GU POLITICS FELLOW TIM LIM
Discussion Group Outline
DIGITAL CAMPAIGNING IN THE UPSIDE DOWN AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT DIGITAL IN CAMPAIGNS

Discussion Group Synopsis
The 2016 elections turned the political world upside down and digital communications played a big role. But beyond the hype and the misinformation, what does a sophisticated digital program look like in today’s fractured political and media landscape? In this discussion group we will be looking at the evolution of digital campaigning since the 2012 elections, cover cutting-edge tactics and technology, and look at what campaigns are doing for the 2018 cycle and beyond.

WEEK 1: DIGITAL TIPPED THE ELECTION, OR DID IT? Twitter, Trump, Cambridge Analytica, Facebook
There was a lot of controversy and new ground forged in digital campaigning in the 2016 elections. But what was myth and what made an actual impact? We will look at the biggest misconceptions about digital campaigning in the 2016 election, the strategies that actually worked, what digital campaigning in the 2018 midterms looks like, and a behind-the-scenes look at how the most sophisticated digital campaigns.

WEEK 2: HOW DO THEY KNOW WHAT I WANT?
Today’s political campaigns can track your everyday movements through your wearable technology, read your facial expressions through your laptop, and figure out what content will get you to vote through online treatment and control tests. We will cover the cutting-edge technology that is used to target voters today and discuss the privacy concerns that come with these tools.

WEEK 3: DIGITAL ORGANIZING, THERE ARE NO LIMITS
In the aftermath of the Parkland shooting, the survivors took to social media to organize and spread their message. Their efforts culminated in the March for Our Lives, one of the largest protests in history. We will look at the strategy and tactics that the organizers used, then analyze the lessons from the March for Our Lives that campaigns can apply today.

WEEK 4: HOW TO RAISE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ONLINE, IT’S HARDER THAN YOU THINK
The Bernie Sanders for President campaign raised $218 million online at an average of $27 per donor while the Jon Ossoff campaign raised $23 million largely from small donors. We will take a look at the finely tuned online acquisition and email programs that generate these eye-popping numbers and what future online fundraising efforts will look like.

WEEK 5: FORGET AVOCADO TOAST, WHAT MOTIVATES MILLENNIAL VOTERS?
In 2018, the American electorate will cross a historic threshold that could reshape the political balance of power. For the first time, millennial voters will pass baby boomers as the largest generation of Americans eligible to vote. Increased millennial voter participation played a big role in the Democratic ticket sweep in the most recent elections in Alabama and Virginia, yet millennials are considered the most apathetic of the voter blocks. So what motivates millennials to get involved in politics? What themes and messages break through and which types of channels are most effective in increasing enthusiasm for voting among millennial voters?

WEEK 6: DID YOU CHANGE THEIR MINDS?
The ways to target a voter online have advanced rapidly, but the methods of measuring the success of a digital campaign have been slow to catch up. Why do campaigns still use engagement metrics, such as clicks and impressions, to judge the performance of a persuasion campaign? This week, we will study newer, more advanced measurement systems that allow campaigns to measure the actual sentiment shift that the content achieves.

WEEK 7: WHAT QUALIFIES AS GOOD CAMPAIGN CONTENT?
Political campaigns usually rely on minute-long TV ads to relay their message to voters, but changing media consumption habits are making those more and more irrelevant. Shareable content, such as GIFs and memes, is having as much impact or more than TV ads in today’s fractured media landscape. This week, we will cover what an engaging and impactful advertising campaign looks like today and what good content will look like in the future.

WEEK 8: IS THE GOP THE “DIGITAL PARTY” NOW?
The conventional wisdom was that the Democratic Party was far ahead in terms of digital, data, and technology capabilities. Yet in the 2016 cycle, Republicans outspent Democrats almost 4 to 1 in digital advertising and President Trump’s Digital Director, Brad Parscale, made history as the first digital director to be promoted to campaign manager of a presidential campaign. It could now be argued that the Republican Party is on par or has surpassed the Democratic Party in those fields. We will discuss the digital evolution of each party and provide an overview of where things stand today.