

DRAFT 8/1 – subject to change

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Strategic Public Relations

Fall 2019

August 27/November 26

Course Name

PSPR 6201.PR

3 Credits

Tuesdays - 7:00-9:15 p.m.

Arlington Graduate Center

950 Glebe Road

Arlington, VA 22203

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

Lawrence J. Parnell – Associate Professor/Program Director

Biography

Over a 32-year career in the private and public sector, Professor Parnell (“Prof P”) has held senior communications positions in consulting, on the client side and in politics and government. He has been at GW in his present capacity since August 2008.

Honors:

While at E&Y he was named ***PR Professional of the Year by PR Week***, (2003). In December 2009, he was named to the ***PR News Hall of Fame***. In March 2015, the GW Master’s in Strategic Public Relations was named ***the Best PR Education program*** of the year by ***PR Week***.

Publications:

He is the co-author of a public relations textbook – *“Introduction to Public Relations – Strategic, Digital and Socially Responsible Communication; Second edition* - published by Sage Publishing in January 2020.

He also contributed as co-author of a chapter in *Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy* (Peter Lang Publishing, 2017) about the social responsibility and reputation management activity by the US Government worldwide.

Contact Information

Phone Number: (202) 994-2685

Email Address: lparnell@gwu.edu

Communication

Instructor is available prior to class and at mutually convenient times arranged by the student and the instructor. Telephone conferences can be scheduled as needed.

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructors and the students. Students can access the course site at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or helpdesk.gwu.edu.

Academic Integrity

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.”

Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>.

Support for Students with Disabilities

GW’s Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Please notify your instructor if you require accommodations. Additional information is available at www.gwu.edu/~dss.

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class

If we experience some an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave here, we will meet at **in Carlyle Square** in order to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University's operating status: <http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu/>.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes unless excused. A sign-in sheet will be provided before each class begins. It is your responsibility to sign in. Attendance will be reflected in the final grade's "participation" component. Please contact me should you need to miss a class so that we can discuss any need for a review of lectures missed.

Note: participation points cannot be made up.

University Policy on Religious Holidays

"1. Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance;

"2. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations;

"3. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW's online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Laura Vasisko
GSPM Student Services
202 994 0945
lvasisko@gwu.edu

Lawrence J. Parnell
Associate Professor & Program Director
202 994 2685
lparnell@gwu.edu

THE COURSE

Strategic Public Relations Program Objectives

Upon the completion of the Masters in SPR, students will have obtained an enhanced understanding and skills in:

1. Fundamentals of effective, strategic communications;
2. Best practices for writing, media relations and strategic communications planning
3. Leadership in communications on a sound ethical and financial basis
4. Implementation of strategic communications plans.

Course Description and Overview

This is a 10-week course, consisting of a two hour, in person class and one hour of independent online learning each week by the student. Attendance and participation in both will be reflected in the participation grade for course.

This graduate course (PSPR 6201) will trace the history and development of Modern Public Relations, survey the major theories that guide strategic public relations and examine how they are applied by business, government and non-profit communications professionals.

It will also introduce the student to strategic communication planning and current PR/PA tactics to accomplish your communications objectives. In subsequent classes, you will delve into these topics in more detail. As such, this course is an overview and sets the stage for the remainder of the program.

Throughout, the course will explore the role of digital communications in strategic communications. Assignments and discussions will emphasize case studies and the application of theory to provide an in-depth understanding of planning, executing and evaluating strategic public relations campaigns. Lectures, case studies and readings will cover key strategic plan components and detail how to measure effectiveness.

NOTE: Readings for each week should be completed BEFORE coming to class.

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will:

1. Understand the context and application of Strategic Public Relations, (SPR)
2. Develop the ability to be a better PR/PA professional
3. Create, implement, and measure strategic plans that include social media
4. Strengthen your writing and oral presentation skills.

Required Textbooks

Introduction to Public Relations: Strategic Digital and Socially Responsible Communications.

Janis T. Page PhD and Lawrence J. Parnell, MBA. Second edition, 2021. Sage Publishing. ISBN 9781544392004.

Strategic Planning for Public Relations. Ronald D. Smith. 5th Edition. Routledge 2013. ISBN – 978-0-415-50676-2 (paperback) 978-0-203-08124-2 (e-book)

Note: Additional readings to increase your understanding and awareness will be posted on Black Board on a timely basis during the semester. It is the student's responsibility to check Black Board on a regular basis to keep current.

Suggested additional resources

News Media:

The Washington Post

The Wall Street Journal

The New York Times

Politico

PR Week; PR News and PR Daily

Other:

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law 2013. Forty-sixth Edition. Associated Press. Basic Books, 2013. ISBN-10: 0465082998; ISBN-13: 978-0465082995.

The Institute for Public Relations – a free website (www.instituteforpr.org) containing a wealth of research, scholarly and practice-based papers, articles and publications on current trends and practices in PR.

The Arthur W. Page Society – www.awpagesociety.com - Public pages of this site offer communications case study examples from recent competitions amongst leading Business schools and Schools of Mass Communication and Journalism. Cases are free to members and non-members.

Public Relations Society of America - (www.prsa.org) The leading association of communications professionals and academics.

Note: All SPR students are encouraged to join PRSA and the PRSA National Capital Chapter upon entering our program. A special discounted yearly rate of \$65 is available. Check the website for more information.

Assignments

All assignments will be graded according to the quality of the research, analysis, critical thinking and writing skills demonstrated by the student.

Please turn in all assignments electronically via Blackboard before class.

Note: all papers are subject to review by Safe Assign on Black Board to determine proper sourcing and assure original work by students.

Use 14 Point type; AP style (consult the stylebook) and APA style for citations.

Graduate school level spelling, grammar and composition are expected.

Note: You may have an opportunity to revise one assignment – with the instructor’s approval.

ASSIGNMENTS – All assignments must be turned in online before class the week they are due.

Assignment #1

Essay – 750 words

Pick a figure from the History of Modern PR (see Chapter 2; Page and Parnell) and draft a short profile.

Use APA format for citations. At least 2 sources besides the course text are required.

Answer these two questions in your essay:

1. What did they mean to the development of the profession?
2. Why are they meaningful to you?

Assignment #2

PR/PA Case Study - (18-20-page paper, plus in class PowerPoint presentation).

Group project, (*groups will be formed in class*).

The class will divide into small groups – depending on the size of the class. Each team will prepare an in-depth analysis of a recent case that focuses on one area we are covering in class – e.g. Crisis and Issues Management; Media Relations, Corporate and Financial communications; Government and Political Communications; CSR etc.

The topic must be approved by the instructor prior to beginning work.

Class time will be set aside on a rotating basis for group presentations. The presentation should involve all group members and last no more than 20 minutes, including Q&A.

The oral presentation will be part of the grade for the project.

NOTE: Group members will be asked to provide the instructor with feedback on the contributions of each member.

This assignment is designed to assess and improve your ability to work cooperatively and effectively in a group setting. Project teams are a common practice in business/government and this task will help improve your ability to work as part of a team. It will also provide an opportunity to develop or enhance your oral presentation and speaking skills.

Assignment #3 - Term paper: Individual assignment.

Your own analysis of how a company, non-profit, government agency, or politician/candidate/government official uses/used strategic public relations and assess their effectiveness. Papers must include your “next steps” recommendations. The paper should be no less than 15 pages long and thoroughly researched, properly sourced, and well written.

Note: Company/organization is subject to review and approval by the instructor

Details:

Pick one company, non-profit group, government agency, or political candidate. Analyze the use of strategic public relations to raise their profile, address issues from customers or voters, improve their bottom line (company), advance a cause/agenda (non-profit), or win an election or implement policy/pass new legislation (candidate/government official).

This exercise will assess your research and critical thinking skills and your ability to write an in-depth analysis of a current situation applying the skills you have developed or enhanced in this class.

Mid Term Exam

At the midpoint of the semester there will be an in-class exam, covering the material to date. It will consist of a few short answer/multiple choice questions and will be an “open book” test. Students will be allowed to refer to their notes and course text in developing their answers.

Evaluation and Grading –

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed (see page 3)	Due Date (papers/projects due before start of class)	Weight
History of PR	2, 4	Week 2	15%
Group Project Paper/Presentation	3	Week 6	30%
Individual Paper	3,4	Week 10	30%
Class Participation*	1,2	Ongoing	15%
Exam	1	Mid- semester	10%

Total:

100%

Rubric:

Your papers, projects and class participation will be graded using the following factors:

- Oral and Written communications skills demonstrated
- Research and Critical Thinking displayed
- Application of Communications Theory to plan elements
- Ability to work in a group setting and/or individually
- Presentation skills
- Contributions to class discussion (participation)
- Knowledge of PR/PA fundamentals (exam)

*Class participation is defined as contributing to and participating in class discussions, group work and activity by introducing new ideas or interpretations of the topic/issue being discussed. It does not mean simply attending class or restating another student’s point.

However, if you do miss a class, participations points cannot be made up. Participation also includes completing a course evaluation at the end of the class, during the evaluation period.

Students MUST alert the professor in advance (Before Noon of class day) if they will miss class. Missing more than 2 classes will impact your grade in the class.

Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

With grading, there is a simple correlation: grades reflect the quality of work. Since this course’s goal is manifested in how much and how well you have learned, your grade will reflect that.

Here is how the grading works:

Grade*	Grading Standard
A 94-100	Your work is outstanding and <u>ready for submission in a professional environment</u> . Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.
A- 90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. <u>Overall, excellent work</u> .
B+ 87-89	Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but <u>needs some minor work</u> .
B 83-86	<u>Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort</u> . Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a “B” is viewed as unacceptable.
B- 80-82	You’ve completed the assignment, but you are <u>not meeting all of the requirements</u> .
C+ 77-79	<u>Needs improvement in content and in effort</u> . Shows some motivation and concern.
C 73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. <u>Shows minimal motivation and concern</u> .
C- 70-72 (lowest grade to pass)	<u>Poor performance</u> . Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F Below 70	<u>Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment</u> .

- If an assignment is late, it will be accepted (by prior arrangement) but the grade will be affected. Please be conscious of this.

Deadlines are essential and will be adhered to, since meeting them is a necessary skill for success in your career.

