

# A MASTER'S IN MANIPULATION

By Jeff Greenfield

ITEM: IN LATE OCTOBER, the New York State Board of Regents granted a charter for the establishment of the Graduate School of Political Management. The school, using the facilities of Baruch College in Manhattan, plans to open its doors next fall to a class of 30 future professional political tacticians. Each will pay \$12,600 for a one-year program that will confer a master's degree in political management.

The concept of a graduate degree in political management seems irresistible in today's Machiavellian media climate. So, too, does the notion of a farcical course catalogue.



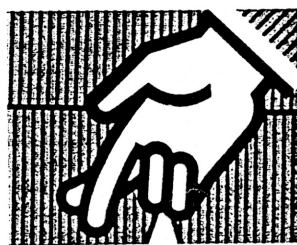
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**W**ELCOME TO the P.T. Barnum School of Political Consultation.

A word about credentials: Our staff carefully reviews every grade, reference and degree listed on your application. Any student found dissembling or exaggerating his or her background will immediately be recommended for advanced placement.

## Theory and Practice Of Consulting

This survey course avoids the obvious — the Vicar of Bray, Iago, Lord Acton and other role models — for more practical matters. Skills taught include: how to estimate the net worth of your client within 15 minutes; how to calculate his CSE (Charisma-Sincerity-Electability) Index with a handshake. The course fee includes purchase of the Retina-Intensity Monitor, a hand-held device that scientifically measures the power of your prospective client's eye contact.



## Political Kinetics 2B (Fieldwork Required)

After intensive examination of campaigns conducted by the established masters — Robert Squier, David Garth, David Sawyer, John Dear-dourff and Douglas Bailey, Robert Goodman — course members observe politicians in their natural habitats in order to answer such questions as: Which shoulder should the sport coat be thrown over to affect the look of casual sincerity? At what point in the question-and-answer session with the League of Women Voters should the sleeves be rolled up to the elbow? What is the correct gesture for the removal of eyeglasses to better employ Retina Intensity?

## The Art of Debate 4A

Through examination of the Great Debates (Lincoln-Douglas, Kennedy-Nixon, Stein-Lipper), students will absorb the essential skills of political debate. The focus: how to avoid a debate without appearing to do so (including a detailed look at Mario Cuomo's 1986 campaign), and how to turn any question into the subject your client wants to discuss ("Sewage treatment plants are important, but we will never have them if people are so afraid of crime that they move out of our community. And speaking of crime...").

A special clinical program teaches future consultants the art of winning post-debate coverage by exulting publicly just after the debate is concluded, and by permitting journalists to catch them in an "unguarded" private telephone call ("Sam, I can't believe how good we did!").

## Political Jujitsu 5B (Joint Course With Department of Physical Education)

This is the most valuable, and least understood, skill in all of politics. Enrollees will learn how to turn an opponent's strength into a weakness, and how to turn a client's weakness to advantage. If the opponent has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, you will have no problem in assailing him for "hobnobbing with foreign big shots." Conversely, should your client be intellectually unable to answer even the simplest of inquiries, you will consider building an entire campaign around that foible: "Lots of politicians know how to talk; isn't it great to find one who knows how to listen?"

## Press Relations 10B (Joint Course With Journalism School)

A consultant without good press coverage is like an indicted politician who has not found God. This course teaches the Art of the Calculated Leak ("Mike, if you tell anybody where this came from, I'll kill you, but the Senator almost went crazy last week — he saw a man abusing a dog and really went after him"); the Dangling Carrot ("You know, Mike, someday I'm gonna quit this business and produce a movie about politics; ever think about writing screenplays?"), and the Ultimate Bailout ("You know, Mike, I think that psychologically the guy wanted to lose").



## Research Laboratory 3A

Not for the squeamish! Students will dissect the Congressional Record to discover damaging votes by prospective opponents. By discovering the weak political tissue lurking beneath the epidermis of a 12-year-old vote on a substitute amendment to table the subcommittee report on a staff study revision, the student should be able to create a 30-second television commercial — factually unassailable — that charges the opponent with "hurling disabled orphans of war heroes into the snow."

## The Art of Reflection

Honors students will be instructed in this highly demanding discipline, involving a long lunch with a Leading Journalist, a thoughtful gaze into a brandy glass and a deep sigh, followed by: "I don't know, Mike. Am I really doing any good? Some day I'm going to go to a small university in New England and teach kids to write." ■

Jeff Greenfield is a syndicated columnist and ABC News analyst.