

**Ad Assignment PSC2225—Women and Politics
Fall 2017
Prof. Corrine McConnaughy**

The class will be divided into campaign teams, each with an assignment to develop a candidate ad that employs a “gendered political strategy.” The ads will be presented on one of our three last class days—December 1, 6, and 8. All students enrolled in the course are expected to be present for every presentation; part of your grade will be based on your presence and participation as an audience member.

There are four components to this assignment: the ad pitch, the ad, the ad strategy paper, and the final presentation. The research, writing, and ad creation work should be shared equally by all members of the team.

Final copies of the actual ad will need to be submitted to the professor via email, YouTube, or on a thumb drive with your paper. Digital files should be in a widely used format and accessible on most Mac and PC computers.

Your ad should:

1. Try to convince a target viewer to vote for your candidate.
2. Use gender somehow in its appeal
3. Be thoughtfully constructed in all its elements (images, music, words, etc.)

My expectation is not that you will produce an ad that mirrors the quality of professional advertising, but instead that it will be a good amateur effort that conveys your design ideas clearly. Your grade will include a modest component for ad quality, but the grade is primarily based on how well you implement your ideas. I expect that you have access to a computer that will assist with ad production. You may seek help with software and technical aspects of production from computer/media labs and advising on campus, or from other classmates, friends, or outsiders with expertise, as long as you acknowledge such help in your final submission.

Some things to think about:

What kind of music will your ad feature? What are you trying to add to the viewer experience of the ad?

Who sponsored the ad? Why does that matter?

Will your ad provide any facts? From where? Why would those facts be useful?

How will your ad make pleas to group identities (partisanship, religion, race, gender)? Why are you choosing that kind of appeal?

The ad should be approximately 30 seconds long. I will evaluate the ad based on:

1. Outcome (did you effectively complete the assignment - is gender there?!)
2. Effectiveness (how well should we expect your ad to work, given what we know about how gender works from our course)
3. Class reaction to your ad.

Political Ads: Quick Facts

Negative ads do work. Ads that create anxiety, fear, and feel threatening help candidates win elections. But they can also be demobilizing and turn voters off. Think carefully about who might like an attack and who might be turned off—will the TOTAL effect be good for your candidate?

Attack ads personally attack the other candidates or party

Negative ads inform voters about the negative outcomes of policies preferred by the competing candidate(s)

Issue ads focus on the issues (can be the candidate's stance or just information about the issue) that are supposed to help move voters in some way for your candidate.

Positive ads focus on the candidate's positive attributes.

Examples:

Negative ad: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Io9KMSSEZ0Y>

Attack Ad: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkiz1_d1GsA

Issue Ad: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXABgjlj-lQ>

Positive Ad: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU-IBF8nwSY>

Some useful campaign ad resources:

http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/from_idea_to_ad/

http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/tricks_of_the_trade/

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov1996/takingonthekennedys/dissect.html>

<http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/>

<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/comm/groeling/web/CommercialProject.html>

Candidate Ad Pitch

This piece is similar to what happens in campaigns, when ad consultants or in-house marketing teams pitch the campaign decision makers on their ideas. You will create an ad storyboard and a one page memo (campaign managers are busy people!!) as a proposal for your ad.

A storyboard is a sketch of what the ad will look and sound like. This means you should have representations of the visuals you are aiming to produce and a draft of the script. You may also want to indicate music/sound additions.

Things campaigns want to know:

(a) What is the intended main audience of the ad, and how do its design and targeting fit that strategy?

(b) What is the intended impact of the ad (e.g., is it to mobilize a particular group? Change certain voters' minds about one of the candidates? Demobilize a group?), and again how is it designed to have such effects?

(c) What potential risks, if any, might the ad pose to the candidate it is designed to support?

Note: This piece of the assignment is meant to help you move toward ad production in a timely fashion and to help you make your final ads and papers as fantastic as they can be. The more effort you put in now, the higher quality feedback you will get from me, and thus the more assistance you are actually getting from me on hitting your final targets for this assignment!

Candidate Ad Strategy Paper

This paper is to make the case for your ad as a smart gendered political strategy for your candidate. In order to do so, it needs to present **what your candidate's existing "gendered profile" is**. This will be a result of your analysis of media coverage, current ads, campaign website, debate performance(s) and the like. Specific content should be cited, including stable URLs whenever relevant. Then, it needs to explain how and why your ad is good for your candidate. This will need to invoke class material about how different ways of invoking gender affect voters.

You **MUST** explicitly address the following:

1. What is the intended main audience of the ad, and how do its design and targeting fit that strategy?
2. What is the intended impact of the ad, and again how is it designed to have such effects?
3. What potential risks, if any, might the ad pose to the candidate it is designed to support?

In addition to these mandatory elements, you are free to describe any other strategic considerations, design features, or secondary goals of the ad that you wish to highlight.

In the course of explaining the candidate profile and ad design decisions, you should include references to research that supports your line of thinking, especially material from class lectures and required readings. You may also consult and reference outside research from the library or other courses. Please follow these guidelines when citing the research sources. For lectures, cite "(LEC Date)" to indicate material drawn from class discussion of the lecture topic. For required course readings, cite "(Last_name_of_first_author_only Year)" – e.g., (Burns 1997) – to indicate material from any article, chapter, or book used in the course. For outside optional sources, include a footnote that provides the author name, date, and book title or article title and journal.

This will be turned in to the professor in writing on the last class day, December 9. It should be typed, double-spaced, on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper, singled-sided with 1 inch margins. Suggested length is 10-15 pages; page LIMIT is 15 pages. It should be grammatically correct and proofread. It will be evaluated for its content, organization, and impact. In other words, it should be well-researched, well-articulated, and, hence, convincing.

Ad Presentation

Each team will screen their ad and then give a 10 minute presentation that would "sell" that ad as effective. All team members are expected to be part of the presentation.

Grade Breakdown

Your grade for the assignment will be determined as follows:

10%—Ad Pitch

10%—Peer evaluation of contributions (cooperation, responsibility; idea generation)

30%—Paper due December 8

30%—Campaign Ad

10%—Group presentation

5%—Individual presentation

5%—Ad screening attendance