MPPR-730: Corporate Communications
Georgetown University: MPS-Public Relations and Corporate Communications
Mondays 5:20pm – 7:50pm | Spring 2015

Instructor: Shelva Clemons, MA
Office Hours: By appointment

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


***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 and make arrangements to make up any missed assignments.

- **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 partnered 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). The topic selected for the homework presentation WILL NOT require a written homework assignment submitted for grading.

Crisis Communication Review Write-up & Presentation (90 points total): Students will have an option of a current or past crisis situation that significantly impacted the well-being or livelihood of a company or organization. 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 and recommendations on improving 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.

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 (250 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, 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. 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. There are NO exceptions to this rule.
Grading
Your course grade will be based on the following:

| Attendance & Participation:       | 20 |
| Partner Evaluation               | 50 |
| Homework Assignments (2):        | 60 |
| Homework Presentation            | 30 |
| Crisis Communication Review      | 60 |
| Write-up (Partner)               |    |
| Crisis Communication Review      | 30 |
| Presentation (Partner)           |    |
| Required Reading In-class        | 50 |
| Assignment (Group)               |    |
| Final Plan: Outline (Partner)    | 25 |
| Final Plan: Presentation (Partner)| 75 |
| Final Plan: Write-Up (Partner)   | 1  |
| Total                            | 150|
|                                  | 550|

**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:**
- A      100 - 93
- A-     92 - 90
- B+     89 - 88
- B      87 - 83
- B-     82 - 80
- C      79 - 70
- F      69 and below

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/](http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/)

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

- Counseling and Psychiatric Services  
  202-687-6985  
  [http://caps.georgetown.edu/](http://caps.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; 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 journalism, 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.

***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.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
<th>In-Class Discussion and Activities</th>
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| Week 1:      | **Readings:**  
January 7   | *Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (pgs. 1-62)  
Leadership Messaging Case Study: *Who Goes, Who Stays?*  
*Leadership Messaging Case Study: Who Goes, Who Stays?*  
*Class introductions*  
*Course overview & expectations*  
*Syllabus review*  
*Partner selections*  
*Crisis Communication company selection*  
*Lecture:*  
**“What is Corporate Communications?”**  
- Corporate communications defined  
- Components of corporate communications  
- How corporations typically utilize communications  
- Elements of a strong communications plan  
- The role of a corporate communicator  
*Class introductions*  
*Course overview & expectations*  
*Syllabus review*  
*Partner selections*  
*Crisis Communication company selection*  
*Lecture:*  
**“What is Corporate Communications?”**  
- Corporate communications defined  
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- How corporations typically utilize communications  
- Elements of a strong communications plan  
- The role of a corporate communicator  |
| Week 2:      | **Readings:**  
January 12  | *Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (pgs. 63-97)  
Leadership Messaging Case Study: *Who Goes, Who Stays?*  
*Leadership Messaging Case Study: Who Goes, Who Stays?*  
*Lecture:*  
**Leadership Messaging**  
**“How what the leader says really makes a difference”**  
- Review of current leaders’ approach to messaging  
- Discussion of various strategies and tactics used  
*Crisis Communications & Leadership Messaging*  
- *Scandal: Crash & Burn*  
*Leadership Messaging Case Study: Who Goes, Who Stays?*  
*Lecture:*  
**Leadership Messaging**  
**“How what the leader says really makes a difference”**  
- Review of current leaders’ approach to messaging  
- Discussion of various strategies and tactics used  |
| January 19   | **Readings:**  
              | *Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (pgs. 98-129)  
*Lecture:*  
**“What is Corporate Communications?”**  
- Corporate communications defined  
- Components of corporate communications  
- How corporations typically utilize communications  
- Elements of a strong communications plan  
- The role of a corporate communicator  |
| Week 3:      | **Readings:**  
January 26   | *Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (pgs. 130-164)  
*Turn-in Assignments:*  
IMC Strategies (HW Assignment or Presentation)  
*Lecture:*  
**“How does IMC mix with Corporate Communications?”**  
- How words shape perception  
- What integrated communications should mean to companies  
*Turn-in Assignments:*  
IMC Strategies (HW Assignment or Presentation)  
*Lecture:*  
**“How does IMC mix with Corporate Communications?”**  
- How words shape perception  
- What integrated communications should mean to companies  |
| Week 4: February 2 | **Readings:**  
*Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (pgs. 165-203)  
Public Affairs Case Study:  
*The Leader As Lobbyist* | **IMC Strategies** (HW Assignment or Presentation) | **Homework Presentations:**  
assigned students present |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week 5: February 9 | **Readings:**  
*Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (pgs. 204-237)  
Public Affairs Case Study:  
*The Leader As Lobbyist* | | **Lecture:**  
**Public Affairs**  
*“Preparing for The Hill.”*  
- Definition and purpose of public affairs activities  
- The role of public affairs and legislation within Corporate Communications  
- Connecting with Law & Regulation departments internally  
**Internal Communications**  
*“What should we say to employees?”*  
- Defining internal communications  
- Why internal communications is critical  
- The components of internal communications  
- Communications’ role in corporate culture & change |
| February 16 | **Readings:**  
*Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (pgs. 238-252) |  | **NO CLASS!!!!!** |
| Week 6: February 23 | **Readings:**  
*Made To Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (pgs. 253-285)  
**Turn-in Assignments:**  
Corporate Social Media Strategies (HW Assignment or Presentation) | **Lecture:**  
**External Communications**  
*“Death to Press Releases”*  
&  
*“Social Media – Has it taken over?”*  
- What is a press release & who reads them  
- Outreach and types of press releases  
- Corporate use of social media |
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Corporate Social Media Strategies (HW Assignment or Presentation)</th>
<th>Homework Presentations</th>
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<td>7: March 2</td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong> <em>Switch, How to Change Things When Change Is Hard</em> (pgs. 1-48)</td>
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<td>assigned students present</td>
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<td>9: March 9</td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong> <em>Switch, How to Change Things When Change Is Hard</em> (pgs. 49-100)</td>
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<td>NO CLASS!!!!</td>
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<td>8: March 16</td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong> <em>Switch, How to Change Things When Change Is Hard</em> (pgs. 101-148)</td>
<td><strong>Turn-in Assignments:</strong> CSR Strategies (HW Assignment or Presentation)</td>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> Corporate Social Responsibility “What can CSR really do for a company?” - The importance of CSR - The impact of CSR to a communication strategy - Strategies for communicating CSR initiatives to the public - Reporting of CSR tactics</td>
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<td>9: March 23</td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong> <em>Switch, How to Change Things When Change Is Hard</em> (pgs. 149-224)</td>
<td><strong>CSR Strategies (HW Assignment or Presentation)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Homework Presentations:</strong> assigned students present</td>
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| 10: March 30 | **Readings:** *Switch, How to Change Things When Change Is Hard* |  | **Lecture:** Change Management “How do we survive change – the corporate change
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<th>Week 11: April 13</th>
<th>Readings: Preparation for Required Reading In-class Assignment</th>
<th>Turn-in Assignments: Crisis Communication Company Presentation &amp; Paper</th>
<th>Crisis Communication Company Presentations</th>
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<td>Week 12: April 20</td>
<td>Readings: Preparation for Required Reading In-class Assignment</td>
<td>Turn-in Assignments: Required Reading In-class Assignment</td>
<td>Guest Speaker: TBD</td>
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<td>Week 13: April 27</td>
<td>Turn-in Assignments: Required Reading In-class Assignment</td>
<td>Required Reading In-class Assignment</td>
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<td>Week 14: May 4</td>
<td>Turn-in Assignments: Final Plan &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>Final Plan Presentations (&amp; Papers due)</td>
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