

**Georgetown University**  
**School of Continuing Studies**  
**MPS Public Relations and Corporate Communications**  
**MPPR-755-01: Digital Communications Strategy**  
**640 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001**  
**Spring Term 2017**

**Class Time:** Wednesdays 5:20 pm to 7:50 pm

**Instructor:** Bill McIntyre

**Office Hours:** By appointment

### **Course Description**

This course will provide students with 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. We will review today's digital tools, trends and tactics; weighing the difference between cool/hip and realistic/effective mediums.

This course will meet for 15 sessions on Wednesdays from 5:20 pm to 7:50 pm, per the following schedule:

- January: 18, 25
- February: 1, 8, 15, 22
- March: 1, 15, 22, 29
- April: 5, 12, 19, 26
- May: 10 (Final class meeting; presentations and final papers due)
- Note: No class sessions on March 8, May 3

### **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.

### **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 (or text) 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.

### **Class Participation**

To gain the full benefit of this class, your attention and participation are 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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Materials**

Required Text, Materials:

*"The New Rules of Marketing & PR" [available on Kindle Edition, Paperback at Amazon] by David Meerman Scott (Wiley, 2015) ISBN-10: 1119070481, ISBN-13: 978-1119070481, \$13.21 on Amazon (paperback).*

*"The Circle" [available on Kindle Edition, Paperback at Amazon] by Dave Eggers (McSweeney's 2013) ISBN: 978-0-385-35139-3, \$9.49 on Amazon (paperback).*

Mashable [www.mashable.com](http://www.mashable.com)

TechCrunch <http://techcrunch.com>

CNET News <http://www.cnet.com/news/>

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

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

### **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, using an 11-point font, and one-inch margins (top, bottom, sides).
- Cite references; refer to APA Style for Electronic Media ([www.apastyle.org](http://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 and digital communications. 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 <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e094eafae2d6-trend1> to secure your presentation spot. Beginning January 25<sup>th</sup>, one (1) or two (2) student(s) will prepare and present, as individuals (not teams), on a recent piece of news in social media or digital communications 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 (people, competitors, an industry, etc), 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. Supplement your summary with brief, expert quotes.
- The presentation should be 5-10 minutes (PPT slides optional) and a Word document (300-400 words) must be turned in as well.

Grading rubric: the assignment is worth 15 points (7 points for the oral presentation and 8 points for the written component). You will receive one point for properly including each of the core components in detail (synopsis, importance, expectations) in both your oral and written work. You will earn additional points for depth of research, strength of insights/considerations, overall plausibility of expectations, persuasive organization, clarity of writing and strength of editing for brevity, grammar, and spelling (for the written component and any presentation materials, if applicable), command of presentation, ability to adhere to the word count and time limit requirements.

Here are three examples to use as a guide:

1. [What You Need to Know about Instagram, Facebook and Twitter's New Features:](http://www.edelman.com/post/instagram-facebook-twitters-new-features/)
2. [What The Demise of Vine Really Means for Twitter:](http://blog.ketchum.com/what-the-demise-of-vine-really-means-for-twitter/)
3. [5 Things to Know About Advertising on Dating Apps:](http://www.edelman.com/post/5-things-know-advertising-dating-apps/)

### **Assignment #2:**

**Subject Analysis** – To be assigned on week #5 and due on week #7. 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](http://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 (5 points each for the Audit, Analysis, and Recommendations). You will receive two (2) points for properly including each of the core components in detail (audit, analysis, recommendations) in your written work. You will earn additional points for depth of research, strength of insights/considerations, use of brief expert quotes to support your positions (no footnotes, please provide attribution right in the text), overall plausibility of recommendations, persuasive organization, clarity of writing and strength of editing for brevity, grammar, and spelling, ability to adhere to the word count limit.

### **Assignment #3:**

**Final Project** -- The final project will consist of an 8-10 page digital communications plan for a company/organization and a related 7-minute presentation. The full assignment will be delivered on week #10, 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.

### **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, 10 points each)  
 100 points Total

**Percentage values for final grades:**

A 100-93  
 A- 92.99-90  
 B+ 89.99-87  
 B 86.99-83  
 B- 82.99-80  
 C 79.99-70  
 F 69.99-0

**Schedule****Week 1:** Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>

Topics: Course syllabus review, class and student expectations, finding a strategy

Guest Speaker: TBD (Nate Bailey)

Practical Capability – Identifying a strategy

Exercise – Is it a strategy or a tactic; finding a strategy

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 “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.

**Week 2:** Wednesday January 25<sup>th</sup>

Topic: Search

Guest Speaker: TBD (Lisa Lewis, Ginny Skitsgo)

Practical Capability – Key Word Scoring Template

Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapters 4-5 in *“The New Rules of Marketing & PR”*; read Book 1 Part 2 of *“The Circle”*; read “Made to Stick (summary)”

<https://ir.stonybrook.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11401/8227/madetostickbillhammacksummary.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 3:** Wednesday February 1<sup>st</sup> (David Meerman Scott?)

Topic: Websites

Guest Speaker: Matt Briney

Practical Capability – The Website Audit

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 “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).

**Week 4:** Wednesday February 8<sup>th</sup>

Topic: Email

Guest Speaker: Chuck DeFeo

Practical Capability: Email performance analysis

Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments

Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapters 9-10 in *"The New Rules of Marketing & PR"*; read Book 1 Part 3 of *"The Circle"*; read "How to use paid, earned and owned media in your content marketing strategy" <https://econsultancy.com/blog/66936-how-to-use-paid-earned-and-owned-media-in-your-content-marketing-strategy/>; Watch Ted Talk, "Alisa Miller: The news about the news," ([http://www.ted.com/talks/alisa\\_miller\\_shares\\_the\\_news\\_about\\_the\\_news](http://www.ted.com/talks/alisa_miller_shares_the_news_about_the_news)); 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 February 15<sup>th</sup> (Assignment #2 issued)

Topic: News Media: Paid, Earned, Owned and Hybrid

Guest Speaker: TBD (David Almay)

Practical Capability: Integrated earned media pitch preparation

Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments

Writing Assignment: Subject Analysis, due on week #7 (Wednesday March 1<sup>st</sup>). 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. See assignment details above.

Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapters 11-13 in *"The New Rules of Marketing & PR"*; read Book 2 Part 1 of *"The Circle"*; Read blog post, "Digital Crisis Trends" (<http://www.edelman.com/post/digital-crisis-trends/>); Watch "Reporting crisis via texting" ([https://www.ted.com/talks/erik\\_hersman\\_on\\_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 6:** Wednesday February 22<sup>nd</sup>

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"*; watch "13 Worldwide Marketing Leaders Talk Creativity, Data, and Technology at Cannes Lions 2015" <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/blog/1/13-worldwide-marketing-leaders-talk-creativity-data-and-technology-at-cannes-lions-2015>; read "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).

**Reminder:** Subject Analysis papers due next class.

**Week 7:** Wednesday March 1<sup>st</sup> (Assignment #2 due)

Topic: Content: From words and video to images and audio

Guest Speaker: Mark Maloney

Practical Capability – Content creation plan and writing a creative brief

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 "Why do a social media listening audit?" <http://www.theguardian.com/media-network/media-network-blog/2013/jan/15/social-media-listening-audit-advice>; read "Conducting a social media audit" <http://adsolutions.yip.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 (if you haven't already done so).

**Week 8:** Wednesday March 15<sup>th</sup>

Topic: Online Autopsy – What Are They Saying About You

Guest Speaker: TBD (Kurt Hauptman, Lisa Abrego)

Practical Capability: The Conversation Audit

Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments

Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapters 20-22 in *"The New Rules of Marketing & PR"*; Read "Want brand engagement? Build your community" <http://digitalmarketingmagazine.co.uk/customer-experience/want-brand-engagement-build-your-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 9:** Wednesday March 22<sup>nd</sup>

Topic: Community Management

Guest Speaker: Alexi Drucker

Practical Capability: Community Management Plan

Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments

Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapters 23-24 in *"The New Rules of Marketing & PR"*; read "What does mobile mean now?" <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Its-2015-What-Mobile-Mean-Now/1012065>; 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).

**RISC Week 10:** Wednesday March 29<sup>th</sup> (Assignment #3 issued)

Topics: Course syllabus review, class and student expectations, the RISC process (Research, Insight, Strategy, Creative)

Guest Speaker: TBD (Elizabeth Stoltz)

Practical Capability – The RISC Process

Exercise – RISC reports

Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments

Assignment for Next Class: Read Chapter 25 in *"The New Rules of Marketing & PR"*; 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).

**Writing Assignment #3:** The final project will consist of a 8-10 page digital communications plan for a company/organization and a related 7-minute presentation both due on May 10<sup>th</sup> (final class).

**Week 11:** Wednesday April 5<sup>th</sup> (Assignment #3 questions due)

Topic: Integrated Fundraising

Guest Speaker: TBD (Anastasia Staten, Delores McDonagh)

Practical Capability: TBD

Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments

Assignment for Next Class: 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 April 12<sup>th</sup>

Topic: Digital Advertising

Guest Speaker: TBD (Craig Karnis)

Practical Capability: How to determine if a digital ad campaign is right for you

Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments

Assignment for Next Class: 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 13:** Wednesday April 19<sup>th</sup>

Topic: Data Mining

Guest Speaker: TBD (Aaron Guiterman)

Practical Capability: Data mining on a shoestring budget

Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments

Assignment for Next Class: routine reading (2-3 times per week) from the list of social media sources listed in the syllabus.

**Week 14:** Wednesday April 26<sup>th</sup> (Assignment #3 discussion)

Topic: Social Media ROI

**Practical Capability: Preparing a ROI report**

Presentations: Weekly Trend Assessments

Assignment for Next Class: routine reading (2-3 times per week) from the list of social media sources listed in the syllabus.

**Week 15:** Wednesday May 10<sup>th</sup> (Assignment #3 due)

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.

### **University Resources**

Georgetown offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed on main campus or at the downtown location:

### **Academic Calendar**

The University Registrar maintains the official academic calendar for Georgetown University. A three--year academic calendar is available at <http://registrar.georgetown.edu/calendars/index.htm>.

### **Academic Resource Center**

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) provides services for students with disabilities, student athletes, and any student facing academic challenges. Visit <http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu> or <http://guarc.georgetown.edu/> for more information. The SCS ARC is located at C129 and can be reached at 202.687.8354 or [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu).

### **The Writing Center (WC)**

WC offers assistance to students in topic development, general organization, guidance on paper revisions, and specific or recurring structural problems with writing at



<http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/>. The SCS Writing Center is now open! Students can make appointments at [writingcenter.georgetown.edu](http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/).

### **Library**

You have access to all campus libraries and resources, as well as online catalogues via <http://www.georgetown.edu/libraries.html>. Our MPS PR/CC library contact, Jessica Vanderhoff, can be reached at [jv532@georgetown.edu](mailto:jv532@georgetown.edu).

### **SCS Counseling & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)**

Georgetown's Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) serves the mental health needs of those in the Georgetown community. CAPS services are available to SCS students and the campus community for personal issues in any aspect of their lives, whether relating to Georgetown or otherwise. The office is located at C130. Appointments can be scheduled at 202.687.6985. For after hours emergencies please contact 202.444.7243 and ask for the on-call clinician. The CAPS website is <http://studenthealth.georgetown.edu/mental-health/>.

### **SCS Digital Media Center**

SCS students, faculty and staff can rent video camcorders, still photography cameras, light kits, and microphones or request access to the state-of-the-art Mac Lab for editing and graphic design. Go to C203 for equipment or C226 for the Mac Lab. Contact the lab at 202.687.5720 or <http://scs.georgetown.edu/students/student-resources/digital-media-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](mailto: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.

### **Student Handbook**

The student handbook outlines academic rules and regulations for students pursuing the master of professional studies degree <http://scs.georgetown.edu/academic-affairs/student-handbooks>.

### **Georgetown Honor Code**

We encourage faculty to include specific statements about the Honor Code on their course syllabi and to use turnitin.com on all student papers to encourage originality and authenticity. Please remember that students are bound by the Honor System. Visit <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/> or <http://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/> for more information.

### **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>.

**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.