

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Strategic Public Relations

Fall 2018

August 27/December 10

Course Name

PSPR 6201.PR

3 Credits

Tuesdays - 7:10-9:40 p.m.

Alexandria Graduate Education Center

1925 Ballenger (near King Street metro)

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

Lawrence J. Parnell ; BS, Journalism; MBA

Contact Information

Phone Number: (703) 299 4150 (o); (571) 334 6872 (cell, text ONLY if necessary)

Email Address: lparnell@gwu.edu

Communication

Instructor is available prior to class (5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.) and at mutually convenient times arranged in advance by the student and the instructor.

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 <https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/>.

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.

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.

Out-of-Class/ Independent Learning Expectation

Over the course of the semester, students will spend at least 2 hours (100 minutes) per week in class. Required reading for the class meetings and written response papers or projects are expected to take up, on average, 7 hours (350 minutes) per week. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 25 hours in instructional time and 87.5 hours preparing for class.

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 of the following:

Dr. Jack Prostko
Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development
College of Professional Studies
jackp@gwu.edu | 202-994-3592

Suzanne Farrand
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309

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 and implementation);
3. Leadership in strategic public relations on a sound ethical and financial basis;
4. Working with management and staff/vendors to develop and manage the implementation of effective communications strategies.

Course Description and Overview

This graduate course (PSPR 6201) will trace the history and development of modern public relations, survey the major theories that guide strategic public relations planning and examine how they are applied by business, government and non-profit communications professionals. It will also introduce the student to communications planning and current tactics to accomplish communications objectives. In your subsequent classes in the program, 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, monitoring, and evaluating a strategic public relations campaign. Lectures, guest speakers and readings will cover key campaign components and 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 in which public relations operates and the dynamics changing the profession;
2. Develop and utilize the capabilities essential to perform the multifaceted role of a strategic public relations professional;
3. Develop, implement, and assess a comprehensive public relations plan that includes social media technologies;

4. Strengthen writing and oral presentation skills relevant to public relations roles through group/individual assignments and class discussions.

Required Textbooks

Introduction to Strategic Public Relations, First Edition; Janis T. Page, PhD and Professor Lawrence J. Parnell. Sage Publications; ISBN 9781506358031.

Corporate Communications, Seventh Edition – Paul Argenti, PhD, McGraw Hill 2015; ISBN 978-0073403274

Strategic Planning for Public Relations - 4th Edition - Ronald D. Smith, Routledge 2013. ISBN – 978-0-415-50676-2 (paperback)

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 texts/resources

The Washington Post; The Wall Street Journal; Politico; PR Week and PR News
(Note: subscriptions required, student rates are available).

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

The Institute for Public Relations – offers 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 international association of communications professionals and academics. Research papers, newsletters, job openings and networking opportunities are listed here.

NOTE: GWU Master's in Strategic PR students are encouraged to join and participate in PRSA National and National Capital Chapter networking and learning events. More info is available at <https://www.prsa.org/?s=National+Capital+Chapter> - including a discounted rate for GW PR grad students.

Assignments

All assignments will be graded according to the quality of the analysis, critical thinking and writing demonstrated by the student. Please turn in all assignments electronically via Blackboard.

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

Use 12-point type; AP style (consult the stylebook) and APA style for citations.
Graduate school level spelling, grammar and composition quality are expected.

Notes:

1. In class quizzes will be given to assess students' review and understanding of assigned reading materials.
2. You will have an opportunity to revise your initial assignment (only) for a higher grade – with the instructor's consent and approval.

ASSIGNMENTS – All assignments must be completed and turned in before the start of class the day they are due.

Assignment #1

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

Answer two questions – in depth will require additional research beyond the text:

1. What did he or she mean to the development of the profession?
2. Why is she/he meaningful to you?

750 words (5 pages), 12-point type, double-spaced)

This is an individual assignment.

Assigned Week 1 (Tuesday, August 28th);

Due Friday, September 7th, close of business, (COB)

Assignment #2

Research and prepare a short paper (**750 - 1,000 words, 5 pages**) on the impact of digital and social media on strategic public relations in either a corporate, non-profit or government/political setting. Use a short case study example to illustrate your key points.

Key questions:

1. What has been the overall impact to date?
2. How did digital communications factor into your example(s)?
3. What do you foresee for the future?

Assigned Week 3 (Tuesday September 11th);

Due Friday, September 21st, COB.

Assignment #3 – Group Project

Assigned October 2nd; due Friday October 19th, COB.

Case Study – 25-page paper, plus in class PowerPoint presentation.

(Groups will be formed/approved by Prof in class).

The class will divide into small groups – 3-4 per group, depending on the size of the class. Each team will prepare an in-depth analysis of a recent case that focuses on one area of SPR 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 submitted to and approved by the instructor prior to beginning work.

Class time will be set aside on a rotating basis for group presentations (October 23rd and 30th)

The presentation should involve all group members and last no more than 20 minutes, including Q&A. NOTE: Time limits will be enforced. The presentations will be part of your grade for the project. 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 setting and this project will improve your ability to work as part of a team. It will also provide an opportunity to develop your oral presentation and speaking skills.

Assignment #4 – Final paper: Individual assignment.

Assigned Nov 6th, *Final due Nov 27th

**Required interim step: Final draft due by 11/20 for review/edits. Returned by 11/23*

Your analysis of how a company, non-profit, government agency, or politician/candidate/government official uses/used strategic public relations and assess their effectiveness. Your paper must include “next steps” recommendations. The paper should be 15 pages long and researched, properly sourced, and well written.

Details: Pick one company, non-profit group, government agency, or political candidate/government official – subject to the approval of the instructor. Analyze the use of strategic public relations to raise their profile, address issues, improve their bottom line (company), advance their agenda (non-profit), or win an election/advance a cause or issue (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.

CLASS SCHEDULE: -

A detailed class schedule (Topics, speakers, readings) will be distributed/reviewed Week 1.

Notes:

Nov 20th - no class - *Thanksgiving Week (work on Final Paper instead)*

LAST class Nov 27th – Location/Topic is TBD.

Evaluation and Grading –

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed (see page 3)	Due Date (papers/projects due before start of class)	Weight
History of PR paper	2, 4	Week 2	12.5%
Impact of Social Media paper	1,4	Week 5	12.5%
Group Project	3	Week 9	25%
Term Paper	3,4	Week 13	30%
Class Participation*	1,2	Ongoing	15%
Quizzes		ongoing	5%

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 abilities displayed
- Application of Communications Theory and Practice to current challenges and situations
- Ability to work in a group setting (where applicable)
- Presentation skills (where applicable)
- Contributions to class discussion

*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.

However, if you 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 (Noon of class day) if they will miss class. Missing more than 2 classes can 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 learn, your grade should 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</u> performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

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

Meeting deadlines is a necessary skill for success in life and your career in SPR.

Prof P