



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
School of Continuing Studies  
Public Relations and Corporate Communications

**GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY: MPS-PRCC | SPRING 2017**

## **MPPR-505: Elements of Communications Planning**

Tuesdays, 5:20 p.m. - 7:50 p.m.

Tuesdays, 8:00 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Instructor: Brigitte Johnson, APR

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Mastering communications planning is similar to laying the foundation for your dream home – it requires an investment but if completed with care, the other pieces easily fall in 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 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.

Wilson, L., & Ogden, J. (2014). *Strategic communications planning for effective public relations and marketing* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company. ISBN-13: 978-1465249159 or ISBN-10: 146524915X

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

### **Recommended Readings**

Associated Press (2009). *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* (46<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Basic Books. ISBN-10: 0465012620 or ISBN-13: 9780465012620 | \$10.80

Strunk, Jr., W., & White, E. (1999). *The elements of style* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. ISBN-10: 020530902X or ISBN-13: 978-0205309023 | \$9.13

### **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 from additional classes 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, etc. – 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.
- Incomplete grades, except in the most exceptional, unforeseeable circumstances, are not available. Job requirements do not qualify.
- Students are responsible for classroom information and instructions, whether 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 Canvas.
- 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. There is a class participation component to your grade.
- Questions during class are encouraged. 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 high-quality work on time. 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 will review your specific question and discuss it

with you. Feedback on all assignments will be provided in a timely manner; no more than two weeks after the assignment was submitted.

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 contact me before the due date, and I will do my best to accommodate you.

### ***Weekly Readings and Class Discussion – 20 points***

Success in the class depends on active participation and discussion. The 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

### ***Student Presentations – 15 points***

Each week, students will be asked to apply the previous week's lesson to a current event in the news, a recent public relations/communication campaign or professional experience. 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 a previous class lesson or discussion. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure students understand important concepts, discuss real-life examples, and to provide a forum for raising additional questions. This activity will help communicate your future strategic plans, as you will need to explain complex information in a compressed timeline during your career.

### ***Quizzes (Four quizzes) – 20 points***

You will have four in-class quizzes on key topics during the semester. The quizzes will assess your ability to: define concepts, differentiate between terms, apply/combine elements, explain your decision making process, and evaluate use of the planning model. The quizzes 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 (Four 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 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.

### **Mid-Term Outline – 60 points**

In preparation for the final plan, students will complete a 6-10 page communications plan outline through the message section. You will develop the draft based on the request-for-proposal [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 20 references you will use in the final plan.

### **Final Plan and Pitch – 120 points**

Your final assignment will be to write a 15-30 page, portfolio-ready strategic communications plan responding to a core problem or opportunity identified in your request for proposal [RFP]. You will use the framework you learned throughout the semester. You will be graded on the overall strength of your recommendations, insights, considerations, creativity, persuasive organization, and clarity of writing. Detailed grading criteria will be shared 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 completed for the mid-term.

During the final class, you will present a key highlight from your plan and showcase your ability to pitch your idea in a compelling manner.

### **WORK SUBMITTED**

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

- Put student name, assignment title and date in the top left of the first page.
- Use a 12-point, 1.5-2-line spacing, plain font, 1" margins, and page numbering (for pages 2+).
- If necessary, reference your sources using [APA citation and reference style](#). 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 to avoid point deductions.

### **GRADING**

Your course grade will be based on the following:

Class discussion	20 points
Student presentations	15 points
Quizzes	20 points
Assignments	40 points
Mid-term Outline	60 points
Final Plan	110 points
Final Plan Pitch	<u>10 points</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>275 points</b>

A	256-275
A-	248-255
B+	240-247
B	229-239
B-	220-228
C	193-219
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**

<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](mailto: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 at (202) 687-8354; [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto: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 journalism and it will also wreck your career in academia. 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.

DATE/TOPIC	READING DUE	ASSIGNMENT DUE	IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES
<b>Class 1: January 17 Course overview</b>	Wilson & Ogden Chapter 1: The Relationship-Building Approach to Communications		Discussion: Class introductions, background survey, syllabus review and discussion. Discuss the value of strategic planning in communications.
<b>Class 2: January 24 The art of persuasion</b>	Wilson & Ogden Chapter 2: Public Information & Persuasive Communication		Discussion: Moving from words to action
<b>Class 3: January 31 Research</b>	Wilson & Ogden Chapter 3: Communications Research Methods		Discussion: Methods for primary and secondary research. Review RFP options.
<b>Class 4: February 7 Planning your way to success in PR</b>	Wilson & Ogden Chapter 4: Using Research for Effective Communications Planning  Reading: Segal, Perfect brainstorm	Choose your RFP and begin your research	Student presentations  Discussion: Key learnings and best practices from planning  Guest Speaker: Megan Hunt, SCS Librarian
<b>Class 5: February 14 Goals &amp; objectives</b>	Wilson & Ogden Chapter 5: Setting Goals & Objectives  Chapter 6: Creativity & Big Ideas		Quiz 1: Research methods  Student presentations  Discussion: Determining sound goals and objectives
<b>Class 6: February 21 Key publics</b>	Wilson & Ogden Chapter 7: Key Publics	DUE: Assignment 1: Research methods	Quiz 2: Goals and objectives  Student presentations  Discussion: Identifying target audiences and key publics

<b>Class 7: February 28 Branding and framing</b>	<p>Wilson &amp; Ogden Chapter 8: Messages, Strategies &amp; Tactics</p> <p>Readings: Kawasaki: Branding Kawasaki: Frame</p>	DUE: Assignment 2: Background, situation analysis, and problem/opportunity statement	<p>Student presentations</p> <p>Discussion: Brainstorming and applying insight to strategies and tactics</p> <p>Discussion: Avoiding brand and message dissonance</p>
<b>March 7 – Spring Break</b>			
<b>Class 8: March 14 Social messaging</b>	<p>Wilson &amp; Ogden Chapter 9: Using Social Media for Message Delivery</p> <p>Readings: Duncan: Principles Leet: Message Matters</p>	DUE: Assignment 3 Identifying key publics	<p>Student Presentations</p> <p>Discussion: Using the power of social media</p>
<b>Class 9: March 21 Time, money &amp; management</b>	<p>Wilson &amp; Ogden Chapter 10: Calendars &amp; Budgeting</p> <p>Wilson &amp; Ogden Chapter 11: Implementation &amp; Communications Management</p> <p>Reading: Scott, Baby Dinosaur</p>	Mid-Term Outline due. See syllabus and grading rubric for details	<p>Quiz 3: Publics and messages</p> <p>Student Presentations</p> <p>Discussion: Being on time and on budget</p>
<b>Class 10: March 28 Results</b>	Wilson & Ogden Chapter 12: Communications Measurement & Evaluation		<p>Quiz 4: Strategies and tactics</p> <p>Student Presentations</p> <p>Discussion: The importance of measurement and showing impact</p>



<b>Class 11: April 4 Ethics</b>	Wilson & Ogden Chapter 15: Ethics & Professionalism	Assignment 4: Strategies and tactics	Student Presentations  Discussion: Why ethics matter
<b>Class 12: April 11 Outline &amp; final plan review</b>			We will schedule 10-minute slots during the class period to discuss your final plan
<b>Class 13: April 18 Final Plan Workshop</b>  <b>Creative materials</b>			Discussion: Bring your plan to life with visuals and creative materials  Review: Sample plan
<b>Class 14: April 25  Writing the plan &amp; executive summaries</b>	Reading: Kawasaki, Executive Summary	Due in Class: Bring your final draft plan to class for discussion	Student Presentations  Discussion: Best practices in writing and presentations  Discussion: Reviewing communications plans
<b>Class 15: May 9 Pitching the plan</b>		Final Plan Due: See Canvas for details and grading rubric	Individual Pitches  Discussion: Lessons learned