



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
School of Continuing Studies
Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Georgetown University, MPS PR/CC | Summer 2017

MPPR-710-40

Media Relations Class

Meets: Wednesday, 5:15 – 8:15 p.m.

Class Location: Room: C124; 640 Mass Ave. Washington, DC 20001

Professor: Ashley A. Forrester

Office Hours: Arranged by appointment

Course Description:

This course will provide you with the skills needed to successfully execute media relations strategies in a variety of environments/scenarios. You will leave this course knowing how to research reporters and outlets, build a media relations plan and messaging platform, identify and prepare spokespeople, manage crisis communications and employ social media to drive your messages. Lectures, readings and assignments will be complemented by guest speakers who are actively working in the media/communications landscape and will share insights gained through their professional experiences.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Practice media relations in a range of organizational settings/situations
- Plan, implement and manage traditional media and new media channels
- Develop messages, identify and prepare spokespeople
- Conduct media interviews with print, broadcast and online outlets
- Utilize social media as a part of an integrated media relations campaign
- Sharpen your critical thinking and strategic communications skills

Attendance:

In-class discussion and practice are essential to mastering the content of this course. Students are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. If you are detained from attending a class or arriving before it begins, you are responsible for notifying me via email prior to the start of class. 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 from 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.

Work Submitted:

Format: All work should be submitted as a Word document. Font size should be at least 11pt; margins should be 1 inch and spacing should be 1.15. Please utilize AP Style. (The AP Stylebook is available at the Library and most bookstores). Each assignment should include your name, date and the assignment title on all pages.

Late Policy: All assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you need to miss a class, your assignment must be submitted via email at the beginning of the class in which it was due. Late work will be dropped a half grade each week it is late and will not be accepted after two weeks. If there any extenuating circumstances, please make arrangements to speak with me in advance of the due date.

Course Policies:

Cell Phones: Out of respect for the instructor, classmates and guest speakers, please silence and refrain from using your cell phone during class.
Laptops: The use of laptops for note-taking is permitted. Often, class discussion about media relations is enhanced by the ability to perform on-the-spot research or find examples that support or refute points under discussion. However, using class time to attend to personal/work email, engage in social media or otherwise remove yourself from the class is both disrespectful and unwise and your class participation grade will suffer.
Classroom Etiquette: This class welcomes and encourages discussion and expects that all members of the class will engage respectfully and civilly. I encourage you to ask questions during class. Chances are if you're wondering about something, at least one of your other colleagues will be also. Always feel empowered to raise your hand and voice your question. Use each question as an opportunity to apply what we are learning about critical thinking and presentation skills.
Incompletes: I will not offer incomplete grades, except in the most exceptional, unforeseeable circumstances. Job requirements do not qualify.

Required Readings:

The resources for this course include articles, book excerpts, cases studies, multimedia and RFPs. The readings are chosen to give you a solid foundation for understanding and internalizing the coursework. All articles, book excerpts, cases and multimedia requested for class will be distributed in advance, via the class Blackboard group. Readings not included in the initial syllabus will be provided later in the semester, so we can review real-time cases and current events.

In order to work effectively with the media, you must be engaged with the media. In addition to readings outlined below, you should cultivate a daily habit of engaging with major print, broadcast and online news outlets, as well as those outlets specific to your industry/the industry in which you work or wish to work.

Recommended Resource:

The AP Stylebook is a critical resource for those writing for the media. While the Stylebook is updated each year, copies of the prior year's book may be available online for less than the current edition. The AP Stylebook is also available in the Georgetown University Library.

Library Resources:

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

Assignments:

You are expected to submit your work on time and of high quality. Please refer to the course schedule and plan your timetable for completing assignments in advance. I encourage you to actively ask questions prior to submitting any assignment. As long as you submit your assignment for review (with a specific question in mind) at least three business days before the assignment is due, I would be happy to review your specific question and discuss it with you. Feedback on all final assignments will be provided in a timely manner; no more than two weeks after the assignment was turned in. All grading criteria, including page length and essential content will be distributed in advance and discussed in class.

Assignment #1 (50 points)

Identifying the Right Reporter

- Identify a reporter from a trusted media outlet and conduct the following audit:
 - o Conduct an analysis of the reporter’s media outlet (audience, frequency, reach, brief history, political stance if any, digital/social channels, special events, editorial calendar);
 - o Create a reporter profile (what’s their beat, how do they prefer to be reached, do they use digital/social channels, frequency of stories/social media usage, review writing/reporting style);
- Based on your audit, prepare a strategy memo on how you would effectively reach and pitch this reporter?
- To complete your assignment, you will be asked to share your findings in a brief 2 – 3 minute oral presentation to the class and submit a written strategy memo (no more than 2 pages, bullets points are acceptable).

Assignment #2 (50 points)

Key Message Development/Interview Briefing

- Identify a client/brand and current campaign or situation to develop key message points in an effort to prepare for an interview with a reporter/media outlet that you’ve identified (use your knowledge gathered in assignment #1);
- Prepare a key message document with no more than 10 messages/soundbites that would be used in the interview with the reporter;
- Based on the reporter identified, craft five potential questions that the reporter might ask and include brief answers utilizing the message document;
- In the questions/answers provided, provide an example where the client bridges back to a key message that they are trying to convey.

Assignment #3 (50 points)

Pitching a Story

- You will be provided with a story/campaign idea to pitch to media.
- Develop a memo for your executive C-suite team that discusses your strategy, targeted outlet/reporter, spokesperson, pitch and any additional assets that would be valuable to your pitch strategy.
- Create a strategy that is no longer than 2 pages in length. You will also be asked to present your strategy and pitch to the class (2 – 3 minutes).

Assignment #4 (100 points)

Crisis Communications

- Identify a recent crisis communications situation (individual, brand or company);
- Describe the situation and their response;
- Describe whether you deemed their response effective;
- Finally, if you were that person or worked for that brand/company, what actions would you have recommended?
- You will be asked to present your findings & recommendations to the class and submit a written response (3 pages in length; 2 – 3 minute presentation).

Final Assignment (400 points)

Media Relations Strategy

- In a team of 4 – 5 students, you will work together to develop a media relations strategy.
- The strategy should include the following:
 - o Situation Analysis
 - o Audit (Relevant Research)
 - o Target Audiences
 - o Objectives/Goals
 - o Strategy Roadmap
 - o Key Messages
 - o Communications Strategies + Tactics
 - Media Outreach
 - Special Event/PR Stunt
 - o Timeline
 - o Resources (should include estimated budget)
 - o Success Metrics
- Your plan should not exceed 10 pages in length and should be accompanied by a PPT presentation. Our last class will be dedicated to presentation of the final project plans; 15 – 20 minutes in length.

Class Participation – 150 Points

Participation in class discussions, including weekly news/hot topics is integral to your success in the class. Thoughtful questions and comments are welcomed, and your willingness to participate is greatly appreciated. Weekly hot topics are an opportunity for us all to discuss recent events, trends and case studies culled from the news. You are encouraged to bring events or issues to the attention of class for discussion. Your participation in these conversations will be reflected in your class participation grade.

Grading

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

Your course grade will be based on the following:

Assignment #1 – 50 Points

Assignment #2 – 50 Points

Assignment #3 – 50 Points

Assignment #4 – 100 Points

Assignment #5 – 400 Points

Class Participation – 150 Points

Total = 800 Points

Grading Metrics:

Students will have the opportunity to earn a total of 800 points this semester. Please reference the grading scale below:

Grading Scale:

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

The instructor will provide a warning by mid-semester to any student who appears to be on tract 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/>
- 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.

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

Syllabus Modification

The syllabus may change to accommodate discussion of emerging topics. Also, the schedules of guest speakers may require some shifting of the agenda. The instructors will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE/TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE	IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES
<p>Class 1 May 24, 2017</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introductions - Course Overview - Syllabus Review - Discussion of 1st assignment
<p>Class 2 May 31, 2017</p> <p>Today’s Evolving Media Landscape</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Topics (Relevant News Stories) - Discussion – Evolving media landscape, discussion of 24/7 media space, trends - Today’s reporter/their roles <p>Reading Due: RIP press releases, hello integration... and goodbye 'PR'? Welcome to the future of our industry, PR Week – October 2015 PR chiefs seek Twitter for breaking news, but traditional media 'more influential' – John Harrington, June 2015</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Kendra Kojcsich, Porter Novelli</p>
<p>Class 3 June 7, 2017</p> <p>Developing a Message Roadmap</p>	<p>Assignment # 1 Due</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Topics - Assignment #1 presentations (3 min. max) - Discussion – Effective key messages and importance of media training; identifying the “right” channels for reach <p>Reading Due: The story behind Caitlyn Jenner’s masterful press strategy – Josef Adalian, Vulture</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Robin McClain, Destination DC</p>

<p>Class 4 June 14, 2017</p> <p>Cultivating Relationships</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Topics - Discussion of Assignments #2 & #3 - Topics – Effective pitching methods, creating relationships with reporters, best ways for outreach <p>Guest Speaker: Markette Sheppard, Great Day Washington</p>
<p>Class 5 June 21, 2017</p> <p>Media Training</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Topics - Mock Media Training - Discussion – Media training techniques <p>Guest Speaker: Keith Blackman, Burson-Marsteller and Larry Shainman, Department of Transportation</p>
<p>Class 6 June 28, 2017</p> <p>Writing for Media</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Topics - Discussion – How to write an effective press release, developing social/digital content, additional writing strategies - Case Study – SXSW and Washington, DC’s activation <p>Guest Speaker: Michael Akin & Zachary Abaie, LINK Strategic Partners</p>
<p>Class 7 July 5, 2017</p> <p>Role of Social/Digital Media</p>	<p>Assignment #2 Due</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Topics - Discussion – Social media trends and best practices, developing social media content & defining metrics <p>Guest Speaker: Anthony LaFauce, Vice President Digital Communications, Porter Novelli</p>
<p>Class 8 July 12, 2017</p> <p>Managing Crisis Communications</p>	<p>Assignment #3 Due</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Topics - Assignment #3 presentations - Discussion – Identifying the right spokespeople, celebrity engagement - Discussion – Crisis communications case studies; effective ways/responses to mitigating crisis scenarios; proactive vs. reactive/do’s & don’t’s

		Guest Speaker: Rebecca Cooper, reporter, Washington Business Journal
Class 9 July 19, 2017 Ethics of Media Relations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Topics - Discussion – Ethics (reporters/comms teams), embargos, exclusives & relationships - Final Project Review Guest Speaker: BrandLink DC – Jayne Sandman & Sofia Royce
Class 10 July 26, 2017 Crisis Communications		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Topics - Discussion – Crisis Communications - Final Project Review Guest Speaker: Brian Frederick, ALS
Class 11 August 2, 2017 Media Relations – Government Perspective, Non-Profit Ideas & Coalition Building	Assignment #4 Due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Topics - Discussion – In-house communications perspectives/roles – from government to advocacy/non-profit - Case Study – Coalition building/is it still successful? - Assignment # 4 presentations Guest Speaker: Executive Office of the Mayor – Washington, DC – Joaquin McPeck
Class 12 August 9, 2017 PR Stunts + Special Events Career Landscape/Open Discussion		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot Topics - Discussion –Strategy in developing special events, identifying the right guests - In review – past PR stunts/effectiveness - Discussion of diverse communication career landscape, trends & outlooks - Mock interviews TBD - Final project check-in Guest Speaker: Washington Wizards
Class 13 August 16, 2017	Final Project Due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final project presentations - Closing remarks

Final Project		

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