

PSPR 6203PR – cunninghamSP22

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Strategic Public Relations

Spring 2022

January 10 – March 22, 2022

**Research Methods for Public
Relations and Public Affairs**

PSPR 6203PR 3 Credits

Tuesday 6:10 – 8 p.m.

950 Glebe Road

Arlington, VA

Basic Information and Resources

Instructor

April Cunningham

Contact Information

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Primary email: april.cunningham@gwu.edu

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Communication

Please use the primary GW email address above to contact the instructor. Students should expect a response within 24 hours. If needed, the instructor is available before and/or after class or by appointment.

Textbook Requirement

Croucher, S., & Cronn-Mills D. (2019). Understanding Communication Research Methods: A Theoretical and Practical Approach, second edition

Michaelson, D., & Stacks, D. W. (2017). Professional and practitioner's guide to public relations research, measurement, and evaluation, third edition.

Page and Parnell (2021), Chapter 4 (2021). Introduction to Public Relations: Strategic, Digital, and Socially Responsible Communication

Course Details

Strategic Public Relations Program Objectives

Upon the completion of the Masters in Strategic Public Relations, students will have an enhanced understanding and skills in:

1. The fundamentals of effective, strategic communications;
2. Best practices for writing, media relations, and strategic communications planning and implementation;
3. Leadership in communications on a sound ethical and financial basis;
4. Working with management, staff, and vendor/partners to develop and manage the implementation of effective communications strategies.

Course Description and Overview

The course will provide an overview of applied research techniques with an emphasis on planning and evaluating public relations and corporate communications campaigns in support of business strategies and goals. The course reviews essential qualitative and quantitative research techniques and methods, including focus groups, surveys, traditional and social media analysis, interviews, case studies, and experiential research. Students will gain an appreciation for using research to support and develop effective communication strategies that align with and support an organization's strategic plan.

Course Learning Objectives

As a result of participating in the learning activities in this course, you will be able to:

1. Develop a strong rationale / business case for research and measurement in public relations and corporate communications to support an organization's strategy.
2. Demonstrate the ability to devise a communication / public relations strategy that supports an organization's strategic plan.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of qualitative and quantitative research methods, their pros and cons, and how to incorporate them into your communication strategies and plans.
4. Recognize opportunities to apply research and measurement in a variety of communication, marketing, advertising, and public affairs settings.

5. Demonstrate the ability to design and present your research and evaluation program and move your organization or client towards implementing recommendations based on research and data analysis (i.e., data-informed decision making).

6. Learn core communication and executive skills.

Course Requirements

Students are required to have completed all assigned readings for the week before coming to class. Participation is a key component of the course grade and, as such, students are required to actively engage in class discussions and in-class activities. Lack of participation in discussions or not being prepared will negatively impact a student's grade. Assignments are due as noted on the syllabus and late submittals will result in lost points on that assignment. Due dates may be revised based on class needs

Course Readings

See Blackboard Course Readings folder for weekly course readings. These are updated regularly. Additional suggestions for applicable readings are welcome.

2021 Edelman Trust Barometer. (n.d.).

<https://www.edelman.com/trust/2021-trust-barometer>

Anderson, F. W. (2014, January 6). Reputation, research, relationships and messages: 11 tips for doing more successful online surveys.

<http://forrestwanderson.blogspot.com/2014/01/11-tips-for-doing-more-successful.html>

Bagnall, R. (2017, June 11). The definitive guide: why aces are invalid - amec.

<https://amecorg.com/2017/06/the-definitive-guide-why-aves-are-invalid/>

Bailey, C., & Shantz, A. (2018). Building an ethically strong organization.

<https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/creating-an-ethically-strong-organization/>

Barcelona Principles 2.0 - Updated 2015. (2015, September 3). Retrieved January 10, 2019, from <https://instituteforpr.org/barcelona-principles-2-0-updated-2015/>

Berinato, S. (2019, January 1). Data science and the art of persuasion. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2019/01/data-science-and-the-art-of-persuasion>

Crowe, Anna. (2018, September 19). A complete guide to Google Analytics. Search Engine Journal. <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/complete-guide-google-analytics/263087/#close>

Gallo, A. (2018, October 31). 4 Analytics concepts every manager should understand. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2018/10/4-analytics-concepts-every-manager-should-understand>

Hootsuite Media. (n.d.). Demystifying social roi. <https://hootsuite.com/resources/demystifying-social-roi>

IPR Measurement Commission. (n.d.). <https://instituteforpr.org/ipr-measurement-commission/about/>

Jackson, D. (2018, April 2). All of the social media metrics that matter. <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-metrics-that-matter/>

Jeffrey, A. (2013, June 6). Social media measurement: a step-by-step approach. <https://instituteforpr.org/social-media-measurement-a-step-by-step-approach/>

Kenny, G. (2016, June 21). Strategic plans are less important than strategic planning. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2016/06/strategic-plans-are-less-important-than-strategic-planning>

Kochhar, S., & Perry, M. B. (2019, January 7). Top 10 public relations research insights of 2018. <https://instituteforpr.org/top-10-public-relations-research-insights-of-2018/>

Lee, R., Ketter, S., & Perrin, A. (2019, July 22). Trust and distrust in America. Pew Research Center. <https://www.people-press.org/2019/07/22/trust-and-distrust-in-america/>

Lindemann, W. (2011, February 6). Guidelines and standards for measuring the effectiveness of pr programs and activities. <https://instituteforpr.org/effectiveness-programs-activities/>

Marx, W. (2017, August 6). PR measurement: 12 important pr metrics that you need to monitor. <https://b2bprblog.marxcommunications.com/b2bpr/pr-measurement-important-metrics>

Michaelson, D., & Stacks, D. W. (2017). Professional and practitioner's guide to public relations research, measurement, and evaluation, third edition.

Page, J.T., & Parnell, L.J. (2021). Introduction to Public Relations. Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (Chapters 4 and 5)

Paine, K. D. (2013). Measure what matters: online tools for understanding customers, social media, engagement, and key relationships. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley.

Peterson, A. (2018, September 26). The big deal about big data & pr.

<https://www.commpro.biz/the-big-deal-about-big-data-pr/>

Reichheld, F. (2003, December 1). One number you need to grow (HBR Onpoint Enhanced Edition). <https://hbr.org/product/one-number-you-need-to-grow-hbr-onpoint-enhanced-edition/5534-PDF-ENG>

Shleyner, E. (2018, June 18). 19 social media metrics that really matter—and how to track them. <https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-metrics/>

Stacks, D. W. (2011). Primer of public relations research (2nd ed). New York: Guilford Press.

Strategic planning. (2018, April 2). <https://www.bain.com/insights/management-tools-strategic-planning/>

The pr professionals definitive guide to measurement. (n.d.).

<https://prguidetomeasurement.org/>

Stalhkopf, Christina. (2019, October 18). Where Net Promoter Score Goes Wrong. Harvard Business Review <https://hbr.org/2019/10/where-net-promoter-score-goes-wrong>

Troyanos, Kevin. (2018, October 25). How to make sure you're not using data just to justify decisions you've already made. Harvard Business Review <https://hbr.org/2018/10/how-to-make-sure-youre-not-using-data-just-to-justify-decisions-youve-already-made>

Weiner, M., (2020, January 15). Dispel these nine measurement myths in 2020 en route to success. <https://www.cision.com/us/2020/01/dispel-these-nine-measurement-myths-in-2020-en-route-to-success/>

Weiner, M. (2016, February 23). Eleven questions you must ask before conducting public relations research. <http://prime-research.com/en/2016/02/eleven-questions-must-ask-conducting-public-relations-research/>

Weiner, M., & Kochhar, S. (2016, April 7). Irreversible: the public relations big data revolution. <https://instituteforpr.org/irreversible-public-relations-big-data-revolution/>

Weiner, M. (2017, November 22). The importance of measurable public relations. <http://prime-research.com/en/2017/11/importance-measureable-public-relations/>

Optional Readings

HBR Guide to Data Analytics Basics for Managers. (2018). Harvard Business Review Press. Boston, Mass.

Kanter, B., Delahaye Paine, K., & Paarlberg, W. T. (2012). Measuring the networked nonprofit: using data to change the world (First edition). San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, a Wiley Imprint.

Stephens-Davidowitz, S. (2018). Everybody lies: big data, new data, and what the Internet reveals about who we really are.

Watson, T. (2012). The evolution of public relations measurement and evaluation. Public Relations Review, 38(3), 390–398. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.018>

- Additional readings as assigned

Additional Resources

- Blackboard course site

Public Relations & Communications

- Institute for Public Relations – <http://www.instituteforpr.org/> and IPR's Research, Measurement, and Evaluation page – <http://www.instituteforpr.org/category/research/measurement-and-evaluation/>
- International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication, <https://amecorg.com/> and <https://amecorg.com/amecframework/>
- Generally Accepted Practices (GAP), Strategic Communication and Public Relations Center, The Annenberg School, University of Southern California, <http://ascjweb.org/gapstudy/>
- Paine Publishing – <http://painepublishing.com>
- PR Guide to Measurement: <https://prguidetomeasurement.org>
- Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) – Measurement Resources: <http://apps.prsa.org/intelligence/businesscase/measurementresources>
- PRIME research: www.prime-research.com Public Opinion
- Census: <http://census.gov/data.html>
- Edelman Trust Barometer: <https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer>
- FiveThirtyEight: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/>
- Gallup: www.gallup.com
- NORC at The University of Chicago: <https://www.norc.org/>

- Pew Research Center: [Americans' Trust in Government, Each Other, Leaders | Pew Research Center](#)

Data Analytics

- U.S. Government data: www.data.gov / www.usafacts.org
- McKinsey&Company: www.mckinsey.com
- Wharton Customer Analytics Initiatives: <http://wcai.wharton.upenn.edu/about-us/Social>

Media Measurement Tool sites

- Google Analytics – <https://analytics.google.com>
- Hootsuite - <https://hootsuite.com/>
- Meltwater - <https://www.meltwater.com/>
- NetBase - <https://www.netbase.com/> Research & Survey Tools
- AskWonder: <https://askwonder.com/>
- Brandwatch: www.brandwatch.com
- Qualtrics: www.qualtrics.com
- Survey Monkey: www.surveymonkey.com

Graduate School of Political Management – Social Media handles and hashtags

You are welcome to use social media to promote course discussion and with the express permission of our guest speakers.

Facebook: @GSPMgwu

Twitter: @GSPMgwu

Instagram: @gspmgwu

LinkedIn: @The Graduate School of Political Management

Hashtags: #OnlyAtGSPM and #InTheRoom

Tentative Course Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress and availability of guest speakers. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar. Final dates and details will be found on the Blackboard course site

Week	Date	Topics to be Covered
1	January 11	Introduction to the Course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Overview • Introductions • What is research?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of research and measurement • RPIE (Research, Planning, Implementation, & Evaluation) • Formative vs. Evaluative Research • Primary vs. Secondary Research • Quantitative vs. Qualitative Methods • Hypotheses vs. Research Question • Defining the line of inquiry – Problem Statements • How to develop a strategic communication plan <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michaelson, D., & Stacks, D. W. (2017), Chapter 1 – Introduction to Research and Evaluations in Public Relations • Page and Parnell (2021), Chapter 5 – Strategic Communication Planning, Page 100 -106 <p>Homework:</p> <p>Assignment #1 – Discussion Board Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the difference between primary and secondary research? • Why is it important to use research when developing communication strategy? • Why are metrics important to public relations?
2	January 18	<p>Primary and Secondary Research Approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy & strategic planning • Primary and secondary approaches to research and benchmarking • Asking questions • Library Research <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michaelson, D., & Stacks, D. W. (2017), Chapter 5 – Secondary Research • Page and Parnell (2021), Chapter 4 – Strategic Communication Planning, How to Begin, Page 76-80 • Croucher, S., & Cronn-Mills D. (2019), Chapter 7 – Hypotheses and Research Questions, page 77-82 <p>Homework:</p>

		<p>Assignment #2 – Management Memo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose your “client” for the course • Determine an idea for a research project. • Come to class prepared to discuss an idea for a research project. • Bring your organization’s strategy and mission statements.
3	January 25	<p>Research, Measurement, and Metrics to Ensure Business Impact I Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring business (organizational) impact • Aligning public relations metrics to business (organizational) goals • Trust <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edelman Trust Barometer: https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer • Pew Research Center: Americans' Trust in Government, Each Other, Leaders Pew Research Center <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a SWOT Analysis for your organization • Be prepared to discuss in class
4	February 1	<p>Qualitative Research: Focus Groups In-depth Interviews Analysis of the Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth Interview Questions • Developing good questions • Net Promoter Score • Ethnographic Approaches • Analyzing Qualitative Data • Ethics in Research <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michaelson, D., & Stacks, D. W. (2017), Chapter 6 – Qualitative Research Methodologies • Michaelson, D., & Stacks, D. W. (2017), Chapter 7 – Content Analysis <p>Homework:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment #3 – Develop Focus Group Moderator’s Guide
5	February 8	<p>Conducting a Focus Group</p> <p>Assignment 4: Conduct a Focus Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams to conduct a Focus Group on topic of choice • Set the context • Gather feedback • Conduct an analysis of the Results
6	February 15	<p>Quantitative Research: Developing Your Survey</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Jeanine Guidry, PhD, Virginia Commonwealth University, Roberson School of Media and Culture Director (Pending Confirmation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variables (nominal, ordinal, continuous) • Open vs. close-ended questions (Likert-type questions; Semantic Differential Questions) • Reliability and Validity- • Survey best practices: Do’s and Don’ts • Basic statistical concepts (measures of central tendency, knowing what questions to ask; Independent and Dependent variables) <p>Reading:</p> <p>Croucher, S., & Cronn-Mills D. (2019), Chapter 5 – Secondary Research Chapter 9 – Survey Methodology, Chapter 15 – Surveys</p> <p>Homework:</p> <p>Assignment 5 – Develop Interview Questions and Conduct an Interview</p>
7	February 22	<p>Developing a Survey Panel Survey Firms and How to Use Them</p>

		<p>Reading: TBD</p> <p>Homework:</p> <p>Assignment 6 – Create a Survey Analyze a Poll or Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a Survey • Carry out your Survey and Get 50 Responses
8	March 1	<p>Social Media Metrics</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Jillian Adams, National Guard Bureau, Social Media and Digital Director (Pending Confirmation)</p> <p>Reading:</p> <p>Croucher, S., & Cronn-Mills D. (2019), Chapter 5, Social Media and Research Methods</p> <p>Homework:</p> <p>Assignment #7: Develop a Measurement Dashboard</p>
9	March 8	<p>Assignment #8: Present Research Plan and Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present findings or final research + our metrics and dashboard • (10 minutes total) • Respond to questions • Receive feedback
Spring Break March 16-17		
10	March 22	<p>Assignment #8: Present Research Plan and Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present findings or final research + our metrics and dashboard • (10 minutes total) • Respond to questions • Receive feedback <p>Assignment #9: Listen to a Podcast</p>

Assignment Details

Assignment 1: Blackboard Discussion:

- Based on the required reading, address the following questions:
 - What is the difference between primary and secondary research?
 - Why is it important to use research when developing communication strategy?
 - Why are metrics important to public relations?
- Maximum 500 words on your discussion board.
- Maximum of 250 words on two of your classmate's discussion board.

Assignment 2: Management Memo – Justification for Research

- Memo presenting the business case for research
- Maximum 1000 words

Use your own work or situation in your area of interest to draft the memo.

Write a memo (maximum 1,000 words) in the first person to your boss laying out your argument why it's important to spend some of the organization's limited funds on communications research. Your business memo must include the following elements:

- An Objective Statement for your research:
- Why do this research?
- What is the specific, critical knowledge that you hope to develop?
- How will this knowledge inform important decisions for the organization?
- How does it fit into your business strategy?
- What topics your research will need to explore and why?
- Relevant communications expert knowledge and benchmarking that supports your argument for research.
- Your planning process for developing the research and gaining organizational buy-in.

Name your memo as follows: Your Name + Management Memo + Topic e.g., Jana Smith + Management Memo + PRSA Membership

You should be prepared to present your argument for funding in class.

Assignment #3: Develop a Focus Group Moderator Guide

For this assignment, you will develop a Focus Group Moderator Guide that you will later use to conduct your focus group.

- Develop focus group questions
- Develop an invitation to participants
- Develop a follow up communication
- Conduct an Analysis of the Results

Name your Focus Group Moderator Guide as follows: Your Name + Focus Group Moderator Guide + Topic

Assignment #4: Conduct a Focus Group

For this assignment, you will conduct a focus group. As part of this assignment, you will:

- Conduct a focus group in class

In pairs or trios, you will devise a scenario for your focus group. You will set up the classroom, welcome participants, introduce yourselves, and conduct a short online focus group (approximately 20 minutes each, followed by a 10 minute debrief during which you will receive constructive feedback).

- After completing your focus group, you will upload your complete focus group materials (your focus group invitation, your focus group guide, i.e., questions + probes, and follow up thank you note) as a single document to Blackboard. Each member of the team should upload the assignment so that you can each receive a grade.

Name your focus group assignment as follows: Your Name + Focus Group + Topic

Assignment #5. Develop Interview Questions and Conduct an Interview

Individual interviews are useful to both gather information and to help hone other research and evaluation tools like surveys and focus groups.

Develop a short set of interview questions and conduct an interview with someone on your topic of choice.

Post your completed interview with a summary of the responses on Blackboard. Name your interview as follows: Your Name + Interview + Topic

Assignment #6. Develop a Survey

- Develop a 10-Question Survey on a topic of your choice.
- Develop an introduction for your survey (e.g., email, script for a phone interview, or letter to participants, etc.)
- Develop a cover memo for the survey to send to your boss for approval.

The survey should include an opening introduction laying out the intent of the survey, how long it should take, as well as closing comments to wrap up the survey.

You will need to subscribe to a free version of the Survey Monkey software at SurveyMonkey. It is user-friendly. The software has prompts for creating a questionnaire.

Also, read SurveyMonkey's tips and guides on developing good questions. SurveyMonkey has a variety of templates that you can use for reference. However, your survey should help you achieve your research goals.

- Prepare a Cover Memo to your boss to accompany the survey.

The memo should be no more than 300 words. The memo should demonstrate a clear understanding of the research need and methodology. The goal of the memo is to brief your boss on the proposed survey.

You will submit your cover memo, invitation to your survey, and your survey as a single document to Blackboard for a grade.

Name your survey assignment as follows: Your Name + Survey + Topic

Assignment #6: Analyze a Survey or Poll of Interest to you

Find a poll or survey of interest to you. Write a 2 – 5-page paper analyzing the survey or poll. Be sure to answer these questions as part of your analysis:

- What were the sponsors of the survey attempting to learn?
- How is the survey data being used to support the sponsor's position or strategy or inform the public?
- What do you like / dislike or want to know more about this poll or survey?

- How has your analysis of this poll / survey affected your thinking about research and evaluation?
- What are your key takeaways from the poll/survey? You will do this paper on your own. Post your paper to Blackboard. Name your writing assignment as follows: Your Name + Analysis + Topic (i.e., the name of your topic such as Views on Health Care, Attitudes on Climate Change, etc.)

Assignment #7: Develop a Measurement Dashboard

- Develop a communication dashboard. This can be a 2 – 3-page slide presentation. Develop a dashboard to measure the desired outcomes and effectiveness of your communication strategy, program, campaign or initiative for presentation to executives. The dashboard should:
 - Feature a set of core metrics
 - Allow you to draw conclusions about impact
 - Identify areas where additional information or research would be useful
 - Be easy to read.

You will present your communication dashboard in class and receive feedback in conjunction with the presentation of your research plan. (Note: You may want to develop a more extensive dashboard that would be used by a public relations / communications team along with the shorter, more concise version of the dashboard to share with executives.)

Name your dashboard as follows: Your Name(s) + Dashboard + Topic

Assignment #8: Present Research Plan & Findings

- Develop and present a Research Plan

Students will provide a short (5-10 minute) overview of their research and evaluation plan for class discussion and comment. The discussion is intended to help students finalize their approach and brainstorm ways to address any questions about an appropriate approach.

- Present final plan / findings to include making recommendations based on findings.
- This should be presented as both a document and a presentation.

Name your research project as follows: Your Name(s) + Name of Research Project

If you worked with a partner, you should each upload the Research Plan & Findings to Blackboard

Assignment #9: Listen to a Podcast

This is part of your class participation.

Find a podcast or TED Talk on a course-related topic such as PR research, data analytics, data storytelling, polling, surveys, the state of trust, etc. Share your reflections on the podcast on the Podcast Discussion Forum along with a link to the podcast or TED Talk. This will allow the class to create a resource library.

- Maximum 500 words on your discussion board.
- Maximum of 250 words on two of your classmate’s discussion board

Summary of Assignments and Dues Dates for Uploading to Blackboard

	Assignment	Points	Due Date
#1	Discussion Board	5	January 18
#2	Management Memo	5	January 25
#3	Develop a Focus Group Moderator’s Guide	10	February 8
#4	Conduct a Focus Group	10	February 8
#5	Develop Interview Questions and Conduct a Survey	10	February 22
#6	Analyze a Poll or Survey	5	March 1
#7	Develop a Measurement Dashboard	10	March 8
#8	Present Research Plan & Findings	20	March 8 & 22
#9	Listen to a Podcast (Class Participation)	5	March 22
	Class Participation	20	Ongoing & March 22
	Total	100	100%

Grading

	Assignment	Points	Percentage
#1	Discussion Board	5	5%
#2	Management Memo	5	5%
#3	Develop a Focus Group Moderator’s Guide	10	10%
#4	Conduct a Focus Group	10	10%
#5	Develop a Survey	10	10%
#6	Analyze a Poll or Survey	5	5%
#7	Develop a Measurement Dashboard	10	10%
#8	Present Research Plan & Findings	20	20%
#9	Listen to a Podcast (Class Participation)	5	5%

Class Participation	20	20%
Total	100	100%

Grading Scale

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

*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

Biography

April Cunningham is the Communication and Marketing Chief in the Office of Strategic Engagement, Veteran Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration. She oversees a team of seven employees in her role. Her primary responsibility is to manage public relations and marketing functions for strategic engagement and communications.

Prior to the VBA, Ms. Cunningham was the Acting Media Operations Branch Chief and official spokesperson for the National Guard Bureau. She led a three-person team to support public affairs professionals in 54 states, territories, and the District of Columbia. She directly worked with National Guard subject matter experts to develop messaging and strategy highlighting the Guard's role during natural disasters, pandemics, civil unrest, and other missions through news and social media.

She brings more than 28 years of communications experience engaging news media, community, employee relations, and developing risk communication strategies. She has extensive experience in leading and managing personnel and advising senior/executive management. She has contributed to developing public affairs and marketing solutions in the military, federal agencies, and private sector. As a Pentagon spokesperson, she has worked closely with legislative affairs and other federal agencies to roll out major programs in cyber security, space, countering weapons of mass destruction, and information technology policy.

Prior to the National Guard Bureau, Ms. Cunningham was a public affairs specialist at the Department of the Army overseeing tough personnel portfolios, such sexual assault, suicides, transgender, women in combat, general officer misconduct, and military casualties.

Ms. Cunningham served 25 years in the U.S. Army, Army Reserve, and Air Force. She served as a public affairs and recruiting officer in the U.S. Air Force and retired as a lieutenant colonel. During her time in the Air Force, she served as the official spokesperson for the USAF, U.S. Northern Command, and the Defense Department.

She has a Master's in Strategic Public Relations from George Washington University, a Master's in Public Administration from Troy State University, and a bachelor's degree in Public Relations from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. She holds a certificate in Strategic Communications Management from Purdue University with a focus in strategic, global, and crisis communication.

Ms. Cunningham has served as an adjunct professor and business owner. She is a leader of communication programs at her local church, a member of Public Relations

Society of America (PRSA), and a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, a private, not-for-profit organization providing support to local communities through established programs.

Expectations and Responsibilities

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site regularly throughout the semester to review weekly course content, view announcements, and submit assignments. Students can access the course site through [GWU Blackboard](#).

Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or the IT Blackboard web page. Please note that your access to this course on Blackboard will continue for one month after the course ends. If you wish to keep any work or materials, you must download or save them before the course closes

Technology Requirements

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the required technology to fully participate in this course. The minimum technology requirements for learning online at GW are outlined on the Technical Requirements and Support web page.

If you have any problems with the technology in this course, you can seek technological support from GW in a variety of ways, outlined on the IT Support website.

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 for missed classes.

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 exams;
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:

Professor Lawrence Parnell Director
Strategic Public Relations Program
lparnell@gwu.edu
703-299-4150

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