GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY: MPS-PRCC | FALL 2015

MPPR-505-04: Elements of Communications Planning

Class Meets: Thursdays, 5:20-7:50 p.m.
Class Location: 640 Mass Ave Washington, DC 20001 | Room C222

Instructor: Kim Martinez
Office Hours: 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
REQUIRED READING
The resources for this course include articles, book excerpts, case studies, multimedia, RFPs and one text book. 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.


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


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 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.

Punctual attendance is critical. If you have to miss a class – family emergency, medical emergency or other act of God – you must let the instructor know in advance and work out a proposal for making up whatever work you will miss. Exceptions will be made only in extraordinary circumstances.

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.
Course Policies

- 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.

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 one week before the assignment is due, I am 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 two 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.

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 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.

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 – 20 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

**Partner Presentations – 15 points**

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.

**Mid-Term Outline – 60 points**

In preparation for the final plan, students will complete a 6-8 page communications plan outline through the messages section. You will develop the draft 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.

**Final Plan – 120 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
Your course grade will be based on the following:

Class discussion: 20 points  A: 259 – 275 points
Partner Presentation: 15 points  A-: 248 – 258 points
Quizzes: 20 points  B+: 242 – 247 points
Assignments: 40 points  B: 231 – 241 points
Mid-Term Outline: 60 points  B-: 220 – 230 points
Final Plan: 120 points  C: 193 – 219 points
Total: 275 points  F: 192 points and below

Graduate course grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C and F. There are no grades of C+, C- or D.

The instructor will provide a warning by mid-semester to any student who appears to be on track for a poor final grade.

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

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://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 at (202) 687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; or http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu 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.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE/TOpic</th>
<th>READING DUE</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT DUE</th>
<th>IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</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>Sept 3, 2015</td>
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<td>Course Overview &amp; Introduction to Planning Elements</td>
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<td>Class 2</td>
<td>Wilson &amp; Ogden pp. 45-59</td>
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<td>Discussion: Methods for primary and secondary research</td>
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<td>Sept 10, 2015</td>
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<td>Research Methods</td>
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<td>Class 3</td>
<td>Wilson &amp; Ogden pp. 61-74, 91-109, See e-reading on Blackboard: *Monahan: Do-it-yourself Lobotomy *Segal: Perfect Brainstorm</td>
<td>Assignment 1: Research methods</td>
<td>Student Presenters: TBD, TBD, Guest Speaker: Jessica Vanderhoff, SCS Librarian, Quiz 1: Research methods, Discussion: The big idea vs. insight and considerations</td>
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<td>Sept 17, 2015</td>
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<td>Assignment 2: Case study and insights</td>
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<td>Research as a Planning Tool</td>
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<td>Benchmark: Choose your RFP and begin your research</td>
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<td>Class 4</td>
<td>Wilson &amp; Ogden pp. 77-88 and 111-121</td>
<td>Assignment 3: Bring in an outline of your background, goal and objectives to class</td>
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<td>Sept 24, 2015</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker: TBD, Student Presenters: TBD, TBD</td>
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<td>Goal, Objectives &amp; Key Publics</td>
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<td>Class 5</td>
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<td>Oct 1, 2015</td>
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<td>Practical Application &amp; Analysis</td>
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<td><strong>Class 6</strong>&lt;br&gt;Oct 8, 2015</td>
<td>Wilson &amp; Ogden pp. 123-127 See e-reading on Blackboard: *Kawasaki: Branding *Kawasaki: Frame</td>
<td>Benchmark: Continue research on Key Publics</td>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong>: Key learnings and best practices from planning and review sample plans in teams</td>
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<td><strong>Introduction to Branding, Framing &amp; Message Design</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Student Presenters</strong>: TBD TBD</td>
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| **Class 7**<br>Oct 15, 2015 | See e-reading on Blackboard: *Duncan: Principles *Leet: Message Matters | Assignment 4: Bring in brand positioning, framing cues and draft messaging to class | **Student Presenters**: TBD TBD  
**Discussion**: Avoiding brand and message dissonance |
| **Messaging** | | | |
| **Class 8**<br>Oct 22, 2015 | Wilson & Ogden pp. 128-150 See e-reading on Blackboard: *Scott: Baby Dinosaur | | **Student Presenters**: TBD TBD |
| **Strategies, Tactics** | | | **Guest Speaker**: TBD  
**Discussion**: Brainstorming and applying insight to strategies and tactics |
| **Class 9**<br>Oct 29, 2015 | Wilson & Ogden pp. 169-190 | Mid-Term Draft Due in Class: See syllabus and grading criteria Benchmark: You should be working on strategies and tactics by this point | **Student Presenters**: TBD TBD  
**Discussion**: Being on time and on budget |
| **Calendars, Budgeting, Implementation** | | | |
| **Class 10**<br>Nov 5, 2015 | Wilson & Ogden pp. 191-201 | | **Student Presenters**: TBD TBD  
**Quiz 4**: Strategies and tactics |
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<th>DATE/LOAD</th>
<th>READING DUE</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT DUE</th>
<th>IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class 11</td>
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<td>Benchmark: You should have a draft plan up to the Calendar and Budget sections completed</td>
<td>Discussion: The importance of measurement and showing impact in communications</td>
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<td>Nov 12, 2015</td>
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<td>Case Studies</td>
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<td>Thanksgiving Make-up Session</td>
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<td>Saturday, Nov 14</td>
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<td>Final Plan Workshop</td>
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<td>Class 12</td>
<td>See e-reading on Blackboard: *Kawasaki: Executive Summary</td>
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<td>Student Presenters: TBD TBD</td>
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<td>Nov 19, 2015</td>
<td>Writing the Plan &amp; Executive Summaries</td>
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<td>Discussion: Best practices in writing and presentations; review more sample plans in teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 13</td>
<td>Due in Class: Bring your draft final plan to class for discussion</td>
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<td>Student Presenters: TBD TBD</td>
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<td>Dec 3, 2015</td>
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<td>Benchmark: You should be working on measurement, evaluation, and bringing your plan to life with creative materials</td>
<td>Guest Speaker: TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Materials</td>
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<td>Discussion: Bringing your plan to life with visuals and creative materials</td>
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<td>Class 14</td>
<td>Final Plan Due in Class: See syllabus and grading criteria for details</td>
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<td>Discussion: Review real life strategic communications plans and new business pitches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 17, 2015</td>
<td>Applied Planning, Pitching the Plan, Future Planning</td>
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<td>Strengths and pitfalls of the framework and marketing yourself!</td>
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