



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
School of Continuing Studies
Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Conversations about Ethics: Philosophical, Professional, Personal (MPPR-500)

Dates: October 26 2016 to December 20 2016

Location: This course takes place online. Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies (SCS) uses Canvas as its Learning Management System. This course will be taught entirely through the Canvas platform. To learn more about Canvas, please go through the [Canvas Guide for Students](#).

Faculty: Mary Stewart

Virtual Office Hours: By appointment through Zoom. Contact me by email to set up an appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class, you will understand basic principles of ethics and learn how to apply them practically in the communications field. Our class will review ethical philosophies, evaluate ethical situations in different areas of communications, and examine case studies and real life situations. You will leave the course with an increased knowledge of and hands-on familiarity with the practical applications of ethics in the communications field, and you will develop your personal code of ethics to guide your practice. You will consider how to live by your ethical code as a communications professional, notably:

- Can you advocate effectively for ethical practices?
- Are your values manifested by your public relations tactics every day?
- Will you be a trusted leader who helps your organization/business navigate complex ethical issues before they become public relations (or legal) problems?

This course will be a good start; and as you complete your degree, you will continue to hone this essential part of your professional and personal identity.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Be familiar with the language of ethics, and secular and moral theory that provides a framework for ethical decisionmaking.
2. Understand the potential ethical challenges in the practice of communications from historical and contemporary perspectives, and understand the standards and codes currently used to encourage best practices.
3. Develop critical thinking skills to:
 - Examine morally and ethically complex professional situations in order to determine the ethical course of action;
 - Clarify, strengthen, and articulate personal values and ethical commitments; and
 - Develop skills to make a compelling and efficacious case to clients for ethical solutions to public relations challenges.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following resources are available for purchase at the Georgetown Bookstore and/or online vendors:

- Ethics in Public Relations: A Guide to Best Practice Author: Parsons, Patricia

ISBN: 9780749453329

Publisher: Kogan Page

Year: 2008. Be sure to get the second edition.

Price: \$35 new, or \$26 used on Amazon; \$30 Google ebook.

- Movie: Up in the Air *

Source: Paramount

ASIN: B0033KM2S

Year: 2009

Price: \$9 new from Amazon or view on Netflix; streaming options vary.

* You don't need to purchase a copy of the movie to keep, but you do need to view the films in this course carefully during the specified module even if you have seen them before.

The following readings are available as an eresource through the Georgetown Library. You will need to login using your Georgetown NetID to access these resources. **If you encounter an**

error while attempting to access these readings, please log out of your current session and log back in.

1. Gower, "Legal and Ethical Considerations in Public Relations," pp. 1-21
2. Akerlof, George A. and Robert J. Shiller, *Phishing for Phools: the Economics of Manipulation & Deception*, (Princeton University Press, 2015). Excerpts: "Of Phish and Phool", from Preface, pp. x-xvi; "Ch. 3: Advertisers Discover How to Zoom In on our Weak Spots", pp. 45-59.
3. Chapter 6 from Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In for Graduates* titled "Seek and Speak Your Truth."
4. *The Insider*, 1999. Directed by Micheal Mann. ASIN: B00003CWRX

The following readings are available as an etext with some restrictions. You will need to login using your Georgetown NetID to read the texts online. You may download sections of the text or check out the etext, however please be aware there are a limited number of copies available for check out. *For this reason, **students may want to purchase the texts for their own convenience, but are not required to do so.*** Please see the library catalogue listing for more information.

[Scott, David Meerman. *The New Rules of Marketing & PR.* \(John Wiley & Sons; Hoboken New Jersey, 2015\). Fifth Edition:](#)

- Students may access all of this reading online, download the reading to check out the e-book for seven days, and copy or print a limited number of pages.
- Only three students (three browser windows) may access this resource at a given time. If additional students try to access this resource, they will receive an error message and will be prompted to add their names to a queue. Please keep in mind that you may not be able to access this resource if several of your classmates, or other Georgetown students, are attempting to access it at the same time. Please use this resource mindfully and exit out of the resources when you are done so that others may access it.

[Tom Bivins' *Mixed Media: Moral Distinctions in Advertising, Public Relations, and Journalism*, May 22, 2009 is available through the Georgetown Library with the following restrictions:](#)

- Students may read all of the book online, but may only save or print a maximum of 30 pages in total from the book.
- Only three students (three browser windows) may access this resource at a given time. If additional students try to access this resource, they will receive an error message and will be prompted to add their names to a queue. Please keep in mind that you may not be able to access this resource if several of your classmates, or other Georgetown students, are attempting to access it at the same time. Please use this resource mindfully and exit out of the resources when you are done so that others may access it.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Technical Requirements

As an online student your "classroom" experience will be very different than a traditional student. As part of your online experience, you can expect to:

1. Communicate via email including sending attachments
2. Navigate the internet using a Web browser
3. Use office applications such as Microsoft Office or Google Docs to create documents
4. Learn how to submit assignments in Canvas
5. Communicate with peers using discussion boards and other platforms
6. Upload and download saved files
7. Have easy access to the Internet
8. Navigate Canvas, including using the email component within Canvas
9. Use a microphone to record audio through your computer
10. Use an internal or external camera to record video through your computer

Computer Requirements

Students need to have sufficient technology and Internet access to complete this course. The requirements are listed by [Canvas in the Instructure Guides](#).

Audio and Video Capability

- You will need an internal or external microphone. Most computers now come with them built in.
- You will need an internal or external camera. Most computers now come with them built in.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

This course is conducted entirely online, which means students do not have to be on campus to complete any portion of it. Students will participate in the course using Georgetown University's online learning management system called Canvas. Each Module will be released on a weekly basis every Sunday at 11:59 pm (ET). Students are required to move through each module in sequential order.

Student Expectations

This course consists of 7 modules and an orientation. You are expected to do the readings, watch the lecture videos, and to engage with the course material in depth. Your responsibilities include taking the module quizzes, completing the module assignments, and turning in your final

Personal Code of Ethics. Participation is essential to your success in this class. In distance education courses you are required to participate just as if you were in a face-to-face course. This means that in order to get full credit for participation, you will have to complete all of your module activities and assignments by the assigned dates.

Time Expectations

Our online classes are designed to meet the same academic standards as our place-based (face-to-face) courses. You can think of each module equal to the same level of participation, commitment, and academic rigor as a face-to-face class. Students should plan on spending approximately 9-12 hours per week on the work for each online module.

Absences

There are no excused absences in an online course. The instructor will count a student as “absent” in any week in which the student fails to submit any of the assignments due that week, including participating in online discussions, quizzes, assignments, and/or activities.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Honor Code.

The Honor Code pledge follows:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Plagiarism

Stealing someone else’s work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as “the act of passing off as one’s own the ideas or writings of another.” More guidance is available through [the Gervase Programs](#). If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the need to credit, check out [Plagiarism.org](#).

COURSE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

These assignments are designed to help students think critically and independently about the issues raised in the reading. These will be graded on a standard scale from A to F. Grades in the B and C range will be common and normal; only truly excellent work will receive the highest grades. Do not, however, worry if your initial grades are low, since we are looking for significant improvement from the beginning to the end of the class.

Written work is due by the assigned due date on Canvas. **You must submit your weekly written assignment online by the time assigned in Canvas; DO NOT SEND YOUR PAPERS TO OTHER PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL EMAIL ADDRESSES.** Follow-ups and class participation is contingent on the timely submission of your initial responses.

Late Submission Policy:

Work will only be accepted late if there is a legitimate reason for the delay, such as a medical issue or serious family illness. Contact me as soon as possible if you anticipate you might be unable to meet a deadline. Your reasons discussed with me will remain confidential. Class participation is contingent on the timely submission of your initial responses, so be sure to get your assignments in on time.

Assignments

Thought Provoker Poll & Survey Participation: (ungraded)

Due: Modules 1-2 and 3-7

Taking the weekly polls is an important way for us as a class to explore the areas of divergence and accord on how individuals assess ethical situations. These polls are meant to group source our opinions and spur our class discussions rather than review cold facts.

Class Discussion: (10% of your grade)

Due: Modules 1-7

Your participation is judged by the way in which you contribute to positive, thoughtful class discussions. We will together create a supportive forum for intellectual deliberation with discussions that are respectful and considerate of others' opinions.

Knowledge Checker Quizzes: (5% of your grade)

Due: Modules 1-6

Having a shared body of knowledge on the readings and concepts in the course is essential for the class to then move to a nuanced discussion moving beyond the material into the case studies and current examples. Weekly knowledge checker quizzes are a quick way for you and for me to assess whether you have a command of the core material.

Applied Ethics Activities: (20% of your grade)

Due: Modules 1-4 and 5-7

You are asked for each module to submit an Applied Ethics Activity. This element requires you to look to the external environment for examples of public relations ethics in action. With each posting, you will be submitting a short explanation of how your selection applies to the week's material and prompt. Expected length 250 or so well-crafted words.

MidTerm: (20% of your grade)

Due: Modules 5

For the MidTerm, You will be presented with a case study for which you will need to develop a written response with an argument and suggested course of action well supported by evidence from our readings and discussions and a solid understanding of the PRSA Code of Ethics.

Personal Code of Ethics: (30% of your grade)

Due: Modules 7

The final written assignment consists of a 15 page paper outlining your personal code of ethics. It should be written in the format of a formal ethics code. This code will become the cornerstone of your personal ethos and will be used in your Capstone course.

Citation Style

This course uses APA or Chicago style for all writing and research assignments. Resources for this citation style are available through

[Georgetown Library Citation Style Guide](#)

[APA Guidebook](#)

[Chicago Guidebook](#)

GRADING

Graduate course grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C and F. **There are no grades of C+, C- or D.**

Please reference the below grading scale:

93 - 100 % = A

90 - 92 % = A-

87 - 89 % = B+

83 - 86 % = B

80 - 82 % = B-

70 - 79 % = C

Below 70 % = F

ACCOMMODATIONS

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equity and access to programs and facilities. Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the Academic Resource Center, the office that oversees disability support services, (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability>) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. The University is not responsible for making special accommodations for students who have not declared their disabilities and have not requested an accommodation in a timely manner. Also, the University need not modify course or degree requirements considered to be an essential requirement of the program of instruction. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the [Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website](#). Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

Tools Accessibility

- VoiceThread is a tool that enables teachers and students to upload and asynchronously present images, video, and/or other media and respond to others presentations with audio, video, and/or text comments. [Student instructions for VoiceThread are available for download.](#)
- Turnitin is a writing assessment tool that is used to detect plagiarism and allows teachers to provide assignment feedback to students. [Students instructions for Turnitin are available for download.](#)
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- If you encounter problems with one of the PollEverywhere polls or Qualtrics surveys, please ask your instructor for guidance.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services

SCS offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed online, at the School of Continuing Studies downtown location, and on the main Georgetown campus:

- **Academic Resource Center**

- 202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
 - <http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/>
-
- **Counseling and Psychiatric Services**
 - 202-687-6985
 - <http://caps.georgetown.edu/>
-
- **Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action (IDEAA)**
 - (202) 687-4798
 - <https://ideaa.georgetown.edu/>

Georgetown Library

Students enrolled in online School of Continuing Studies SCS coursework have access to the University Library System's eResources, including 500+ research databases, 1.5+ million ebooks, and thousands of periodicals and other multimedia files (films, webinars, music, and images). Students can access these resources through the [Library's Homepage](#) by using their University username (NetID) and password (this is the same login information used to access email, BlackBoard, etc.). The Library does not mail physical items to students.

SCS students may make an appointment with a librarian to discuss a research topic, develop a search strategy, or examine resources for projects and papers. Librarians offer an overview of and in-depth assistance with important resources for senior or master's theses, dissertations, papers and other types of research. Appointments are conducted using Google Hangout (video-conferencing function) through the Georgetown Gmail System or by telephone. This service is available to currently enrolled students who need assistance with Georgetown-assigned projects and papers. Please review the [Services & Resources Guide for Online Students](#) for additional information.

Research Guide

The Public Relations and Corporate Communications program has an extensive online [Library Research Guide](#) designed for the subject and research specifications of our program. This Guide will give you direct access to the library resources central to your course research work.

Learning Resources

SCS offers a host of [learning resources](#) to its students. Two that you might find particularly helpful in this course are the [Writing Center](#) and [Refworks](#).

- The [Writing Center](#) offers professional writing support through its online peer tutoring service.
- [Refworks](#) is an online research management tool that aids in organizing, storing, and presenting citation sources for papers and projects.

Technical Support

Click on the Help link (on the bottom-left corner in Canvas) to reach Canvas Support, including the [Canvas Student Guide](#) and 24 hour Canvas Support Hotline at 855-338-2770.

In this course we will use VoiceThread, Turnitin, PollEverywhere, and Qualtrics.

- [Technical support for VoiceThread is available at the VoiceThread website.](#)
- [Technical support for Turnitin is available at the Turnitin website.](#)
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- If you encounter problems with one of the PollEverywhere polls or Qualtrics surveys, please ask your instructor for guidance.

COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

Canvas Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies (SCS) uses Canvas as its Learning Management System. This course will be taught entirely through this Canvas course platform. To learn more about Canvas, please go through the Canvas Guide for Students.

Communication with Peers

- You will be expected to communicate with your peers via the discussion board and VoiceThread.
- In this course we will use Canvas to send email for private messages. You can either check your messages in the Canvas system or set your notifications to your preferred method of contact. Please check your messages at least once per day.
 - When submitting messages, please do the following: *Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name and module.*

Email

In this course we will use Canvas to send email for private messages. You can either check your messages in the Canvas system or set your notifications to your preferred method of contact. Please check your messages at least once per day. When submitting messages, please do the following:

- Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name and module.
- Do not send messages asking general information about the class, please post those in the **General Question Discussion Board** question forum.

Questions

- In online courses, everyone will likely have many questions about things that relate to the course, such as clarification about assignments, course materials, or assessments. Please post these in the **General Question Discussion Board** forum, which you can access by clicking the **Discussions** link in the course navigation menu. This is an **open** forum, and you are encouraged to give answers and help each other. I will be checking this regularly to respond to any content-related questions and at times share additional resources.
- If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a response within 2 business days. Please allow 3 business days for assessment submission feedback.

Netiquette Guidelines

To promote the highest degree of education possible, we ask each student to respect the opinions and thoughts of other students and be courteous in the way that you choose to express yourself. The topics in this course can be controversial and promote debate. Students should be respectful and considerate of all opinions.

In order for us to have meaningful discussions, we must learn to genuinely try to understand what others are saying and be open-minded about others' opinions. If you want to persuade someone to see things differently, it is much more effective to do so in a polite, non-threatening way rather than to do so antagonistically. Everyone has insights to offer based on his/her experiences, and we can all learn from each other. Civility is essential.

Statement of Student Conduct, Civility, and Engagement

The School of Continuing Studies offers students the opportunity to engage with faculty, staff, and peers in ways that foster intellectual growth and development in their chosen field of study. It is important to recognize that each member of our community brings his or her own values, thoughts, perspectives, and experiences into each interaction. We expect students to behave in a manner that is civil and respectful of others, and appreciate the learning opportunities that come from engaging pluralistic perspectives in a dynamic educational environment.

Engagement within the SCS Georgetown community takes place in on-campus meeting spaces and classrooms, and extends to online learning platforms and forums. Students should be particularly mindful that participation in class discussions, group assignments, emails, blogs, and social media reflect upon them personally, academically, and professionally. All viewpoints, editorials, and opinions expressed by students represent those students exclusively – and not the students' instructors, classmates, academic program, School, or University – even in cases when students are using Georgetown-affiliated systems like email, blogs, and online portfolios. The expectations for respect and civility are consistent for on-campus classes and spaces, as

well as cyber, virtual, and online environments. Thus, civility and cybercivility are expected of all students, in all campus spaces.

SCS students are expected to adhere to the SCS guidelines for student conduct and the University Code of Student Conduct. In the event that a student's behavior is perceived to fall outside the stated SCS guidelines or may be a violation of the Code of Student Conduct, the matter may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for further review and possible sanctioning. Such instances can include but are not limited to: disruption of official university functions (including teaching, research, administration), failure to comply with a directive issued by a University official, harassment and bullying, and incivility. For questions regarding the SCS student conduct expectations please review the policy in-full found in the [Graduate Professional Studies Student Handbook](#). For questions about the Code of Student Conduct, please review the information provided by the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

Communication with Peers (Collaborations)

If you wish, you may also communicate with your Peers using Collaborations. Collaborations allows you to collaborate with your peers using Google Docs. Collaborative documents are saved in real-time, meaning a change made by any of its users will be immediately visible to everyone. It is a useful tool for students to work on group projects or papers, take shared notes, etc. Instructors or students can set up group collaborations. [Instructions for using Collaborations are available for download.](#)

Notifications

In this course we will use Canvas to send email for private messages. You can either check your messages in the Canvas system or set your notifications to your preferred method of contact. Please check your messages at least once per day. When submitting messages, please do the following:

- Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name and module.
- Do not send messages asking general information about the class, please post those in the [General Questions Open Forum](#) question forum.

Questions Forum

In online courses, everyone will likely have many questions about things that relate to the course, such as clarification about assignments, course materials, or assessments. Please post these in the [General Questions Open Forum](#) forum, which you can access by clicking the **Discussions** link in the course navigation menu. This is an *open* forum, and you are encouraged to give answers and help each other. I will be checking this regularly to respond to any content-related questions and at times share additional resources.

Turnaround and Feedback

If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a response within 2 business days. Please allow 3 business days for assessment submission feedback.