



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
School of Continuing Studies
Public Relations and Corporate Communications

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, MPS PR/CC | FALL 2015

MPPR-505-01: Elements of Communications Planning

Class Meets: Wednesdays, 5:20-7:50 p.m.

Class Location: 640 Mass Ave Washington, DC 20001 | Room C219

Instructor: Alyson Curtis, MS

E-mail: Alyson.Curtis@georgetown.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 4:30-5:20 p.m.

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 into 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 and tactics, and concluding with 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 his or her ability to envision and write insightful communications plans. To reach this goal you will:

1. Understand 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

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 on time, you are responsible for notifying the instructor 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 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.

COURSE POLICIES

- A successful class depends on the active engagement of all students. **Students should turn off all cell phones 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.
- You are responsible for classroom information and instructions, **whether you are present in class or not**. If you must miss a class (see "Attendance," above), it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain class notes from a colleague in class. All class PowerPoint slides will be posted on Blackboard.
- If you are not present for an in-class activity, no makeup will be given, except in cases of documented emergencies. In general, 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. **Missed quizzes can only be made up at the beginning of the following week's class.**
- I will not offer incomplete grades, except in the most exceptional, unforeseeable circumstances. Job requirements do not qualify.
- 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.

WORK SUBMITTED

Your assignments should meet Georgetown University's standard of excellence. Please follow these guidelines for all written assignments:

- Title your electronic files with *[Your Last Name][Assignment Name]*, as listed below.
- Put student name, assignment title and date in the top left of the first page.
- Use no smaller than 11-point and no larger than 12-point, plain font, no larger than 1" margins, and page numbering (for pages 2+).
- If necessary, reference your sources using documentary-note style with footnotes or endnotes. Chicago style is preferred (see <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocChicago.html> for reference). If you do not reference your work, you run the risk of plagiarizing.
- Consider the tone and formality of the assignments. Avoid contractions, slang, fragments or jargon.
- Proofread your work carefully. Do not undermine your good work by having it marred by errors in spelling, usage, grammar and formatting. Your work is graded on both the content and your ability to express yourself in a polished and professional manner. Use other classmates, the Recommended

Readings below, and/or the MPS Writing Resource Program (see “University Resources,” below) to ensure you are submitting your best work.

- **Late submissions will result in deductions of 5% per day.** That means if the assignment was due via email at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, anything submitted after 5 p.m. gets a 5% deduction from the grade it would have otherwise earned; anything received after 5 p.m. on Thursday gets a 10% deduction, etc. Email submissions count as received only when formatted and named in accordance with the requirements listed above and when attached in readable format.

REQUIRED READINGS

The resources for this course include articles, book excerpts, case studies, multimedia, RFPs and one textbook. The readings are chosen to give you a solid foundation for understanding the Georgetown planning framework and opportunities to apply the model to real-world examples.

- 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 | \$75.05

All articles, book excerpts, cases, and multimedia listed on the course schedule will be distributed in advance, via the class Blackboard site. 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

- Associated Press (2015). *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law 2015* (46th ed.). New York: Basic Books.
ISBN-13: 978-0465062942 ISBN-10: 0465062946 | \$14.21
- Strunk, Jr., W., & White, E. (1999). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
ISBN-10: 020530902X or ISBN-13: 978-0205309023 | \$5.20

ASSIGNMENTS

You are expected to submit work on time and of high quality. We will discuss each assignment in advance. All grading criteria, including page length and essential content, will be distributed and discussed in class. Please do not hesitate to ask for guidance if you do not understand the scope of an assignment.

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. If you have a specific question about an assignment, you may submit it one week or more before the assignment is due; I will be happy to review your specific question at that time and discuss it with you well in advance of the due date. Feedback on all final assignments will be provided in a timely manner, within two weeks after I receive the assignment.

Weekly Readings & Class Participation – 20 points

Ongoing

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.

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.

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; and/or help make connections among ideas, readings, or experiences we discuss.

Partner Presentation – 15 points

Presented in class (Multiple dates TBD)

Starting with the third class, each week a pair of students will be asked to apply the previous week's lesson to a current event in the news or a recent campaign. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure students understand important concepts and 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) – 20 points (5 points each)

Completed in class (Multiple dates per the Course Schedule)

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. If you miss a quiz, you will only be permitted to make it up at the start of class the following week.

Assignments (4) – 40 points (10 points each)

Due electronically by 5 p.m. on the date per the Course Schedule, with the following file names: [Your Last Name] Research; [Your Last Name] Case Study; [Your Last Name] Background; [Your Last Name] Brand

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 Plan, while in-class activities will allow you to apply what you are 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 readings 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. The Assignments must be written based on the Request for Proposal (RFP) you select at the beginning of the semester.

Mid-Term Outline – 50 points

Due electronically by 5 p.m. on the date per the Course Schedule, with the file name [Your Last Name] Outline

In preparation for the Final Plan, students will complete a 6- to 8-page communications plan outline from beginning through the Messages section. You will be provided with 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 the 25 references that you will use in the Final Plan. The Outline must be written based on the RFP you select at the beginning of the semester.

Peer Reviews – 20 points (10 points each; best 2 out of 3 peer review grades will be counted)

In-class per the Course Schedule

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 out of 3 Peer Review 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

Due electronically by 5 p.m. on the date per the Course Schedule, with the file name [Your Last Name] Final Plan

Your final assignment will be to write a 15- to 30-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 Final Plan must be written based on the RFP you select at the beginning of the semester and the plan outline assignment you complete earlier in the semester. Maximum length is 30 pages.

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:

Class Participation:	20 points
Partner Presentation:	15 points
Quizzes:	20 points
Assignments:	40 points
Mid-Term Outline:	50 points
Peer Reviews:	20 points
<u>Final Plan:</u>	<u>110 points</u>
Total:	275 points

Grading Scale:

Students will have the opportunity to earn a total of 275 points this semester. Please reference the

below grading scale:

A:	259 – 275 points
A-:	248 – 258 points
B+:	242 – 247 points
B:	231 – 241 points
B-:	220 – 230 points
C:	193 – 219 points
F:	192 points and below

The instructor 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:

- Library Resources for MPPR-505
<http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/researchcourseguides>
<http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/prcc>
- 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/disability>) 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 instructor will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE/TOPIC	READING DUE	ASSIGNMENT DUE	IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES
Class 1 Sept 9, 2015 Course Overview & Introduction to Planning Elements	Review Syllabus posted on Blackboard	Benchmark: You should have already ordered your textbook and logged into your Blackboard account	Discussion: Class introductions, background survey, Blackboard overview; value of planning in strategic communications
Class 2 Sept 16, 2015 Research Methods	Wilson & Ogden, pp. 45-60	Benchmark: Choose your RFP and begin your research	Discussion: Methods for primary and secondary research
Class 3 Sept 23, 2015 Insights & Research as Planning Tool; Creativity & Brainstorming	Wilson & Ogden, pp. 61-75, 91-109 <u>Blackboard Files:</u> *Monahan: Do-it-yourself Lobotomy *Segal: Perfect Brainstorm	Assignment 1: Research Methods	Presenters: X X Guest Speaker: Jessica Vanderhoff, SCS Librarian Quiz 1: Research Methods Discussion: The big idea vs. insight and considerations
Class 4 Sept 30, 2015 Goal & Objectives	Wilson & Ogden, pp. 77-89	Assignment 2: Case Study and Insights Benchmark: Begin drafting Goal & Objectives for Final Plan	Presenters: X X Quiz 2: Insights/Research as a Planning Tool Discussion: Identifying sound goals; finding your target audiences; hitting the bull's eye
Class 5 Oct 2, 2015 FRIDAY, 6:00 PM Key Publics; Practical Application	Wilson & Ogden, pp. 111-122	Assignment 3: Background, Goal and Objectives Benchmark: Begin drafting Key Publics for Final Plan	Presenters: X X Peer Review 1: Discuss Assignment 3 Discussion: Key learnings and best practices from planning and review sample plans in teams
Class 6 Oct 7, 2015	<u>Blackboard Files:</u> *Kawasaki: Branding	Benchmark: Continue research on Key Publics	Presenters: X

DATE/TOPIC	READING DUE	ASSIGNMENT DUE	IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES
Branding Positioning, Framing & Message Design	*Kawasaki: Frame		X Guest Speaker: TBD Quiz 3: Goal, Objectives and Key Publics Discussion: Avoiding brand and message dissonance
Class 7 Oct 14, 2015 Messaging	Wilson & Ogden, pp. 123-127 Blackboard Files: *Duncan: Principles *Leet: Message Matters	Assignment 4: Brand Positioning, Framing and Draft Messaging	Presenters: X X Peer review 2: Discuss Assignment 4 Discussion: Crafting messages
Class 8 Oct 21, 2015 Strategies & Tactics	Wilson & Ogden, pp. 128-151, 153-167 Blackboard Files: *Scott: Baby Dinosaur *I'm w/ Suzy		Presenters: X X Guest Speaker: Julia Burgos Discussion: Brainstorming and applying insight to strategies and tactics
Class 9 Oct 28, 2015 Calendar, Budgeting & Implementation	Wilson & Ogden, pp. 169-190	Assignment: Mid-Term Outline Benchmark: You should be working on strategies and tactics by this point	Presenters: X X Guest Speaker: TBD Discussion: Being on time and on budget
Class 10 Nov 4, 2015 Measurement & Evaluation	Wilson & Ogden, pp. 191-201		Presenters: X X Quiz 4: Strategies and Tactics Discussion: The importance of measurement and showing impact in communications
Class 11 Nov 7, 2015 SATURDAY, 9:30 AM		Benchmark: You should have a draft plan up to the Calendar and Budget sections completed	The class will meet in RFP groups each for 45 minutes via Zoom or Google Hangout to have dedicated time with Prof. Curtis.

DATE/TOPIC	READING DUE	ASSIGNMENT DUE	IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES
Final Plan Workshop			NFL 9:30-10:15 AM BUDWEISER 10:30-11:15 AM CVS 11:30 AM - 12:15 PM
Class 12 <i>Week of Nov 9, 2015</i> RECORDED LECTURE Writing the Plan & Executive Summaries	<u>Blackboard Files:</u> *Kawasaki: Executive Summary		<u>Discussion:</u> Best practices in writing and presentations; review more sample plans in teams
Class 13 Nov 11, 2015 Responding to RFPs and Creative Materials	Wilson & Ogden, pp. 203-213	<u>Assignment:</u> Draft Final Plan for discussion <u>Benchmark:</u> You should be working on measurement, evaluation, and bringing your plan to life with creative materials	<u>Presenters:</u> X X <u>Guest Speaker:</u> Ebonie Johnson <u>Peer review 3:</u> Discuss Draft Final Plan <u>Discussion:</u> Bringing your plan to life with visuals and creative materials
Class 14 Nov 18, 2015 Applied Planning		<u>Optional:</u> Submit questions re: Capstone for Prof. Curtis to answer in the Nov. 25 th recorded session.	<u>Presenters:</u> X X <u>Guest Speaker:</u> Joe Plenzner <u>Discussion:</u> Review “real life” strategic communications plans and new business pitches
Class 15 <i>Week of Nov 25, 2015</i> RECORDED LECTURE Pitching the Plan, Future Planning	Wilson & Ogden, pp. 215-222	<u>Assignment:</u> Final Plan	<u>Discussion:</u> Strengths and pitfalls of the framework and marketing yourself!