

**Course Title:**

Rhetoric, Marketing and Democracy  
MKTG 486, cross-listed with HONS 301-07/POLI300-01/ ENGI385 01  
4 Hours Credit

**Professors contacts and office hours:**

Nick Clark, Ph. D (Steele 215)  
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To Be Announced

Emma Fleck, Ph.D. (Apfelbaum Hall 239A)  
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Tuesday and Thursday 10am-11am

Betsy Verhoeven, Ph.D. (Siebert 111)  
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Tuesdays, 10-11

\*All professors are also open to meetings by appointment\*

**Textbooks (required):**

Heatherington, M. and Weiler, J. (2018) Prius or Pick up?: How the answers to four simple questions explain America's great Divide. ISBN 9781328866783

Ober, Josiah, Naomi J. Norman, and Mark Carnes. 2015. *The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.* Norton. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). ISBN 978-0-393-93887-6

**Recommended Reading**

Linker, M. (2014) Intellectual Empathy: Critical Thinking for Social Justice Paperback (not used in class until 9/26) ISBN-10: 0472052624 ISBN-13: 978-0472052622

**Meeting times for class:**

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2.35pm- 4.05pm, Location TBA

**Course Description:**

Frustrated by how hard it is for people to talk with each other when their political opinions vary? Craving better political conversations with friends, family, strangers, and opponents? Us too! This course brings together Political Science, English, and Marketing to foster better political understanding and discussion. We describe the evolution of democratic ideals from ancient Greece to contemporary America. We learn empirical means to explore actual trends in political behavior. We study rhetorical concepts to more carefully judge the political claims made by others. Finally, we practice marketing strategies to engage in better political communication ourselves. Hands-on projects will help us implement what we learn outside of the classroom.

All majors and student levels are welcome. No prior knowledge of any of the fields is needed.

**Specific Student Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will be able to describe connections that exist between the study of rhetoric (and the humanities more broadly) and the social sciences and business.
- Students will understand some of the forces behind political polarization
- Students will gain tools for political communication that decrease polarization, including
  - Identification of rhetorical devices designed to influence political attitudes and/or behavior
  - Identification of marketing strategies designed to influence political attitudes and/or behavior
- Students will be able to craft their own political messages demonstrating their ability to use rhetoric and marketing tools for the common good

**Instructional Methods:**

This course is taught on a twice-weekly basis. Weekly readings and brief lectures help students build knowledge of political science, rhetoric, and marketing, which students apply to a political issue their group chooses. Students will collect and study messages about their political issue in order to produce their own political message. Students will engage in brief writing assignments, hands-on projects, small-group activities, and occasional presentations to the whole class. Throughout the course, students will have access to lecture slides, case studies and readings. We are dedicated to supporting students during the COVID crisis. For students needing to move to the online version of the class for parts or the entirety of the semester, all materials, including recordings of brief in-class lectures, will be available on BlackBoard, and alternative activities will be provided as necessary to cover goals for small-group and discussion sessions that happen in class.

**Learning Strategies:** The keys to having a successful experience in this class include:

1. Reading the materials prior to attending class. It is expected as a given that you read all assigned materials prior to class as a foundation for discussion and a general “starting point” for each session. The use of the Blackboard system is integral to this course. Make sure you have access to it! Once a message is posted on the Blackboard system or sent via email to the class, the instructor will assume that all students have read the information.
2. Participation: Learning involves the exchange of ideas, testing concepts, and analyzing; not just rote memorizing. Participation means reading before class, preparing materials, asking and answering questions, and appropriately contributing to class discussions and exercises. Susquehanna University expects regular class attendance of all students and given that much of class time will be spent in teams working on the various components of the final brief, attendance is imperative.
3. Application: Apply the principles discussed in class in your everyday life, in both school and personal situations. Think about the implications for yourself as well as society, citizens, consumers, the firm, local and national government, etc.
4. Professionalism: Conduct yourself with the professionalism that is standard among Susquehanna students and working adults. If you must miss a class, please contact a team member or classmate for missed notes, etc. Out of respect for the instructor and other students, cell phones, and other electronic devices must be turned off or muted before the start of class, unless for medical or emergency reasons.

**E-mail:**

Students are responsible for all information sent by the Instructor to their SU account. **All** class correspondence from the professor will be sent via the SU email system. The professor will respond with 24hours except at the weekend and/or holidays.

**Late Work Policy:**

Late work is not acceptable!! All work for the class which is submitted late is subject to a 20% reduction in grade in the first 24 hours and then 15% per day for each day following. Due dates on all assignments are not negotiable and may not be made up unless the absence is discussed beforehand and is related to SU authorized activity.

Students will be expected to complete all assignments and contribute to class discussions on a timely and regular basis. It is expected that the student will have read the chapters indicated on the course outline by the end of the semester and tests will reflect this expectation.

All assignments will be returned to the student on a timely basis. It is the responsibility of the student to retain the returned material. If the student feels that an error has been made in the recording of their grade/points, the original paper/homework/quiz/etc. must be produced in order for the Instructor to make the grade/point change. All grades will be recorded using Blackboard, allowing students to check their grade for the course whenever the student so chooses.

### **Time Requirements:**

An undergraduate student should expect to spend on this course a minimum of two hours outside the classroom for every hour in the classroom.

### **Attendance Policy:**

Susquehanna University expects regular class attendance of all students and as such, attendance in class will be taken every day. **Three or more unexplained absences will result in students having to take on extra work in order to pass the class.** Tests and assignments can only be “made-up” if the student is absent from class due to SU authorized activities and COVID-related absences (see below). In order for tests/assignments to be “made-up”, the Instructor must be contacted, at least by email, before the testing/assignment period begins. Failure to do so, may disallow the test/assignment to be “made-up”.

Any student who is experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms should not attend class in person. Students experiencing a fever over 100.4, cough, shortness of breath, or loss of taste and/or smell or other COVID 19 related symptoms must stay away from in-person class and notify the Health Center immediately. All absences for synchronous coursework (whether face-to-face or online) will be excused so long as the student notifies the instructor as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after the class. An email without further documentation is sufficient. An absence for which a student fails to provide an explanatory email will be counted as an absence under the instructor’s regular attendance policy.

It is the University's policy that when a student has accumulated more absences than weekly class meetings in any particular course during the semester, the faculty member may warn the student in writing of the consequences of additional absences. When a total absence accumulation has reached the equivalent of two weeks' class meetings (4 classes), the faculty member may award a grade of "F", which automatically withdraws the student from the course. You should read this policy, located at <https://www.susqu.edu/academics/course-catalog/academic-policies-and-regulations-catalog>. As with any grade, appeal may be made through normal channels if gross unfairness or illegal discrimination is alleged. **If you are absent for any reason, you are responsible for tracking down any material or assignment instructions.**

### **Grading Procedure:**

Final grades will be computed on a scale of total points obtained divided by total points possible (based on class tests, discussions, presentations assignments, and group activities). All graded items will be returned/posted to SU within one week of submission. **GRADES WILL NOT BE ROUNDED UP.** There will be opportunities to obtain extra credit **DURING** the semester, but **NOT** at the end of the semester. The grading is as follows:

### **Grading Scale:**

The final grade in the class will be determined as follows:

A 93-100	C+ 77-79.99
A- 90-92.99	C 73-76.99
B+ 87-89.99	C- 70-72.99

B 83-86.99  
B- 80-82.99

D+ 67-69.99  
D 60-66.99

### **Assignment Feedback:**

The instructors will regularly join the discussions providing feedback to the students during class. Formal feedback and grades will be available 5 days after submission. However, more detailed feedback and copies of the grading criteria explaining allocation of percentages can be requested through a one to one meeting with the instructor.

### **Assignments:**

#### 1. Blog Post Portfolio (35%): Individual Submission

Students will collect ~10 messages attempting to persuade audiences on a particular issue of the student's choice; There will be 7 blogposts, each one applying concepts-from readings and lectures the previous week to one or a few of their collected messages. The Blog Post Portfolio forms the base of the other assignments, several of which are group assignments. Therefore, you should coordinate the particular issue of your portfolio with your small-group members, and faculty will facilitate this process.

#### 2. Policy Brief (20%): Group Submission

Each group will choose a topic (related to their blogpost issues) and develop a 3-5 page single-spaced policy brief for the that issue. The brief should include a statement of the problem; a section providing relevant background information on that problem (including political science research and any relevant information you might be able to extract from local media or other resources); a section that offers 2-3 possible solutions; a cost-benefit analysis of those solutions (including benefits and drawbacks of at least two different policy responses; and a final recommendation. The instructors will provide you example briefs so that you can easily see the structure.

#### 3. Message Creation (10%) Group Submission

Students must develop a message which has one of the following purposes: encourage "the other side" or "your own side" to modify their feelings, beliefs, or actions in some way. You should consider the evidence gathered in your policy brief and attach a copy of the marketing communication to your submission. Please note, you do not need to be a graphic designer to complete this exercise successfully!! This is about meeting the criteria as outlined above in whatever way works best for you. Feel free to think outside the box and use any medium (drawing, collage, Powerpoint, photographic imagery etc).

#### 4. Message Analysis (20%): Group Submission

Using the evidence gathered throughout the semester (blog post portfolio, Policy Brief), a full and detailed rhetorical analysis of your Message Creation should be provided. Students must be able to explain how their message deviates from the ones in the blog post portfolio and illustrate how their message will do a better job of appealing to a wider target audience. Students will submit a 3-5minute video presentation of their analysis along with the written document.

#### 5. Simulation Participation (5%): Individual Submission

The simulation "Threshold of Democracy" is meant to familiarize you the origins of democracy, the sorts of issues that continue to plague democracy (we have been debating the same things for centuries), and the ways in which groups compete and compromise. All of the students in the simulation are assigned roles, either as a member of one of four political factions (like parties) or as an independent voter in the Assembly. The political factions will each have an agenda they are trying to pass. In doing so, they will both try to negotiate with the other factions and to persuade the independent voters. Much of the simulation takes place in the form of delivered speeches and oral argumentation and debate. Each participant will be required to prepare two speeches as part of their role. The instructors will give you more guidance on what to address in the speech. All speeches should be approximately 3-5 minutes in length and should be pre-scripted. You will also be assigned a grade based on how much you participate in the class; how often you engage with the other class members in discussion and debate.

#### 6. Reflection (10%) Individual Submission:

This assignment asks students to reflect on their experiences with political communication across the “polarization divide”. Using concepts from Braver Angels workshops and from the Simulation of the Classical Greek Assembly, explain to what extent you think communication and collaboration is possible across political ideologies and parties. Which techniques do you think are most likely to work? Why? Which kinds (genres) of communication do you think are most effective? Which do you think is more important: individual action, group action, political party action? Ground your reflection in specific examples.

### **Student Learning Accommodations:**

Students with Disabilities: Welcome! Susquehanna University works with students with disabilities to provide reasonable and helpful accommodations. If you have reason to believe you have any kind of disability that would merit accommodations, please contact SU’s Director of Disability Services (the office is in the Center for Academic Achievement, Fisher 204; phone: 570-372-4340). Students with disabilities will be accommodated confidentially. Full information about the required documentation and steps for obtaining accommodations is discussed in the disabilities policy available at <http://www.susqu.edu/academics/academic-resources/disability-services/disability-accommodations>. This site also presents a list of resources.

### **SU policies on academic honesty**

This class will operate in full compliance with the Policy Statement on Academic Honesty for the School of Business and the Policy Statement on academic Honest for Susquehanna University. By enrolling in this class you have agreed with all student responsibilities described in that document. If the application of that Policy Statement to this class and its assignments is unclear in any way, it is your responsibility to ask me for clarification. It is your responsibility to read and abide by the university’s policy on plagiarism: <https://www.susqu.edu/Documents/campus-life/student-handbook/2015-16-student-handbook.pdf> (pages 31-33).

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Students are often confused about academic dishonesty when it comes to projects/papers. The most general confusion is with plagiarism. Academic dishonesty is a really serious issue. The basic rule to avoid plagiarism is to simply cite your sources: If it’s not your idea, then cite the source. You should use APA style within the Business School however, any other style is acceptable, as long as you are consistent.

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE IF DEEMED NECESSARY BY THE PROFESSOR. IF CHANGES ARE NEEDED, THESE WILL BE COMMUNICATED IN ADVANCE WITH CLEAR RATIONAL FOR THESE CHANGES PROVIDED.**

