Georgetown University, MPS PR/CC | Summer 2015
MPPR-735-40: Content Strategy & Creation

Class Meets: Thursdays May 28-August 6, 6-9:20pm
Class Location: 640 Mass Ave Washington, DC 20001 | Room: C221

Professors: Amy Brown & Madeline Sanchez
Office Hours: No office hours. However, we are both available by email or phone and will do our best to get back to you within 48 hours. We are also happy to meet by appointment outside of class.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is intended to introduce students to the practice of content marketing. By the end of the course, students will have the knowledge and skills to build an integrated content strategy, structure a content studio, and design, publish and optimize great content.

Building on strategic principles, students will be able to put fundamentals into practice such as:

- Understanding how content is built on brand purpose
- Understanding brand voice and brand storytelling
- Content planning rooted in consumer insights: Identifying what stories a brand should be telling to specific audiences
- Connecting content to business goals

Functionally, students will gain an understanding of the following topics/areas:

- Research tools to support content planning
- Different models of content studios and newsrooms
- The creative process and executing against a content plan
- Working in cross-functional teams
- Working in real time: content that keeps up with the speed of the industry
- Paid media and the role of owned, earned and sponsored content
- Measuring, optimizing and reporting on performance metrics

Weekly performance will be based on demonstrating a grasp of concepts taught in the classroom and assigned via readings, and participation via group activities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. Understand and be able to demonstrate the different models and frameworks for content strategy and planning.
2. Demonstrate the ability to identify audience insights, the brand purpose and objectives, and the strategic content opportunities where those two areas intersect.
3. Proficiency in measuring content and how it relates to campaign and business objectives.
4. Ability to concept, plan and produce integrated content campaigns across multiple channels and platforms.
5. Understanding of content production models and basic levels of content production.
STRUCTURE
You will be introduced to fundamental topics in Content Strategy and Creation in each class. To enhance your learning, you will complete out-of-class assignments, read and discuss business cases, do in-class presentations, and participate in team projects. In addition, we will have several presentations from guest lecturers who are currently active in the Content space.
While the course includes some lectures, it is planned to be highly interactive. Discussing when and how the concepts and models apply play a large role in the learning process, so we encourage and expect significant classroom discussion, which will be a significant part (30%) of your overall grade.

ATTENDANCE
In-class discussion and practice are essential to mastering the content of this course particularly given the studio format. 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 both of us via email prior to the start of class.
You should tailor your summer schedule to ensure you attend every class but if you aware of any classes you may miss due to pre-planned activities please notify us on the first day of class so we can plan for make up assignments.
Discussing when and how the concepts and models apply play a large role in the learning process, so we encourage and expect significant classroom discussion, which will be a significant part (30%) of your overall grade.
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
• All work should be submitted in a professional manner in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, or Excel unless specified otherwise. Given the creative nature of the course we are always welcome to new formats for displaying and presenting work but please clear this with us before you begin work.
• We will not accept late work.

COURSE POLICIES
• Please turn your phones off before class starts. We will have a 10-minute break during class to include a media check. We will also on occasion, have clients and guest speakers who will appreciate your focus and attention while they are visiting us.
• We 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.
• 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.
• We 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 coursework.

Please purchase the following:

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.

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

ASSIGNMENTS
Course deliverables will include the following: 3 individual assignments and one semester-long group project. Additional details will be provided around each assignment.

Weekly Evaluation via Reading Review:
To ensure we are gaining the full benefit of the readings, lecture will include a brief discussion of the readings. This will be approximately 15 minutes and 4-5 students at random will be called on to discuss a highlight of their reading experience. It's best to stay up to speed with the readings – it will only help you navigate your projects and help you be smart and informed about the work you are doing.

**Individual Assignment #1: Content Strategy case study and presentation (15%).**
You will be responsible for selecting one brand that you think has a great content strategy, and creating and delivering a presentation that outlines why. Presentations should identify the brand purpose, the business objectives, the audience, and the content strategy and tactics designed to meet those goals. Presentations should last 15 minutes. 2-3 students will present each week, beginning on class #4.

**Individual Assignment #2: Creation of a “Persona” (10%)**
You will be responsible for developing a Persona representing the target audience of a brand selected from a list provided during Class #3 (Audience, Research & Tolls). Your Persona presentation should be max 5-6 slides in length and should illustrate who the target audience is using demographics, psychographics, channel usage, media affinities, social perceptions, etc. More information will be provided in Class #3.

**Group Assignment #1: Content platform assessment and presentation (15%).**
You will be split into teams of 2-3 and will be responsible for “briefing” the class on the state of a specific content platform (e.g., YouTube, LinkedIn, Medium, Snapchat, etc.). Presentations should last 10-15 minutes and should answer the following questions:

- What audiences using the platform?
- What opportunities exist for paid content distribution?
- What are the current limitations?
- What brands are leveraging the platform well, and what brands are not?
- What other observations do you have on the evolution of the platform?
Group Assignment #2: Semester-long Group Project (30%)  
A semester long team project in which students will be assigned a client and tasked to design and execute a content strategy.  
During Class #2 we will form teams at random. Throughout the course, each team will develop a content strategy and campaign-based content plan for an assigned client. At the end of the course your team will share your project with the class in an oral presentation.  
  o The team project is worth 30% of your grade and is a very important part of the course.  
  o You will have one graded check point before this is due at the end of the semester:  
    ▪ Stage 1: Designing the plan (outline)  
    ▪ Stage 2: “Pitching” the plan  
  o This should be a power point presentation plus any other creative mediums you feel are relevant to bring your content strategy to life (e.g., a Tumblr, ReadyMag, etc.)

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.

We 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, we 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.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assignment #1</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assignment #2</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Assignment #1</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Assignment #2: Group Project*</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>60 points</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>200 points</strong></td>
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*5% of the Group Project grade will be based on the Outline, 15% on the final deliverable.

**Grading Metrics:**  
Students will have the opportunity to earn a **total of 200 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/

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

- Counseling and Psychiatric Services
  202-687-6985
  http://caps.georgetown.edu/

- Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action (IDEAA)
  (202) 687-4798
  https://idea.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://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

Class #1: What is Content? - 5/28
Readings:
- When Content Ate Marketing: The State of Content Marketing in 2015, Contently Whitepaper
- Most Contagious: 2014, Contagious, 2014
Speaker: TBD
Activities: Introductions, Syllabus walk-through, Lecture and Reading Review
Assignment: Please bring in an outline of your background, goals and objectives to class.

Class #2: Brand Purpose and Passion - 6/4
Readings:
- Strategic Content: Beware of Diving in Head First, Campaign Asia, Nov 2014
- IBM Smarter Planet: A Belief, A purpose, a behavior, a purpose, and an advertising campaign, Edward Boches, 2013
- How AirBnB is Using Content Marketing to Stay on Top, Contently, December 2014
Speaker: TBD
Activities: Lecture and Reading Review
Assignment: None due. Individual Assignment #1 (Case Study) will be discussed. Group project will also be discussed and teams will be formed.

Class #3: Audience, Research & Tools - 6/11
Readings:
- Smile, You're Speaking Emoji, NYMag.com article, 2015
- Buzzfeed Unveils Pound to show how you really share content, FastCompany.com
- Toolkit
Speaker: TBD
Activities: Lecture and Reading Review, Group Project Work
Assignment: None due. Individual Assignment #2 (Personas) will be discussed.

Class #4: Content Models & Frameworks - 6/18
Readings:
- The Ultimate Guide to Content Marketing, NewsCred
- Additional - TBD
Speaker: TBD
**Activities:** Lecture and Reading Review, 2-3 students to share Individual Assignment #1, Group Project Work

**Assignment:** Individual Assignment #2 due. Group Assignment #1 (Platform briefings) will be discussed.

**Class #5: Planning a Channel Strategy - 6/25**

**Readings:**
- *Give Them Something to Talk About*, ThinkWithGoogle (Brian Solis on Engagement) (Attached)
- *Google’s Zero Moment of Truth Meets the Ultimate Moment of Truth*, Brian Solis
- *Cross-Device Trends Roundup*, eMarketer, December 2014

**Speaker:** TBD

**Activities:** Lecture and Reading Review, 2-3 students to share Individual Assignment #1, Group Project Work

**Assignment:** None due.

**Class #6: Platforms Overview, User Generated Content and Usage Rights - 7/2**

**Readings:**
- *More Mobile Connections than People*, We Are Social, December 2014
- *Always Connected: How Smart Phones and Social Keep us Connected*, IDC and Facebook, 2014

**Activities:** Short Lecture, Group Assignment #1 Presentations (Platform Briefings)

**Assignment:** None due.

**Class #7: Content Studio and Production Models - 7/9**

**Readings:**
- *Content, Community, Commerce: Inside Marriott’s Thriving 65-Person Content Studio*, Contently

**Speaker:** TBD

**Activities:** Lecture and Reading Review, 2-3 students to share Individual Assignment #1, Group Project Work

**Assignment:** None due.

**Class #8: Amplifications and Paid Media - 7/16**

**Readings:**
- *The Ultimate Guide to Content Distribution*, NewsCred
- *eMarketer Programmatic*

**Speaker:** TBD

**Activities:** Lecture and Reading Review, 2-3 students to share Individual Assignment #1, Group Project Work

**Assignment:** None due.

**Class #9: Listening & Measurement - 7/23**

**Readings:**
- Evaluating Creative, Facebook, 2014

**Speaker:** TBD

**Activities:** Lecture and Reading Review, 2-3 students to share Individual Assignment #1, Group Project Work

**Assignment:** None due.
Class #10: Group Presentations - 7/30

Class #11: Group Presentations - 8/6

Other Suggested Readings:
State of the Web: Mary Meeker / KPCB Internet Trends 2014 > 2015 version will come out soon