

**Syllabus: Georgetown University
Employee Engagement and Internal Communications**

**MPS - Public Relations & Corporate Communications
Employee Engagement and Internal Communications
MPPR-835-01**

**Lecturer: Heather Neisworth
Class: Tuesdays, 8:00 p.m.-10:30 p.m.
Term: Spring 2017**

Course Description:

Internal Communications is the essential partner that creates meaningful connections between organizations and their employees amidst a demanding business climate. Internal Communications educates and engages employees so they can understand organizational values to see their unique role in delivering business results.

This class focuses on the influential role communication advisors play to address the issues, challenges and opportunities facing internal stakeholders. Students will focus on research, consulting, and best practices to develop internal communication strategies that impact employees with the right message, channel and device. Culture and branding will also be examined in relationship to internal social media, message development, measurement, communicating in real time, and fostering significant two-way communications while balancing the impersonal nature of technology.

This course is designed to provide each student with exposure to important terms, tools, vital concepts in action, real world examples and case studies in addition to the recommended textbooks. Students will approach this class from the viewpoint of the communications professional to understand the multifaceted concepts related directly to internal communications and to be able to act as a strategist.

Course Objectives:

When this course is completed, students will be able to:

- Understand the importance of culture when developing an internal communications strategy.
- Create communication messages that keep employees engaged and informed about relevant business issues
- Develop a communication strategy and implementation plan that takes into account organizational needs, timeframe, channels, audience, and measurable actions.
- Empower leaders to communicate meaningful and effectively
- Understand how to identify the communication approaches that effectively reach employees

- Develop a working understanding of the specific tools and tactics required to engage employees, with special emphasis on digital and social capabilities.
- Present actionable plans to present and sell employee engagement to senior management.

Teaching Philosophy:

This course requires every student to be actively engaged and to read all assignment materials and participate in class dialogue. Active listening and dialogue gives each student the opportunity to take on the role as communication strategist, employee advocate, change manager, researcher, counselor, and valuable contributor to organizational goals. Every week each class will blend the study of engagement with the practice of communications. Progress will be measured through student participation, in-class assignments, homework assignments and group project outputs.

Communication:

All emails will receive a response within 24 hours. In-person meetings are also available and can take place before or after class or by appointment.

Attendance:

Class attendance is expected and students are expected to attend every class, arrive on time and actively participate in class discussions. If a student has extenuating circumstances or becomes unable to make it to class on time, please send a note via e-mail prior or call before the start of class to discuss your situation. Without proper notification, missing more than two classes will result in a final grade reduction of one level (for example a final grade of an A would be reduced to an A- after a student has missed two classes without proper notification. Of course, some absences can't be anticipated, and if the student finds themselves in this position, please discuss your situation as soon as possible to work out reasonable accommodations.

Library Resources:

<http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/researchcourseguides>

<http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/prcc>

Assignments:

Class assignments are to be high quality and will be considered for writing, content and professional appearance. Assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with a 12-point font (such as Arial, Tahoma, Verdana or Times New Roman) and 1-inch margins.

Students should apply standard business writing conventions, including full identification of any noted research using APA or Chicago style citations in all papers.

Assignments should be e-mailed before 5:00pm on the day of class it is due (see syllabus for exact due dates for assigned work). If any student has extenuating circumstances and need accommodations, please reach out and discuss your situation *before* the assignment due date. Unless the situation is explained and cleared before the due date, late work will lose one letter grade per day it is late.

Ethics Statement:

As signatories to the Georgetown University Honor Pledge, and indeed as good scholars and citizens, students are expected to uphold academic honesty in all aspects of this course. You are expected to be familiar with the letter and spirit of the Standards of Conduct outlined in the Georgetown Honor System and on the Honor Council website. As faculty, I too am obligated to uphold the Honor System and report all suspected cases of academic dishonesty. For more information, please visit:
<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/he/index/html>.

Honor System:

Students are expected to abide by the Georgetown University Honor System and should be familiar with the material and information posted on the Honor Council's website:
<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/he/index.html>.

Georgetown University Honor Pledge:

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.

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/>
- 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/>

Students with Disabilities Policy

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; <http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu>) 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.

Digital Devices:

Use of a laptop or digital device is welcomed as long as it is for appropriate for class use. Please be mindful and consider if you were giving a speech, what behavior would you expect from your audience? Please demonstrate this behavior in class as if you were the next speaker.

Guest Speakers:

Invited speakers will be visiting our class to discuss how the communications concepts discussed in class are applied in real-world situations. Guest speakers will present for a period of time and then allow students time for questions and discussion.

Required Books:

Joep Cornellisen

Corporate Communication: A Guide to Theory & Practice 4th Edition

Sage Publications

ISBN – 978-1-4462-7495-8

2014

[New Paperback Edition – \\$54.00 - Amazon](#)

Susan M. Drake, Michelle J. Gulman and Sara M. Roberts

Light Their Fire: Using Internal Marketing to Ignite Employee Performance and Wow Customers

Dearborn Trade Publishing – A Kaplan Professional Company

ISBN – 978-1-6071-4978-1

2005

[New Paperback Edition - \\$19.00 - Amazon](#)

Liam FitzPatrick and Klas Valskov

Internal Communications: A manual for practitioners (PR in Practice)

Kogan Page

ISBN – 978-0-7494-6932-0

2014

[New Paperback Edition - \\$29.95 - Amazon](#)

Grading:

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

Course grades will be based on the completion of assignments and classroom participation as follows:

- Class participation: 150 points
- Assignments: 150 points (50 points each)
- Individual paper: 300 points
- Group Project: 400 points (paper: 250 points, presentation: 150 points)
- Total: 1000 points**

Grading Scale:

- A** 100 – 93%
- A-** 92 - 90
- B+** 89 - 87
- B** 86 - 83
- B-** 82 – 80
- C** 79 - 70
- F** 69 and below

ASSIGNMENTS

Specific instructions will be given for each Class assignment, Individual paper and Group Project during the semester in a separate informational packet.

Weekly Reading:

It is crucial for each weekly reading to be completed on time. Each week’s lesson will integrate the content from the reading and active participation in classroom discussion, including reference to reading, is expected of every student.

Culture/Real-World Examples:

Each week, students should be prepared to present an example (good or bad) of employee engagement/internal communications as directed by the weekly theme. The examples can be pulled from your workplace, from documented articles or from the media.

Schedule:

Week Due	Discussion Topics	Readings & Assignments
Wk 1: January 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Overview of Course• Syllabus review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read FitzPatrick and Valskov: pp. 4- 19• Introductions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Internal Communications and Employee Engagement? • Why does Internal Communications and Employee Engagement matter in the modern workplace? • Reading discussion/ Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: What do you expect from this class?
Wk 2: January 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining Corporate Communication • Corporate Communication in Contemporary Organizations and the relationship to Internal Communications • Discuss culture/real-world examples • Reading discussion/ Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Cornelissen: pp. 3-16 • Read: Cornelissen: pp. 17-37
Wk 3: January 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing Your Homework (SWOT Analysis) • Planning • Discuss culture/real-world examples • Reading discussion/ Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Drake, Gulman and Roberts: pp. 71-93 • Read FitzPatrick and Valskov: pp. 41- 57 • Assignment #1: Create a SWOT Analysis for a selected business and industry. Details of the plan are in the supplemental packet Due: February 14
Wk 4: February 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Branding and The Hot Topic of Internal Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Drake, Gulman, Roberts: pp. 1-30 • Read Drake, Gulman, Roberts:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Light Their Fire – The Benefits of Internal Marketing • Discuss culture/real-world examples • Reading discussion/ Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pp. 31-49
Wk 5: February 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Audiences • Stakeholder Management and Communication • Discuss culture/real-world examples • Reading discussion/ Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: FitzPatrick and Valskov pp. 58-72 • Read Cornelissen: pp. 41-62 • Assignment #2: Create an Employee Survey. Details of the plan are in the supplemental packet Due: February 28
Wk 6: February 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging • Employee Communication • Discuss culture/real-world examples • Reading discussion/ Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: FitzPatrick and Valskov pp. 73-89 • Read Cornelissen: pp. 163- 179
Wk 7: February 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Value of Storytelling • The Leader's Guide to Storytelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Stephen Denning pp. 59 to 88 (Provided in Supplemental Packet) • Paper: Write a Paper detailing how senior leadership will introduce an organizational change and include messaging and channels distribution ideas. Details of the plan are in the supplemental packet. Due: March 21
Wk 8: March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Channel • Discuss culture/real-world examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: FitzPatrick and Valskov pp. 90-114

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading discussion/ Q&A 	
Wk 9: March 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying People, Culture, Business and Management Issues • What to Say to Whom and How 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Drake, Gulman and Roberts 95-126 • Group Project - Build an employee communications strategy and implementation plan to address scenario provided in the supplemental information packet. • Due: May 9
Wk 10: March 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Strategy • Strategic Planning and Campaign Management • Discuss culture/real-world examples • Reading discussion/ Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Cornelissen: pp. 89-108 • Read: Cornelissen: pp. 109-126 • Groups pitch their client and initial strategy for group project with professor to obtain approval.
Wk 11: April 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Identity, Branding and Corporate Reputation • Brand Power: Creating an Internal Brand • Discuss culture/real-world examples • Reading discussion/ Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Cornelissen pp. 63-85 • Read: Drake, Gulman, Roberts pp. 51-69
Wk 12: April 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media and Corporate Communications • Discuss culture/real-world examples • Reading discussion/ Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Cornelissen: pp. 257-272 • Assignment #3: Create a Social Media campaign to address scenario provided in the supplemental information packet. Due: April 25

<p>Wk 13: April 18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change • Leadership and Change Communications • Final Project Group Q&A/Check-in • Discuss culture/real-world examples • Reading discussion/ Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: FitzPatrick, Valskov: pp. 168-187 • Read: Cornelissen: pp. 219-239
<p>Wk 14 April 25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Senior Leaders • Building Strong Client Relationships • Final Project Group Work Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: FitzPatrick and Valskov: pp. 136-167 • Read: FitzPatrick and Valskov: pp. 29-30
<p>Wk 15: May 9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Presentations Due 	