Georgetown University, MPS PR/CC | Summer 2015

MPPR-505-41: Elements of Communications Planning

Class Meets: Wednesdays, 6pm to 9:20pm
Class Location: 640 Mass Ave Washington, DC 20001 | Room: C218

Professor: Prof. Liz Bradley
Office Hours: Arranged by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Mastering communications planning is similar to laying the foundation for your dream home – it requires an investment but if completed with care, all the other pieces easily fall in to place. In this course, you will learn the Georgetown model for step-by-step communications planning – a building block for success in MPS PR/CC and in your career. The model generates proven results by illuminating the research, creative discovery, and strategies you will consider on your road to becoming a successful communications leader. Every element of the framework builds on the last; starting with research and insight, moving through situational analysis, goals, objectives, strategies, tactics and evaluation. You will learn how to identify key publics, create targeted messaging, build budgets, and convey timelines. The course focuses on each of the elements in-depth and provides opportunities for practice and ultimately mastery.

At the end of the course, you will understand the planning model as a framework for thinking about strategic communication. You will also be able to apply your reasoning skills to figure out a range of communications challenges and effectively explain your decision making to peers, superiors and clients. This course will prepare you to respond confidently and creatively to the rigors of your capstone experience, coursework, and professional environments.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Each student can expect to cultivate their ability to envision and write insightful communications plans. To reach this goal you will:
1. Understand and internalize the principles of the Georgetown planning model/framework
2. Customize and confidently apply elements of the framework to various communications challenges
3. Develop analytical reasoning skills in order to assess and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of a proposed plan
4. Explain, outline and write strategic communications plans, one of which will be portfolio-ready

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY
This course is designed to help you answer the question: How can I become an effective and insightful communications strategist and planner? You will be asked to consider your decision making processes and think critically about how the Georgetown model/framework will shape and be shaped by your personal strengths and interests. Thus, the course is interactive and requires your commitment to becoming an effective strategist. Throughout the semester, we will all model fair assessment, respect, discourse, encouragement, self-reflection, listening, and critical learning skills.

Each week, you will build on your knowledge by grappling with a new topic, discussing the readings, and applying what you’ve learned/developed to practical activities and assignments. At the start of each class, weekly learning objectives will be provided to help you gauge your progress in real time. We will also have a
number of formal and informal assessments to help us identify any areas for further discussion and practice.

Insightful communications planning is a skill you will develop over the span of your career; your growth will not end at the close of this course. Think of this class and the Georgetown framework as your foundation for becoming a confident and critical planner. The model/framework presented here is a proven approach for considering key questions and building communications solutions. At the close of this course you will be confident in your strategic planning skill and have a framework to effectively respond to communications challenges with professionalism and creativity.

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.

If you encounter any special circumstances at any point in the semester, it is imperative that you discuss them with me immediately. My contact information and office hours are located at the beginning of this syllabus. My door is always open – if you are experiencing an academic difficulty or life circumstance please let me know early in the challenge so we can identify a solution.

WORK SUBMITTED
All typed text should be no bigger than 12-point font, double-spaced and referenced following AP style guidelines. Please include your name, the assignment title, page numbers and the date on all written submissions. Please bring a hard copy of your assignment to class the night it is due, unless instructed otherwise. In all that you do, remember that grammar, spelling and style are important to your ability to be a strategic and effective communicator. Please refer to the recommended reading section for additional resources. We will discuss grading criteria for all major assignments prior to the assignment due date so we have a common understanding of expectations.

Work is due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Late work will be dropped one grade for each day it is late (for example, an A will shift to a B). If you are not present for an in class activity, no makeup will be given, except in cases of documented emergencies. Quizzes can be made-up but only at the beginning of the next immediate class. In genera, if you have extenuating circumstances or need special accommodations, please see me before the due date, and I will do my best to accommodate you.

COURSE POLICIES
• Please silence your cell phones and do not check websites related to other topics while in class.
• I will not offer incomplete grades, except in the most exceptional, unforeseeable circumstances. Job requirements do not qualify.
• You are responsible for classroom information and instructions, whether you are present in class or not. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain class notes. All class PowerPoint slides will be posted in Blackboard.
• Please bring your full range of life experience to the content of this course. We will use popular culture, current news, business literature, persuasion and social influence theory, social media, and more, to bring the Georgetown framework to life. As you will see, there is a class participation component to your grade.
• I encourage you to ask questions during class. Chances are if you’re wondering about something, at least one of your 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.

**REQUIRED READINGS**
The resources for this course include articles, book excerpts, case studies, multimedia, RFPs and two key books. The readings are chosen to give you a solid foundation for understanding and internalizing the Georgetown planning framework and opportunities to apply the model to real world examples.

ISBN: 9780757548871 | $55.92


All articles, book excerpts, cases, and multimedia listed on the course schedule 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.

**Recommended Readings**


**LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR MPPR-505**
http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/researchcourseguides
http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/prcc

**ASSIGNMENTS**
You are expected to submit 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 assignments 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 2 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.

**Weekly Reading**
Be prepared to discuss the assigned reading in class. Arrive prepared with at least two questions or insights that arose while you were reading. These questions could be specific to the reading or current topic, or could relate to the overarching learning objectives of the course. Remember to apply the strategic framework we are learning in class to evaluate and respond to your readings.

**Class Discussion – 35 points**
Success in this class is dependent on active participation in discussion. Our goal is not to memorize and conform strictly to the Georgetown planning model, rather we want to understand the framework so that it guides our critical thinking and creative, strategic planning. You will commit to your own learning experience and teach your colleagues through conversation. Everyone in the course will be graded each time you are present in class and contribute to the class discussion; an average of class participation scores
for each class will determine your final class participation grade. I expect you to be considerate and respectful of others’ ideas, words and efforts. I especially value contributions to our discussions that:

- Show clear understanding of the readings and subject at hand
- Apply a framework or criteria for analyzing a topic
- Help make connections among ideas, readings, or experiences we discuss

Each week, students will be asked to apply the previous week’s lesson to a current event in the news or a recent campaign. Every student will choose at least one date during the semester to give a summary of an event/issue/campaign and discuss its relevance to the previous week’s lesson. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure students understand important concepts, discuss real-time examples of ideas, and to provide a forum for raising additional questions. This activity will help you in communicating your strategic plans in the future, as you will need to explain complex information in a compressed timeline often throughout your career.

**Quizzes (4 quizzes) – 20 points**
You will have four in-class quizzes on key topics in the schedule throughout the semester. These will be formatted to assess your ability to: (1) define concepts; (2) differentiate between terms; (3) apply/combine elements; (4) explain your decision making process; and (5) evaluate use of the planning model. The quizzes will allow us to identify areas for further discussion and strengthen your analytical skills. You will be permitted to make-up missed quizzes the following week if you will not be able to attend class.

**Assignments (4 assignments) – 40 points**
This course is designed to offer opportunities to practice the planning model in different contexts. The assignments will allow you to apply the planning elements to your final project, while in class activities will allow you to apply what you’re learning to different organizations and business settings. After completing a reading, lecture, and in-class activity related to a planning element, you will complete an assignment designed to crystallize the concept through practical application. It is essential that you complete your reading and assignments, in order to fully engage in class discussions. You will use your assignments as a basis for identifying creative ideas with your peers and brainstorming for your final plan.

**Plan Outline – 50 points**
In preparation for the final plan, students will complete a 6 to 8 page communications plan outline. You will develop the outline based on the RFP you select at the beginning of the semester. You will be provided with a grading rubric and specific questions to direct you in completing this assignment. In this assignment you will use short paragraphs and bulleted lists to convey your insights, considerations and strategic thinking about your final plan. You will also submit at least 10 of your 25 references you will use in the final plan.

**Peer Review (best 2 out of 3 peer review grades) – 20 points**
Your course schedule includes checkpoints throughout the semester where you will be expected to bring in elements of your final plan for peer discussion and review. Your final plan grade will include your highest 2 of out of 3 peer grades, which reflect your preparedness for in-class peer review and discussion. This format is intended to help you develop your final plan over the course of the entire semester with group input and sufficient feedback during the process.

**Final Plan – 110 points**
Your final assignment will be to write a 15-30 (max) page, portfolio-ready strategic communications plan using the framework you learned throughout the semester. You will receive detailed grading criteria prior to the assignment due date, so you know exactly what to include and how each element will be graded. **The plans must be based on the RFP you select at the beginning of the semester, and be written based on the plan outline assignment you complete earlier in the semester.**
## Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Discussion</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>A: 259 – 275 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A-: 248 – 258 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>B+: 242 – 247 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>B: 231 – 241 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>B-: 220 – 230 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Plan</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>C: 193 – 219 points</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>275</td>
<td>F: 192 points and below</td>
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## 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/)

- **Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action (IDEAA)**
  [https://ideaa.georgetown.edu/](https://ideaa.georgetown.edu/)
  (202) 687-4798

## 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://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm](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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE/TOPIC</th>
<th>READING DUE</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT DUE</th>
<th>IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1 May 20, 2015</td>
<td>Review Syllabus posted on Blackboard</td>
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<td>Discussion: Class introductions, background survey, Blackboard tutorial and discussion about the value of planning in strategic communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Overview &amp; Introduction to Planning Elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 2 May 27, 2015</td>
<td>Wilson &amp; Ogden pp. 36 – 47 You should have already ordered your texts</td>
<td>Benchmark: Choose your RFP and begin your research</td>
<td>Discussion: Methods for primary and secondary research</td>
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<td>Research Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 3 June 3, 2015</td>
<td>Wilson &amp; Ogden pp. 50 – 68 See e-reading on Blackboard: *Monahan: Do-it-yourself Lobotomy *Segal: Perfect Brainstorm</td>
<td>Assignment 1: Identify secondary research sources (see post in Blackboard for details)</td>
<td>Presenters: TBD Quiz 1: Research methods Discussion: The big idea vs. insight and considerations</td>
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<td>Research as a Planning Tool</td>
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<td>Class 4 June 10, 2015</td>
<td>Wilson &amp; Ogden pp. 72 – 81, 84 – 94 Reis and Trout 143 – 152 and 183 - 191</td>
<td>Assignment 2: Read the case study and identify 3 key insights for class discussion Benchmark: Begin drafting goal, objectives and key publics for final plan</td>
<td>Presenters: TBD Quiz 2: Insight/research as a planning tool Discussion: Identifying sound goals; also, finding your target audiences and hitting the bull’s eye</td>
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<tr>
<td>DATE/TOPIC</td>
<td>READING DUE</td>
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| Class 5  
       June 17, 2015  
   **Introduction to Branding, Framing & Message Design** | Reis & Trout pp. 1-84, 193-210  
See e-reading on Blackboard:  
*Kawasaki: Branding  
*Kawasaki: Frame | Benchmark: Continue research on Key Publics  
Assignment 3: Bring in an outline of your background, goal and objectives to class | Presenters: TBD  
Discussion: Avoiding brand and message dissonance |
| Class 6  
       June 24, 2015  
   **Messaging** | See e-reading on Blackboard:  
*Duncan: Principles  
*Leet: Message Matters | Assignment 4: Bring in key publics, brand positioning, and framing cues to class | Presenters: TBD  
Discussion: Crafting message platforms  
Quiz 3: Goal, objectives and key publics  
Peer review 2: Discuss Assignment 4 |
| Class 7  
       July 1, 2015  
   **Strategies, Tactics** | Wilson & Ogden pp. 102 – 127  
See e-reading on Blackboard:  
*Scott: Baby Dinosaur  
*I’m w/ Suzy | Plan Outline Due in Class:  
See syllabus and grading criteria (*through messaging stage*) | Presenters: TBD  
Discussion: Brainstorming and applying insight to strategies and tactics |
| Class 8  
       July 8, 2015  
   **Calendars, Budgeting, Implementation** | Wilson & Ogden pp. 136 – 144, 146 – 152 | Benchmark: You should be working on strategies and tactics by this point | Presenters: TBD  
Discussion: Being on time and on budget |
| Class 9  
       July 15, 2015  
   **Measurement & Evaluation** | Wilson & Ogden pp. 154 – 160 | Benchmark: You should be working on measurement, evaluation, and bringing your plan to life with | Presenters: TBD  
Quiz 4: Strategies and tactics  
Discussion: The importance of measurement and showing impact in communications |
| Class 10  
       July 22, 2015  
   **Creative Materials** | Benchmark: You should be working on measurement, evaluation, and bringing your plan to life with | Presenters: TBD  
Discussion: Bringing your plan to life |
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<th>ASSIGNMENT DUE</th>
<th>IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>creative materials</td>
<td>with visuals and creative materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 29, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Executive Summaries / Presentation Tips</strong></td>
<td>Wilson &amp; Ogden pp. 163 – 169</td>
<td>Due in Class: Bring your draft final plan to class for peer discussion (drafts will <strong>not</strong> be collected or graded).</td>
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<td>See e-reading on Blackboard: *Kawasaki: Executive Summary</td>
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<td>Presenters: TBD</td>
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<td><strong>Discussion:</strong> Best practices in writing and presentations; In-class writing workshop/Peer Review #3.</td>
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<td>Class 12</td>
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<td>Final Plan Due in Class: See syllabus and grading criteria for details. Bring hard copies to class and email digital files by 6pm.</td>
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<td>August 5, 2015</td>
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<td><strong>Discussion:</strong> Strengths and pitfalls of the framework and marketing yourself!</td>
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<td><strong>Share Your Plans / Career Planning</strong></td>
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