MPPR-755-40: Digital Communications Strategy

Class Meets: Wednesdays 5:15pm to 8:15 pm

Instructor: Bill McIntyre
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description
This course will teach students to provide a clear understanding of effective Digital Communications Strategies in today's business environment. Students will increase their understanding of how digital communications relate to more traditional marketing and PR tactics, and how to combine them for the best integrated approach. Students will leave the course with an increased knowledge and hands-on familiarity of the practical applications of digital communications, and how these lead to success. This course will meet for 13 sessions (May: 25; June: 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; July: 6, 13, 20, 27; August: 3, 10, 17) starting Wednesday, May 25th and concluding Wednesday, August 17th. We will review today's digital tools, trends and tactics; weighing the difference between cool/hip and realistic/effective mediums.

Course Objectives
• To increase student understanding of digital communications strategies including social media, online communities, blogs, search engine marketing, mobile communications, video, etc. and how to apply these for success.
• To increase student understanding of how digital communications strategies integrate effectively with more traditional communications practices, and how to determine an appropriate balance.
• To examine cases of effective digital and integrated campaigns and examples to draw parallels for coursework.
• To equip students with the knowledge to develop a comprehensive integrated digital communications strategy for business.

Materials
Required Text, Materials:


Mashable www.mashable.com
TechCrunch http://techcrunch.com

eMarketer http://www.emarketer.com/articles

These required readings will be supplemented by timely news articles, blog posts or current events throughout the semester.

**Attendance**
In-class discussion and practice are essential to mastering the content of this course. Students are expected to attend 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. Attendance will be taken weekly. 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. At the beginning of the semester, it’s recommended that you partner with another member of the class to share notes/etc. in the event of an absence.

**Course Policies on Smartphones, Digital Devices, and Food in Class**
The use of smart phones or any other devices in class is prohibited, unless specifically related to current classwork. Please turn these off before class starts. We will have a break during class where you can check messages. We will also on occasion, have guest speakers who will appreciate this as well.
Regarding food, you are welcome to bring food or drink to the classroom.

**Contacting Me**
There are no regularly scheduled office hours, however you can schedule time to speak with me before or after class by appointment, as well as at other scheduled times during the week. The best way to reach me is via email.

**Assignments**
There are three written assignments for this class. Your assignments should meet Georgetown University’s standard of excellence. Please follow these guidelines for your work:
• Include student name, course number and assignment title.
• Double-spaced work with no larger than size 11 font and no greater than 1 –inch margins.
• Cite references; refer to APA Style for Electronic Media (www.apastyle.org).
• Bring one hard copy of your assignment to class the day it is due, and submit a digital copy via email.

**Assignment #1:**
**Weekly Trends Assessment** -- This class is heavily based around participation, discussion and following trends in social media. Each student is required to complete routine reading (2-3 times per week) from the list of social media sources listed above, in addition to your favorites. Each student must present one (1) trend to the class by the end of the semester. Please sign up at www.SignUpGenius.com/go/30E094EAFAE2D6-trend1 to secure your presentation spot. Beginning June 1st, two (2) students will prepare and present, as individuals (not teams), on a recent piece of news in social media that you have learned from reading these blogs or from other credible sources.
The presentation format must include:

- A clear, concise synopsis of what is happening and who is responsible.
- An explanation of why this is important, who it will impact, any important dates (ex: launch, term or end dates), and what geographies are included (ex: USA, Europe, Asia, etc.).
- A summary of expectations, reactions or forecasts related to the news, announcement or development.
- The presentation should be 5-10 minutes (PPT slides optional) and a Word document (300-400 words) must be turned in as well.

Here are three examples to use as a guide:

2. Foursquare Swarms: [http://www.edelman.com/2014/05/08/foursquare-to-spin-off-new-app-swarm](http://www.edelman.com/2014/05/08/foursquare-to-spin-off-new-app-swarm)
3. Vines New Messaging Feature: [http://www.edelman.com/2014/05/02/friday5-vines-new-messaging-feature](http://www.edelman.com/2014/05/02/friday5-vines-new-messaging-feature)

Assignment #2:

**Subject Analysis** – To be assigned on week #4 and due on week #6. Select a company, organization or product with which you have some familiarity. Complete a three-part, two-page written document that: 1) audits and inventories the digital tools and tactics used; 2) analyzes how each of these tools and tactics are being applied to attain a defined goal; 3) provides recommendations for improvement.

The written document should meet Georgetown University’s standard of excellence. Please follow these guidelines for your work:

1. Include student name, course number and assignment title.
2. Double-spaced work with no larger than size 11 font and no greater than 1 –inch margins (top, bottom and sides).
3. Cite references; refer to APA Style for Electronic Media (www.apastyle.org).
4. Bring one hard copy of your assignment to class the day it is due, and submit a digital copy via email.

The written report must be divided into three sections and include the following:

1. Audit: A clear, concise identification and articulation of the website's digital tools and the tactics used. For example, does the site use Facebook, Twitter, RSS, blogs, SEO/SEM, email, etc.?
2. Analysis: A strategic analysis of how each of these tools and tactics are being applied to attain a defined goal. For example, is the site featuring an RSS feed to promote blog updates about its products, sales, or related news about the industry or events that feature a related lifestyle?
3. Recommendations: An analysis and summary of how the existing tool set is strategically sound or, conversely, deficient. Provide recommendations on how the current tool set can be better deployed. Further, please suggest what new digital features should be
deployed, being sure to explain how your recommendations align with the website's goals.

Grading rubric: the assignment is worth 15 points. I will award five (5) points for each of the three sections.

Assignment #3:
Final Project -- The final project will consist of a 8-10 page digital communications plan for a company/organization and a related 7-minute presentation. The full assignment will be delivered on week #8, so there will be ample time to prepare your work and ask questions.

Quizzes
There will be a two spontaneous quizzes to track your progress with the readings, case studies, class discussions and assignments.

Class Participation
To gain the full benefit of this class, your attention and participation is critical. Active dialogue is recommended and encouraged. Our class will be a 2-way conversation where learning occurs through the readings, individual research and monitoring of the digital industry, the materials presented in class and through your own contributions to our discussion. This includes participating in class discussion, in working groups as determined and in the weekly news presentations.

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

Grading Rubric
15 points – Subject Analysis
15 points – Trends Assessment
20 points - Class Participation
30 points - Final Project
20 points – Quizzes (2 total)
100 points Total

Percentage values for final grades:

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
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) 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.
Schedule

**Week 1:** Wednesday, May 25th
Topics: Course syllabus review, class and student expectations, the RISC process (Research, Insight, Strategy, Creative)
Guest Speaker: TBD

**Practical Capability – The RISC Process**

**Exercise – Does the Medium Change the Content?**
Assignment For Next Class: Read Chapter(s) 1-3 in “The New Rules of Marketing & PR”; read Book 1 Part 1 of “The Circle”; read “Why do a social media listening audit?” [http://www.theguardian.com/mediasite](http://www.theguardian.com/mediasite); read “Conducting a social media audit” [http://adssolutions.yp.com/articles/conducting-a-social-media-audit](http://adssolutions.yp.com/articles/conducting-a-social-media-audit); routine reading (2-3 times per week) from the list of social media sources listed in the syllabus; sign up for Trend Assessment presentation.

**Week 2:** Wednesday June 1st
Topic: Online Autopsy – What Are They Saying About You
Guest Speaker: Kurt Hauptman, Lisa Abrego

**Practical Capability – The Conversation Audit**

**Week 3:** Wednesday June 8th
Topic: Websites
Guest Speaker: Matt Briney

**Practical Capability – The Website Audit and The Creative Brief**
Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments
Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapters 6-8 in “The New Rules of Marketing & PR”; read Book 1 Part 3 of “The Circle”; read “Made to Stick (summary)” [https://ir.stonybrook.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11401/8227/madetostickbillhamackssummary.pdf?sequence=1](https://ir.stonybrook.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11401/8227/madetostickbillhamackssummary.pdf?sequence=1); routine reading (2-3 times per week) from the list of social media sources listed in the syllabus; sign up for Trend Assessment presentation (if you haven’t already done so).

**Week 4:** Wednesday June 15th
Topic: Email
Guest Speaker: Chuck DeFeo

**Practical Capability: Email performance analysis**
Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments
Writing Assignment: Subject Analysis, due on week #6 (Wednesday June 29th). Select a company, organization or product with which you have some familiarity. Complete a three-part, two-page written document that: 1) audits and inventories the digital tools and tactics used; 2) analyzes how each of these tools and tactics are being applied to attain a defined goal; 3) provides recommendations for improvement. The document should meet Georgetown University standards of excellence (ex: double-spaced, size 11 font, and one (1) inch margins).

Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapters 9-10 in “The New Rules of Marketing & PR”; read Book 1 Part 3 of “The Circle”; Read Pew Research Report, “Search and email still top the list of most popular online activities,” (http://www.pewinternet.org/2011/08/09/search-and-email-still-top-the-list-of-most-popular-online-activities/); routine reading (2-3 times per week) from the list of social media sources listed in the syllabus; sign up for Trend Assessment presentation (if you haven’t already done so).

Week 5: Wednesday June 22nd
Topic: Search
Guest Speaker: Lisa Lewis
Practical Capability: Key Word Scoring Template
Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments
Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapters 11-13 in “The New Rules of Marketing & PR”; read Book 2 Part 1 of “The Circle”; read “6 A/B tests you should be running in your app” (https://www.swrve.com/whitepapers/files/6-AB-Tests.pdf); routine reading (2-3 times per week) from the list of social media sources listed in the syllabus; sign up for Trend Assessment presentation (if you haven’t already done so).

Reminder: Subject Analysis papers due next class.

Week 6: Wednesday June 29th (Assignment #2 Due today)
Topic: Crisis: Plan, Prep and React
Guest Speaker: Zack Condry
Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments
Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapters 14-16 in “The New Rules of Marketing & PR”; read Book 2 Part 2 of “The Circle”; Read blog post, “Crisis in a Digital Age” (http://www.edelman.com/2013/06/14/friday-five-crisis-management-in-a-digital-age/); Watch “Reporting crisis via texting” (https://www.ted.com/talks/erik_hersman_on_reporting_crisis_via_texting); routine reading (2-3 times per week) from the list of social media sources listed in the syllabus; sign up for Trend Assessment presentation (if you haven’t already done so).

Week 7: Wednesday July 6th
Topic: Content: From words and video to images and audio
Guest Speaker: Mark Maloney
Practical Capability – Content creation plan
Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments
Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapters 17-19 in “The New Rules of Marketing & PR”; read Book 2 Part 3 of “The Circle”; read “20 worthless SEO tactics to avoid plus 7 ways to dominate” (http://www.websitemagazine.com/content/blogs/posts/archive/2014/04/29/20-worthless-seo-tactics-to-avoid-plus-7-ways-to-dominate-the-serps.aspx); routine reading (2-3 times per week) from the list of
social media sources listed in the syllabus; sign up for Trend Assessment presentation (if you haven’t already done so).

**Week 8:** Wednesday July 13th (Assignment #3 issued)
Topic: Government vs. Corporate vs. Association
Guest Speaker(s): Corey Henry and Laura Miller

**Practical Capability: Integrated earned media pitch preparation**
Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments
Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapters 20-22 in “The New Rules of Marketing & PR”; read “Video vs. Text: The Brain Perspective” [https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/behind-online-behavior/201505/video-vs-text-the-brain-perspective](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/behind-online-behavior/201505/video-vs-text-the-brain-perspective); routine reading (2-3 times per week) from the list of social media sources listed in the syllabus; sign up for Trend Assessment presentation (if you haven’t already done so).

**Week 9:** Wednesday July 20th (Assignment #3 Questions Due)
Topic: Community Management
Guest Speaker: Alexi Drucker

**Practical Capability: Community Management Plan**
Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments

**Writing Assignment:** The final project will consist of a 5-8 page digital communications plan for a company/organization and a related 10-minute presentation both due on May 10th (final class).

**Week 10:** Wednesday July 27th (Assignment #3 Discussion)
Topic: Government vs. Corporate vs. Association
Guest Speaker(s): Corey Henry and Laura Miller

**Practical Capability: Integrated earned media pitch preparation**
Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments

**Week 11:** Wednesday August 3rd
Topic: News Media: Paid, Earned, Owned and Hybrid
Guest Lecturer: David Almacy

**Practical Capability: Integrated earned media pitch preparation**
Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments
community/2115: routine reading (2-3 times per week) from the list of social media sources listed in the syllabus; sign up for Trend Assessment presentation (if you haven’t already done so).

**Week 12:** Wednesday August 10th (Remote Presentation)
Topic: Social Media ROI
Guest Speaker: TBD
**Practical Capability: Preparing a ROI report**

Presentations:

**Week 13:** Wednesday August 17th
Final Project Written Assignment Due
Final Project Presentation Due

* Please note, the nature of this course is to stay relevant and timely with current digital trends and tactics, therefore subject matter may adjust slightly. Additionally travel and speaker schedules may cause date shifts. This syllabus will be subject to revisions.