacy in a Polarized Environment (October 20, 22)

**Learning Objectives:**
- How to communicate in a polarize environment
- Understanding misinformation/disinformation campaigns

**Due Dates:**
- Content Response #8 – 10/19 EOD
- Learning Exercise #6 – 10/23 EOD
  
  *Introduction of Individual Assignment #2*

**Readings and Other Content:**
- READ *A Better Way to Look at Political Issues*
- LISTEN or READ *Ezra Klein Show w/Jamelle Bouie (1/30/20)*
- WATCH *UI Lecture Series with Ezra Klein*
- Other Content TBD

**Online Activities**
- PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments

**Face-to-Face Activities:**
- PARTICIPATE in discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments

### Week 10 | Module 5: Everyone’s Lost Their Minds – Advocacy in a Polarized Environment (October 27, 29)

**Learning Objectives:**
- How to communicate in a polarize environment
- Understanding misinformation/disinformation campaigns

**Due Dates:**
- Content Response #9 – 10/26 EOD
- Learning Exercise #7 – 10/30 EOD
  
  *Introduction of Individual Assignment #2*

**Readings and Other Content:**
- READ *Purpose of the Lincoln Project*
- READ *The Self-Importance of the Lincoln Project*
- READ *The Lincoln Project: Friend, Foe or Fraud?*
- Other content TBD

**Online Activities**
- PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments

**Face-to-Face Activities:**
- PARTICIPATE in discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments

### Week 11 | Module 6: Pivot to Video: Creating Effective Political Ads and Videos (November 3, 5)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Creating effective political videos for digital and TV
- Pros/cons of negative and positive political ads

**Due Dates:**
- Content Response #10 – 11/2 EOD
- Learning Exercise #8 – 11/6 EOD
- Vote if you haven’t already!!! 11/3

**Readings and Other Content:**
- READ *Viral Videos Replacing Pricy Ads*
- WATCH *Campaign Experts React to Good/Bad 2020 Ads*
- Other content TBD

**Online Activities**
- PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments

**Face-to-Face Activities:**
- PARTICIPATE in discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments
### Week 12 | Module 7: Political Identity – When it does (and doesn’t) matter (November 10, 12)

**Learning Objectives:**
- How to properly use polls and surveys in political campaigns
- Designing effective polls and surveys

**Due Dates:**
- Content Response #11 11/9 EOD
- Learning Exercise #9 11/13 EOD
- *Introduce Individual Assignment #3*

**Readings and Other Content:**
- **READ** *Against Identity Politics, Stacey Abrams Response*
- **LISTEN/WATCH** *Higher Learning Podcast*
- Other Content TBD

**Online Activities**
- **PARTICIPATE** in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments

**Face-to-Face Activities:**
- **PARTICIPATE** in discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments

### Week 13 | Module 7: Political Identity – When it does (and doesn’t) matter (November 17, 19)

**Learning Objectives:**
- How to combat misinformation about your organization or candidate
- How to determine when you are the target of misinformation or disinformation campaigns

**Due Dates:**
- Content Response #12 – 11/16 EOD
- Learning Exercise #10 – 11/20 EOD

**Readings and Other Content:**
- **WATCH** *Yoho Apology; AOC Response*
- **READ** *AOC’s Response is One for the Ages; AOC and the Daughter Defense*
- Other Content TBD

**Online Activities**
- **PARTICIPATE** in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments

**Face-to-Face Activities:**
- **PARTICIPATE** in discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments

### Week 14 | THANKSGIVING – Enjoy your holiday!! (November 24, 26)

### Week 15 | Module 8: Lies, Darn Lies, and Statistics - Use and Misuse of Data in Political PR December 1,3)

**Learning Objectives:**
- How to properly use and visualize data in political PR
- Designing effective polls, surveys and graphics

**Due Dates:**
- Learning Exercise #11 - 12/4 EOD

**Readings and Other Content:**
- Content TBD

**Online Activities**
- **PARTICIPATE** in online discussion about content and current events
- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments
- Zoom check-in during class time
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 16</th>
<th>Module 8 : Lies, Darn Lies, and Statistics - Use and Misuse of Data in Political PR (December 8, 10)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Objectives:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Readings and Other Content:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Content TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to properly use and visualize data in political PR</td>
<td><strong>Online Activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Designing effective polls, surveys and graphics</td>
<td>- PARTICIPATE in online discussion about content and current events</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Due Dates:</strong></td>
<td>- WORK ON Learning Exercise and/or Individual Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Response #13 12/7 EOD</td>
<td>Zoom check-in during class time</td>
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</table>
| Learning Exercise #12 12/11 EOD | **All Individual Assignments are due to me by 12/11 EOD**