



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
School of Continuing Studies
Public Relations and Corporate Communications

MPPR-500: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ETHICS: PHILOSOPHICAL, PROFESSIONAL, PERSONAL
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY: MPS-Public Relations and Corporate Communications
Tuesdays, 5:20 p.m. To 7:50 p.m. Room 221 | Fall 2016

Instructor : Mary Stewart

Office Hours: Meetings/calls are available by appointment.

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this class, you will learn basic principles of ethics and learn how to apply them practically in the communications field. Our class will review ethical philosophies, evaluate ethical situations in different areas of communications, and examine case studies and real-life situations. You will leave the course with an increased knowledge of and hands-on familiarity with the practical applications of ethics in the communications field, and you will develop your personal code of ethics to guide your practice. You will consider how to live by your ethical code as a communications professional, notably: Can you advocate effectively for ethical practices? Are your values manifested by your public relations tactics every day? Will you be a trusted leader who helps your organization/business navigate complex ethical issues before they become public relations (or legal) problems? This course will be a good start; and as you complete your degree, you will continue to hone this essential part of your professional and personal identity.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Be familiar with the language of ethics, and secular and moral theory that provides a framework for ethical decision making.
2. Understand the potential ethical challenges in the practice of communications from historical and contemporary perspectives, and understand the standards and codes currently used to encourage best practices.
3. Develop critical thinking skills to:
 - ☐ Examine morally and ethically complex professional situations in order to determine the ethical course of action;
 - ☐ Clarify, strengthen, and articulate personal values and ethical commitments; and
 - ☐ Navigate the complex ethical issues at work before they become public relations (and/or legal) problems.

REQUIRED READING

Title: *Ethics in Public Relations: A Guide to Best Practice*
Author: Parsons, Patricia
Year: We are using the newly released Third Edition. However, if you have the Second Edition, that will be fine for this transitional semester – just let me know. The Chapters listed are for the Third Edition.
ISBN: 0749477261
Publisher: Kogan Page
Year: Third Edition, April, 2016
Price: \$35 new, or about \$21 used on Amazon; also available electronically.

Movie: *The Insider*
Source: Walt Disney Video
ASIN: B00003CWRX
Year: 1999; DVD Release Date: April 2000
Price: \$12 new from Amazon or for rent via Netflix; streaming options vary.*

Movie: *Up in the Air*
Source: Paramount
ASIN: B0033KM2S
Year: 2009
Price: \$9 new from Amazon or view on Netflix; streaming options vary.*

*You do **not** need to purchase a copy of the movies to keep, but you do need to view the films carefully prior to the specified class even if you have seen them before.

The instructor will also assign specific articles and websites to read as part of the homework, which will be posted on the class Blackboard site. Students must be prepared to discuss any of those assigned readings in class.

ATTENDANCE

As outlined by the university, 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 reason – 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.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE, CLASS PARTICIPATION AND OTHER GUIDELINES

A successful class depends on the active engagement of all students. Students should turn off all cell phones, pagers or other communication devices while in class. Class discussions should be respectful and considerate of others' views and opinions.

ASSIGNMENTS

We will discuss each assignment in class. Please do not hesitate to ask for guidance if you do not understand the scope of the assignment.

In Class Preparation and Discussion: 40 points (10% of your grade)

This class is a collaborative, interactive, fast-paced format. You are expected to be present, prepared and participatory, having read all assigned materials and contributing constructively to discussions. You will also be tasked with sharing “hot topics” from the week’s news cycle, and submitting articles, ads and other items as instructed to spur class discussions. We will divide submissions by group in class. Your participation is judged by the way in which you contribute to positive, thoughtful class discussions. We will together create a supportive forum for intellectual deliberation with discussions that are respectful and considerate of others’ opinions.

Individual Presentation: 20 points (5% of your grade)

Presentations in class (Date TBD by student sign-up in first class – see Blackboard for posted schedule). Each student will deliver a three minute presentation to the class on a topic of interest relating to PR ethics as arranged with the instructor in advance. These short presentations will be discussed in the class and are intended both to showcase the perspectives of individual class members and to help prepare for the team challenge presentations.

Personal Paper: 60 points (15% of your grade)

File must bear name **Ethics Tues16 LASTNAME Personal Paper**.

In this assignment, you will identify and discuss influences that have shaped your personal ethics to date. Your five-page, double-spaced paper will analyze and discuss these influences in relation to one or more classical ethics philosophies and Georgetown’s Ethos. This analysis will likely form the background informing your final Personal Code of Ethics.

In-Class Case Study and Analysis: 60 points (15% of your grade)

You will be presented with a case study in class for which you will need to develop a written response with an argument and suggested course of action well supported by evidence from our readings and discussions and a solid understanding of the PRSA Code of Ethics.

Applied Ethics Submissions:: 40 points (10% of your grade)

Guided by the in-class discussions, submit as outlined in the syllabus an advertisement, an op-ed or short speech recently published, a notated job description, and an example of a cause marketing campaign. Each submission must be turned in via email by appointed time as noted on syllabus – usually either Friday or Monday morning at 9 a.m. before the specified class—and must bear your section and name on the file. No written analysis is required; the topic submissions will be dissected in class.

Team Challenge: 80 points (20% of your grade)

Presentations are given in class on the final two class dates of December 6 and December 13. Students will sign up for which week at the first class. The instructor will assign teams. On the presentation date, submit hard copy of presentations/handouts at start of class on your presentation date. Teams will be presented with an ethical communication challenge. Each team will develop a response that outlines the team’s course of action. Teams will present their scenario and recommendations to the class, defending their chosen course of action and addressing questions.

Personal Code of Ethics: 100 points (25%)

Due by or before Monday, December 12 at 9 a.m. via email with file name **Ethics Tues16 [Your Last Name] Final Code**. The final written assignment consists of a 15-page (4500 words of content not including notes, appendices if any, or graphics) paper outlining your personal code of ethics. It should be written in the format of a formal ethics code. This code will become the cornerstone of your personal ethos and will be used in your Capstone course. We will discuss your creation of this code extensively throughout the course, and you will submit a draft for ungraded feedback and to workshop the code in class.

Work Standards

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

- ☐ Title your electronic files with Ethics Tues16 (Your Last Name)(Assignment Name), as listed above and submit as attachments as a Word.doc or as a pdf. Do not submit via GoogleDocs.
- ☐ Put student name, assignment title, and date in the top left of the first page.
- ☐ Use a 12-point plain font, 1" margins, double spacing and page numbering (for pages 2+).
- ☐ Reference your sources in Chicago Style. Take the time to learn how to do proper footnotes. If you do not reference your work, you run the risk of plagiarizing.
- ☐ Consider the tone and formality of each assignment as given. Academic writing should not have contractions, slang, fragments or jargon.
- ☐ Proofread your work carefully. Don't undermine your good work by having compelling arguments 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 the MPS Writing Resource Program to ensure you are submitting your best work.
- ☐ **Late submissions will result in deductions of 5% per day.** That means if the paper was due via email at noon on Friday, anything submitted after 12:01 pm. gets a 5% deduction from the value of the assignment; anything received after 12:01 pm. Saturday 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.

GRADING

Your course grade will be based on the following:

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|--|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In Class Preparation and Discussion | 40 points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Presentation | 20 points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Paper | 60 points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Applied Ethics Submissions | 40 points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-Class Case Study and Analysis | 60 points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Team Challenge | 80 points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Personal Code of Ethics</u> | <u>100 points</u> |

Total: 400 points

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

A	376-400	B-	320-335
A-	360-375	C	280-319
B+	352-259	F	279 or below
B	336-352		

The instructor will provide a warning by mid-semester to any student who appears to be on track for a C or below.

CORE COURSE MINIMUM PASSING GRADE

As a core course for the program, this class has a minimum passing grade of “B.”

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://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://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

Date/Topic	READING/PREP DUE THIS CLASS	ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES	IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES
Class 1 Tuesday, September 6 Beginning Our Conversation: Words & Ideas Philosophical Foundations and Practical Implications of Ethics in Your Personal and Professional Life	Welcome to the class!	Signed Georgetown University Honor Code in first class Sign up for class project dates in first class. Connect to Blackboard.	<u>Discussion:</u> Overview of Syllabus; Honor Code and resources; What constitutes ethical PR practice? Tenets and theories. Values and Style. Discussion of Personal Paper assignment due by Friday, September 16 at 9 a.m.
Class 2 Tuesday, September 13 Personal Code, Societal Codes, Professional Codes, PRSA Code Introduction	Read before Sept. 13 class: Parsons, Part One, Chapters 1-6, (pp 3-41) Blackboard Files: Gower, Legal and Ethical Considerations in Public Relations, pp. 1-21 *Markkula Center for Applied Ethics: "Framework for Ethical Thinking" and short takes Watch <i>The Insider</i> before Class 3	Individual Presentation Opportunity #1: Framework Profiles Assignment Due: Your Personal Paper is due to me via email by Friday, Sept. 16, 9 a.m.	Discussion: Codes and Conduct; PRSA Role; <i>The Insider</i> ; Seeing Frameworks in Action Additional discussion of Personal Paper assignment. Personal Style related to Frameworks

Date/Topic	READING/PREP DUE THIS CLASS	ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES	IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES
Class 3 Tuesday, September 20 PRSA Code II ETHICS AND THE MEDIA	Read before Class 3: Parsons, Part Two, Chapter 7-9; Part Three, Chapter 11. Codes and Readings on Blackboard: PRSA, SPJ, and others. *Bivins, Mixed Media, "Checklist for Ethical Decision Making" AND Watch <i>The Insider</i> thoughtfully for discussion in Class 3	Individual Presentation Opportunity # 2: PRSA Code Case Studies	Discussion: What constitutes truth and transparency? Journalism ethics; ethics and media relations. <i>The Insider</i> – frameworks in conflict discussion Graded Personal Papers Returned Overview of Final Code Puzzle Pieces and Tenets

Class 4 Tuesday, September 27 PRSA III Ethics and Social Media, Activist Publics; Intent	Read before Class 4: Parsons, Part Two, Chapter 10; Part Three, Chapters 12 and 15; Part Four, Chapter 16. <u>Blackboard Files:</u> *Bivins, Mixed Media, "Ethics and PR"	Individual Presentation Opportunity #3: PRSA/ Case Studies	Discussion: New technologies, new expectations, new ethics? Review/ Discussion of PRSA Code and the forthcoming in-class graded assignment. Final Code exercise – forming questions to investigate
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<p>Class 5</p> <p>Tuesday, October 4</p> <p>Putting it Together: Professional Practice</p>	<p>Review ethics quiz on PRSA.ORG site and review your readings and notes, focusing on PRSA Code.</p>	<p>No presentations</p>	<p><u>In-Class Assignment:</u> Graded Case Study Analysis focusing on PRSA Code of Ethics as applied to a scenario.</p>
<p>Class 6</p> <p>Tuesday, October 11</p> <p>Codes and Challenges: Persuading Clients of an Ethical Public Relations Path</p>	<p>Parsons, Part Four, Chapters 17 and 18.</p> <p>On Blackboard: PowerPoint: Lens for Examining Cases</p>	<p>Individual Presentation Opportunity #4: Customers and Clients</p> <p>Applied Ethics Submission #1: Advertising sample submitted as .jpg by Friday at 9 a.m., October 14 as described in class.</p>	<p>In-case graded assignments returned and discussed.</p> <p>Assignment of Final Challenge groups and discussion of process</p> <p>Tenet Structure and brainstorming exercise</p>

<p>Class 7</p> <p>Tuesday, October 18</p> <p>Advertising and the Ethics of Visual Culture</p>	<p>Blackboard Files:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *AAF's Principles and Practices for Advertising Ethics *PRSA ESA-19 Native Advertising *Bivins, Mixed Media, "Ethics and Advertising" *Plaisance, "Virtue in the Media World," <i>Psychology Today</i> 	<p>Individual Presentation Opportunity #5: Mores and Boundaries in Visual Culture</p> <p>Applied Ethics Submission #2: By Monday morning at 9 a.m., October 24, submit one well-crafted tenet via email as instructed in class.</p>	<p>Discussion: Ethical consideration in visual collateral and implicit messages; native advertising; case studies</p> <p>Final Codes – Samples of Drafts: Order and Tenets</p>
<p>Class 8</p> <p>Tuesday, October 25</p> <p>Ethical Persuasion and Advocacy; Evidence and Emotion</p>	<p>Parsons, Part Three, Chapters 13 and 15.</p> <p>Check on Blackboard for files:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *AGRP Code of Ethics *Articles regarding public affairs ethics issues 	<p>Individual Presentation Opportunity #6: Fighting Fair? Advocacy in Action.</p> <p>Applied Ethics Submission #3 for next week: Ideal job description to me via email by Monday, 9 a.m., October 31, as an attachment (described in class.)</p>	<p>Discussion: Ethical quality of civil discourse; Identifying frameworks in rhetoric</p> <p>Building Your Code Tenets: Developing Evidence to Support your Arguments</p>

<p>Class 9</p> <p>Tuesday, November 1</p> <p>Shaping an Ethical Career</p>	<p>For Class 9: Read Blackboard: Browse posted articles on career management.</p> <p>This is an excellent week to work on your Code & bring questions to Class 9.</p> <p>View <i>Up in the Air</i> thoughtfully for Class 10 discussion.</p>	<p>Individual Presentation Opportunity #8: Scandals for PR Folks?</p>	<p><u>Discussion:</u> Discussion: Finding a career to match your framework and style; topical ethical challenges.</p> <p>Also, Final Code Examples of Layout and discussion of incorporating career plans and Evaluation in your Code</p>
<p>Class 10</p> <p>Tuesday, November 8</p> <p>Ethics in Corporate Communications, Corporate Social Responsibility and Crisis Communications</p> <p>Final Challenge Mini-Round</p>	<p><u>Blackboard Files:</u> *Bivins, Mixed Media, "Corporate Social Responsibility"</p> <p>Browse Posted Case Studies</p>	<p>Individual Presentation Opportunity # 9: Spin or Sail – reputation management in times of crises and spotlight</p> <p>Applied Ethics Submission #4: Prepare one-pager with your team; bring to class Nov. 15 (no advance submission required)</p>	<p>Discussion: Role of Public Relations in Management Messaging, Internal and External PR, Managing Mess</p> <p>Discussion of <i>Up in the Air</i></p> <p>Also, Final Code Helpful Notes on Codes</p>

Class 11 Tuesday, November 15 Final Challenge Final Preparation Rounds And Power Presentation Points	By challenge group, bring 4 hard copies to the class an outline of key issues and action items for peer and instructor feedback.	. If you want feedback from the instructor on your <u>final code draft</u> , submit it by or before Friday, November 18 at 9 a.m. via email.	Working in teams and as across sections, discussion of key issues and potential formats in Final Challenge Scenarios Final Challenge Tips: Making Your Ideas Heard
Class 12 Tuesday, November 22 Crafting Your Final Code Workshop	Bring three hard copies of your draft as it now is to class. Expected length of the draft is at least five pages; but the process of writing is different for each of us and, therefore, your draft format should be what genuinely helps you get peer feedback.		Discussion and Guided Analysis: Getting Your Final Code from good to great; structured peer review and class focus on key issues.
Class 13 Tuesday, November 29 Ethical Considerations of Cause Marketing and Non-Profits Final Challenge Prep	Blackboard: Six Pillars Graphic Four short articles	Opportunity #10: Choosing your Friends Wisely .	Discussion: Affiliations, Disclosure and Efficacy in Doing Well While Doing Good. Final Challenge Finding Solutions in Public

Class 14 Tuesday, December 6 Final Challenge Team Presentations (1-3)	Final Challenge Presentations (Groups 1 to 3)	Assignment: One hard copy of presentation and 20 handouts by Teams 1-3 due to instructor in class.	Discussion: Final Code, Final Queries
There are no Georgetown University classes or assignments due Dec. 8-11.		Assignment DUE: Your Final Code of Ethics is due by email by <u>Monday, December 12 at 9 a.m.</u>	
Class 15 (final class) Tuesday, December 13 Final Challenge Team Presentations (Teams 4-6) Closing Conversations	Final Challenge Presentations (Groups 4 to 6)	Assignment: One hard copy of presentation and 20 handouts, Teams 4-6 due to instructor in class.	Final Codes Returned Graded