



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
School of Continuing Studies
Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Capstone (MPPR-950)

Dates: 5/22/2017 - 8/19/2017

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: Cylor Spaulding

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

Downloadable Syllabus

The complete syllabus is available in PDF (for download). If you do not have the free Adobe Reader to view the PDF file, please download at [Adobe Reader](#).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Capstone is the final academic opportunity to assess and apply your strategic communications skills and knowledge. The course focuses on the comprehensive skills you have built throughout your time in MPS PR/CC by evaluating your writing, strategic thinking, creativity, and ethical framework in a real-time context.

During your final challenge, you will apply your strategic communications skills to an existing communications challenge identified by a company/organization of your choosing. Working individually, you will respond to a communication problem or opportunity for your client. At the close of the semester, you will be expected to write and present a well-researched, insightful, creative plan that illuminates how your strategic considerations will lead to positive outcomes for your client. Your plan will tell the story of the original research, implementation plan, timelines and budget necessary to meet the client's communication goal.

Although the primary focus for the semester is on creating a comprehensive plan, there will be in-class assignments to review and diagnose your mastery of specific concepts in strategic communications planning and responsible communication.

The capstone experience is intended to ensure you have the strategic skills and confidence necessary to be a leader in responsible communication, and provide a unique networking and career-enhancing opportunity. In addition to the minimum, cumulative grade point average of 3.0 required for graduation from the MPS PR/CC program, you must receive a minimum grade of a B in the capstone course to graduate. Students with a 3.0 cumulative GPA, who receive a final grade of a B- or below may receive one opportunity to retake the course, if approved by the associate dean.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Effectively apply strategic and creative communications skills to complex communications and public relations challenges.
2. Design, compose, and present a fully integrated communications plan, representative of industry best practices, trends and tools.
3. Refine and demonstrate a commitment to their personal code of ethics through assignments, including their communications plan
4. Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of the professional characteristics exhibited by innovators in the field, including commitment to ongoing professional development, situation-appropriate communication skills, intellectual curiosity, leadership, and engagement in the industry
5. Recall and employ core PRCC concepts and skills, to be used toward their comprehensive communications plan.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following reading is available for purchase at the Georgetown Bookstore and online vendors. You are likely already familiar with this resource from other PRCC courses you have taken. We strongly suggest reviewing this resource before the course begins.

1. Wilson, L., & Ogden, J. (2014). Strategic communications planning for effective public relations and marketing (6th ed.). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company. ISBN-13: 978-1465249159 or ISBN-10: 146524915X \$100.00.

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

In this course we will use VoiceThread, PollEverywhere, and TurnItIn.

- 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. Instruction for this tool is available for download.
- TurnItIn is a writing assessment tool that is used to detect plagiarism and allows teachers to provide assignment feedback to students. Instruction for this tool is available for download.
- PollEverywhere is a polling tool that is used to collect and display results from you and your classmates. If you have problems with PollEverywhere during this course, consult your instructor for guidance.

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. All modules will be open to students from the start of the course to allow them to review materials as needed. Students should pay close attention to the dates included throughout to ensure that no assignment due dates or synchronous sessions are missed.

Student Expectations

This course consists of 11 modules. In this course, content listed under the “Assignments” section in this syllabus is required. Other content and activities provided are supplementary materials which you may use to review concepts you have become familiar with throughout your time in PRCC. While these activities are not mandatory, they are strongly recommended.

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.

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

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:

Grades for late assignments will automatically be reduced by 5% per day of the maximum points (in addition to points reduced in the normal grading process). Assignments that are late by more than 7 days will receive no credit.

As stated in the Student Handbook, you must notify the instructor and obtain approval if you are unable to complete any assignment by the published submission deadline. Exceptions will only be made for uncontrollable emergencies (e.g. medical or family emergencies) and you should be able to provide proof of these circumstances if asked.

Assignments (355 total)

Quick-fire Challenge: 25 points

Due: Module 1

Students will respond to a written scenario to demonstrate their mastery of the elements of strategic communications planning. You will be graded on your insights, the plausibility of your recommendations, concise writing, strategic thinking, and creativity.

Research Plan: 25 Points

Due: Module 4

You will submit a plan outlining and discussing the primary research you will be conducting for your Final Plan. Your research plan should clearly outline what type of research you are planning on conducting and why and provide a timeline for conducting it.

Ethical response paper: 30 points

Due: Module 6

You will be presented with a situation depicting an ethical dilemma typical in communications. You will apply the personal code of ethics you developed earlier in the program in the Ethics course, by writing your response to, reflection on, and examination of the situation.

Communications Plan Outline: 70 points

Due: Module 8

You will submit an outline of your approach to your client's communications challenge. Your plan will convey information ranging from the research and background of your plan through to the messaging only. The document should outline your insightful considerations and convey the strength and cohesion of the recommendations you plan to make in your final plan.

Final Plan: 150 points

Due: Module 11

You will use the feedback from your outline to complete a 30-35 page written plan that is comprehensive, client-ready, and representative of current trends and tools of the industry. The plan should demonstrate your professional and academic knowledge and experience in a proposal that balances strategy and creativity.

Final Pitch: 40 points

Due: Module 11

You will give a 5-minute pitch of your final plan to your colleagues and a panel of the professor and advisors via VoiceThread.

Class Participation: 15 points

Due: All Modules

You are required to attend your individual meetings and you must send tangible (written or electronic) progress to discuss related to your plan 48 hours in advance of your meeting. You will begin the semester with full credit for participation. Your Capstone Advisor will only make deductions if you do not attend your individual meetings and do not send progress. You are required to complete all knowledge-check quizzes for participation points as well.

Citation Style

This course uses APA style for all references and citations writing and research assignments. Resources for this citation style are available through:

[Georgetown Library Citation Style Guide](#)

[APA 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;) 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

- Technical support for VoiceThread is [available](#)
- Technical support for TurnItIn is [available](#)
- If you encounter problems with PollEverywhere, consult 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

- [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#)
- 202-687-6985

- [Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action \(IDEAA\)](#)
- (202) 687-4798

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.

- Technical support for VoiceThread is [available](#)
- Technical support for TurnItIn is [available](#)

COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

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

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.

Questions Forum

In online courses, everyone will likely have many questions about things that relate to the course, such as clarification about assignments and course materials. Please post these in the General Questions Open Forum], which you can access from the landing page. This is an open forum, and you are encouraged to give answers and help each other.

Turnaround and Feedback

If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a response within 2 business days. Please allow up to 2 weeks for assignment submission feedback.