



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
School of Continuing Studies  
Public Relations and Corporate Communications

## **MPPR-730-01: Corporate Communications**

**Georgetown University: MPS-Public Relations and Corporate Communications**

Mondays 8:00pm – 10:30pm | Fall 2016

Instructor : Shelva Clemons, Ph.D.

### **Course Overview**

This course is designed to provide aspiring communications professionals with a deep understanding of the interplay between the many corporate communications functions and best-practice approaches to their strategic integration. We will examine how successful communicators leverage the skills of influence, persuasion and organizational awareness to establish themselves as true business partners and ultimately maximize their contributions to impact the business.

The significance of this class is to give students a chance to apply relevant theories, principles and experiences to real-life scenarios.

Upon conclusion of the course, students will have a solid perspective on the various communication tactics used by corporate communicators to achieve their goals. Students will learn how to sell themselves and their communication skills to leadership, fellow employees and external stakeholders to align with an organization's overall business objectives.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the semester, students will:

- Explore the scope of corporate communications functions and their integrated application across organizations
- Learn to recognize the relationship between successful corporate communications practices, the ability to build strong partnerships, and the need to gain influence at all levels of the organization;
- Develop the tools needed to build an organic corporate communications practice that adapts to changes in strategy and direction
- Be inspired to build and maintain the corporate political capital that drives optimal corporate communications results

### **Introduction**

Corporate communications is more than the carefully selected words that make it into memos, newsletters, speeches and official corporate outreach activities. It's how well communications priorities integrate with business objectives. It's what managers say – and neglect to say – to their employees. It's the way leaders address rumors and speculation. And, perhaps most important, it's the vehicle that drives the way the world regards an organization.



### Required Readings

**Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die** Chip Heath & Dan Heath, 2008, \$17.16, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), ISBN 978-1-4000-6428-1

**Switch, How to Change Things When Change Is Hard** Chip Heath & Dan Heath, 2010, \$15.60, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), ISBN 978-0-385-52875-7

*\*\*\*The instructors will also assign specific articles to read as part of the homework. Students must be prepared to discuss any of those assigned readings in class.*

### Attendance

As outlined by the university, missing more than two classes will result in a final grade reduction of one level (for example, an A will be converted to an A-). **Absences for classes, beyond the initial two, will result in further reduction of the final grade.** If you are absent for more than four classes, you will be in danger of failing this course.



Punctual attendance is critical. If you have to miss a class – family emergency, medical emergency or other act of God – you must let the instructors know in advance and work out a proposal for making up whatever work you will miss. Exceptions will be made only in extraordinary circumstances.

### Classroom Etiquette, Class Participation and Other Guidelines

A successful class depends on the active engagement of all students. Students should turn off all cell phones, pagers or other communication devices while in class. Class discussions should be respectful and considerate of others' views and opinions. What happens in class stays in class unless you receive permission from the instructor to share something.

### Assignments (Components of Class Grade)

Students' final grade will consist of the following components:

-  **Class Attendance & Participation (20 points):** Each week, students are expected to attend and contribute to class conversations. For each class missed, 2 points are deducted from the overall 20 points for class attendance and participation. If missing class is necessary, please give prior notice.
-  **Partner Evaluation (50 points):** Students will work with a partner throughout the semester to complete presentations and papers for the Crisis Communication Review as well as the Final Plan. These 50 points will come from your partner to evaluate your contributions to completing assignments and performing in a team environment. This grade is solely determined by the partner and given to the instructor on the last day of class when all assignments have been completed and presented.



- ✚ **Assignments (60 points total):** Students will have two assignments (30 points each). Each assignment should be no more than 5 doubled-spaced pages. This page count does not include the reference page or appendices. Work submitted should be free of grammatical errors and clearly addressing the strategy - social media, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) or Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – discussed in class. Each assignment should include a SWOT analysis for the organization.
  
- ✚ **Presentation (30 points total):** Each student will present one of the three assigned assignments. In a PowerPoint presentation, the student will address the necessary topic (e.g. social media, IMC or CSR). A SWOT analysis is required within the presentation. The topic selected for the homework presentation WILL NOT require a written homework assignment submitted for grading.
  
- ✚ **Corporate Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Write-up & Presentation (90 points total):** Students will have an option of a current or past diversity scenario with major corporations that encounter backlash and scrutiny publicly (or internally with their employees) surrounding their operating practices of inclusiveness. Within a group, students will submit a write-up and present this scenario, the outcome/current status of the situation, how communication components are involved in the organization's D&I practices and recommendations on improving (and/or enhancing) the outcome for the organization. Each group will submit a write-up for 60 points and present in class for 30 points. Free of grammatical errors, the write-up should be no more than 10 pages double-spaced. This page count excludes the reference page and appendices. A SWOT analysis should also be included.
  
- ✚ **Required Reading In-class Assignment (50 points):** In class students will be divided into two groups. Each group will be assigned to one of the readings. The first part of class will be preparation for each group to present the reading to the remainder of the class. The second part of class will be two presentations from each group on the required reading. Each person in the group is required to participate in the presentation. Overall, the class presentations should lead discussions to debate the concepts and key learnings from the reading.
  
- ✚ **Final Plan: Outline, Write-up & Presentation (225 points):** In groups, students will create a 20 – 25 page double-spaced communications plan to address the various components of corporate communications. These elements include – but are not limited to – CSR, IMC, a measurement mechanism, internal messaging for employees and shareholders, external for customers, diversity & inclusion, investor relations, public affairs, change management and media strategies. Successful plans will demonstrate strong awareness and understanding of all corporate communications principles discussed throughout this course, including presentation tips, functional knowledge, fitness of the solution for the company, and strength of pitch. A SWOT analysis is expected for this assignment as well (in the presentation as well as the paper). Students should approach this presentation as a mock business meeting (not as an academic exercise). Assume a corporate environment and the appropriate accompanying behaviors and expectations. Students will spend most of the semester working on the final project and present the last day of class. The final outline is



worth 25 points, the presentation is 75 points and the write-up will be graded out of a total of 150 points.

*\*\*\*\* Assignments are due on their assigned day at the beginning of class. No assignments will be accepted after the day it is due. Hardcopies are required. Submitting assignments via email will not count as being submitted on time. There are NO exceptions to these requirements.*

### Grading

Your course grade will be based on the following:

<b>Attendance &amp; Participation:</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Partner Evaluation</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Homework Assignments (2):</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Homework Presentation</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Corporate Diversity &amp; Inclusion (D&amp;I) Write-up (Partner)</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Corporate Diversity &amp; Inclusion Presentation (D&amp;I) (Partner)</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Required Reading In-class Assignment (Group)</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Final Plan: Outline (Partner)</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Final Plan: Presentation (Partner)</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Final Plan: Write-Up (Partner)</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Total =</b>	<b>550</b>

### Grading Metrics:

Students will have the opportunity to earn a **total of 550 points** this semester. Please reference the below grading scale and assignments:

### Grading Scale:

<b>A</b>	<b>100 - 93</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>92 - 90</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>89 - 87</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>86 - 83</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>82 - 80</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>79 - 70</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>69 and below</b>

The instructors will provide a warning by mid-semester to any student who appears to be on track for a poor final grade.

### University Resources

Georgetown offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed on main campus or at the downtown location:

- MPS Writing Resource Program  
202-687-4246  
<http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/>



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- Academic Resource Center  
202-687-8354 | [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)  
<http://ldss.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/>

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with documented disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (202-687-8354; [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu); <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm>) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

### **Georgetown Honor System**

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 at <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html>. If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing and the need to credit, check out <http://www.plagiarism.org>.



Date	Readings Due	Assignments Due	In-Class Discussion and Activities
<b>Week 1:</b> <b>August 31</b>			Class Introductions Course Overview & Expectations Syllabus & Grading Rubric Partner Selections Crisis Communication Scenario Company Selection  <b>Lecture 1:</b> <b>“What is Corporate Communications?”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Corporate communications defined</li> <li>+ Components of corporate communications</li> <li>+ How corporations typically utilize communications</li> <li>+ Elements of a strong communications plan</li> <li>+ The role of a corporate communicator</li> </ul> <b>Lecture 2: Internal Communications</b> <b>“What should we say to employees?”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Defining internal communications</li> <li>+ Why internal communications is critical</li> <li>+ The components of internal communications</li> <li>+ Communications’ role in corporate culture &amp; change</li> </ul>
<b>September 5</b>			<b>NO CLASS!!!</b> <b>(LABOR DAY)</b>
<b>Week 2:</b> <b>September 12</b>	<b>Readings:</b> <i>Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die</i> (pgs. 1-97)  Leadership Messaging Case Study: <i>Who Goes, Who Stays?</i>  Corporate Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Case Study: <i>Harvard Review Business Article; TBD</i>		<b>Crisis Communications &amp; Leadership Messaging</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ <i>Scandal: Crash &amp; Burn</i></li> </ul> <b>Case Study:</b> <i>Who Goes, Who Stays?</i>  <b>Lecture 3: Leadership Messaging</b> <b>“How the leader’s messaging really makes a difference”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Review of current leaders’ approach to messaging</li> <li>+ Discussion of various strategies and tactics used</li> </ul> <b>Lecture 4: Corporate Diversity &amp; Inclusion:</b> <b>“What does this really mean in the workplace and for our customers?”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ How do we define diversity in the workplace; how does it compare and/or align with inclusion?</li> <li>+ Internally: a way of operating and establishing</li> </ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ a corporate culture</li> <li>✚ Externally: demonstrating your company's commitment to reaching a diverse pool of target audiences</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3:</b> <b>September 19</b>	<b>Readings:</b> <i>Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die</i> (pgs. 98-164)		<b>Guest Speaker: TBD</b>
<b>Week 4:</b> <b>September 26</b>	<b>Readings:</b> <i>Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die</i> (pgs. 165-237)		<b>Lecture 5: Corporate Branding</b> <b>"How are you known and perceived by your customers and other consumers?"</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ The identity of your organization</li> <li>✚ Determining what your company stands for</li> <li>✚ Discovery, Definition &amp; Expression</li> </ul> <b>Lecture 6: Integrated Marketing Communications</b> <b>"How does IMC mix with Corporate Communications?"</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ How words shape perception</li> <li>✚ What integrated communications should mean to companies</li> <li>✚ The goals of marketing communications</li> <li>✚ Media Relations/PR/Crisis Communication</li> <li>✚ Managing your message and vehicles effectively</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5:</b> <b>October 3</b>	<b>Readings:</b> <i>Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die</i> (pgs. 238-285)	<b>Turn-in Assignments:</b> <b>IMC Strategies (HW Assignment or Presentation)</b>	<b>Homework Presentations:</b> assigned students present  <b>Lecture 7: External Communications</b> <b>"Death to Press Releases"</b> <b>&amp;</b> <b>"Social Media - Has it taken over?"</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ What is a press release &amp; who reads them</li> <li>✚ Outreach and types of press releases</li> <li>✚ Corporate use of social media</li> </ul>
<b>October 10</b>			<b>NO CLASS!!!</b> <b>(COLUMBUS DAY)</b>



<p><b>Week 6:</b>  <b>October 17</b></p>	<p><b>Readings:</b>  <i>Switch, How to Change Things When Change Is Hard</i> (pgs. 101-224)</p>	<p><b>Turn-in Assignments:</b>  <b>Corporate Social Media Strategies (HW Assignment or Presentation)</b></p>	<p><b>Homework Presentations:</b>          assigned students present           ***Discussion of requirements for Final Plan Outline Assignment</p>
<p><b>Week 7:</b>  <b>October 24</b></p>	<p><b>Readings:</b>  <i>Switch, How to Change Things When Change Is Hard</i> (pgs. 225-266)</p>		<p><b>Guest Speaker: TBD</b></p>
<p><b>Week 8:</b>  <b>October 31</b></p>			<p><b>Lecture 8: Corporate Social Responsibility &amp; Reputation Management</b>  <b>“What can CSR really do for a company?”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ The importance of CSR</li> <li>✚ The impact of CSR to a communication strategy</li> <li>✚ Strategies for communicating CSR initiatives to the public</li> <li>✚ Reporting of CSR tactics</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 9:</b>  <b>November 7</b></p>		<p><b>Turn-in Assignments:</b>  <b>CSR Strategies (HW Assignment or Presentation)</b></p>	<p><b>Homework Presentations:</b>          assigned students present</p> <p><b>Lecture 9: Change Management</b>  <b>“How do we survive change – the corporate change cycle?”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Learning to read the signs of change</li> <li>✚ Communications as change enabler</li> <li>✚ Communication components’ contribution to companies staying on top with consumers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 10:</b>  <b>November 14</b></p>	<p>Public Affairs Case Study:  <i>The Leader As Lobbyist</i></p>	<p><b>Turn-in Assignments:</b>  <b>Final Plan Outline due</b></p>	<p><b>Case Study:</b>  <i>The Leader As Lobbyist</i></p> <p><b>Lecture 10: Public Affairs</b>  <b>“How do we prepare for the Hill?”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Definition and purpose of public affairs activities</li> <li>✚ The role of public affairs and legislation within Corporate Communications</li> <li>✚ Connecting with Law &amp; Regulation departments internally</li> </ul> <p><b>Lecture 11: Investor Relations</b>  <b>“What about shareholders?”</b></p>





			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ The difference between shareholders vs. stakeholders</li> <li>✚ What shareholders mean to an organization</li> <li>✚ Definition and purpose of a earnings call</li> <li>✚ What it means when a public company releases corporate earnings (and the role communications should play)</li> <li>✚ Investor Relations Communications Strategy</li> </ul> <p><b>Lecture 12: Measurement</b>  <b>"The Numbers Don't Lie"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Why we need to measure our work</li> <li>✚ Identifying the most effective measuring tactics within communications</li> <li>✚ Defining the most appropriate audience for measurement results</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11: November 21</b>			<p><b>Review of:</b>  <i>Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die</i>  <i>&amp; Switch, How to Change Things When Change Is Hard</i></p>
<b>Week 12: November 28</b>	<b>Readings:</b> Preparation for Required Reading In-class Assignment	<b>Turn-in Assignment:</b> Crisis Communication Company Write-up & Presentation	<b>Corporate Diversity &amp; Inclusion (D&amp;I) Write-up &amp; Presentation</b>
<b>Week 13: December 5</b>			<b>Required Reading In-class Assignment</b>
<b>Week 14: December 12</b>		<b>Turn-in Assignment:</b> Final Plan Write-up & Presentation	<b>Final Plan Write-up &amp; Presentation</b>

**\*\*\*Syllabus Modification & Potential Changes:**

1. *The syllabus may change to accommodate discussion of emerging topics. Also, the schedules of guest speakers may require some shifting of the agenda. The instructor will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.*
2. *Due to the class being held on Monday evenings, this course section requires one make-up class for Columbus Day. As a group, the class will determine a Friday evening or Saturday morning within the semester to hold this make-class session.*