BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor
Angelo Ioffreda, MBA, MA, PCC

Contact Information
Phone: 703-338-6591
Primary email: aioffreda@gwu.edu
Secondary email: aioffreda@aol.com

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.

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 assignment submission and 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 https://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 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, we will regroup across the street in front of the classroom building 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
Attendance and participation are critical components of the learning process and are a key factor in student grades. Students are expected to attend each class and should notify the instructor in advance of any planned absences. Students’ participation scores will be negatively affected by unexcused absences and by not participating in class discussions or in-class activities. Students may miss up to two classes during the semester due to illness or work responsibilities. Students who miss more than two classes for any reason should speak with the professor about making up class time.

Out-of-Class/ Independent Learning Expectation
Over the course of the semester, students will spend at least 2 hours (120 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/all of the following:
THE COURSE

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. Not
participating 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.

https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer

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


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


Review.

Engine Journal.
https://www.searchenginejournal.com/complete-guide-google-analytics/263087/#close


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](https://b2bprblog.marxcommunications.com/b2bpr/pr-measurement-important-metrics)


The pr professionals definitive guide to measurement. (n.d.). https://prguidetomeasurement.org/


Optional Readings


- Additional readings as assigned

**Additional Resources**

- Blackboard course site

**Public Relations & Communications**

- Generally Accepted Practices (GAP), Strategic Communication and Public Relations Center, The Annenberg School, University of Southern California, [http://ascjweb.org/gapstudy/](http://ascjweb.org/gapstudy/)
- PR Guide to Measurement: [https://prguidetomeasurement.org](https://prguidetomeasurement.org)
- Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) – Measurement Resources: [http://apps.prsa.org/intelligence/businesscase/measurementresources](http://apps.prsa.org/intelligence/businesscase/measurementresources)
- PRIME research: [www.prime-research.com](http://www.prime-research.com)

**Public Opinion**

- Census: [http://census.gov/data.html](http://census.gov/data.html)
- Edelman Trust Barometer 2019: [https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer](https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer)
- FiveThirtyEight: [https://fivethirtyeight.com/](https://fivethirtyeight.com/)
- Gallup: [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com)
- Pew Research Center: [http://www.pewtrusts.org](http://www.pewtrusts.org)

**Data Analytics**

- Wharton Customer Analytics Initiatives: [http://wcai.wharton.upenn.edu/about-us/](http://wcai.wharton.upenn.edu/about-us/)

**Social Media Measurement Tool sites**

- Google Analytics – https://analytics.google.com
- Hootsuite - [https://hootsuite.com/](https://hootsuite.com/)
- Meltwater - [https://www.meltwater.com/](https://www.meltwater.com/)
- NetBase - [https://www.netbase.com/](https://www.netbase.com/)
Research and Writing Help
For help with research, such as search strategies and finding specific types of information, please contact:

Joscelyn Leventhal
Online Education and Off-Campus Services Librarian
Gelman Library
The George Washington University
2130 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20052

To schedule an appointment, please visit https://calendly.com/leventhal
202-994-5680 | leventhal@gwu.edu

For a consultation with the next available librarian, please see https://library.gwu.edu/reference/research-consultations

For help with writing and organizing your thoughts and papers, please contact the Writing Center at https://writingcenter.gwu.edu/about.

Both Research and Writing support are available in-person and online.

Graduate School of Political Management – Social Media handles and hashtags

Facebook: @GSPMgwu
Twitter: @GSPMgwu
Instagram: @gspmgwu
LinkedIn: @The Graduate School of Political Management
Hashtags: #OnlyAtGSPM and #InTheRoom

Course Calendar
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics to be covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 13</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Course Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The importance of research and measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event/Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 20</td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – no class</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 27</td>
<td>Primary and Secondary Research Approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strategy &amp; strategic planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Primary and secondary approaches to research and benchmarking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue to refine research plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Research, Measurement, and Metrics to Ensure Business Impact I Research Ethics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensuring business impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Aligning public relations metrics to business goals</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 17</td>
<td>No class – President’s Day</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Assignment:**
- Come to class prepared to discuss an idea for a research project.
- Bring your organization’s strategy and mission statements.

**Homework:**
- Conduct a SWOT analysis for your organization.
- Be prepared to discuss in class.

**Guest Speaker:** John Friedman, Manager, Sustainability, WGL Holdings, Inc.

**Other Research Approaches**
- Net Promoter Score
- Ethnographic Approaches
- Interviews
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 24</td>
<td><strong>Social Media Metrics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Measuring the impact of social media</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What can we measure?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Which measures matter most?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Guest speaker:</strong> To be confirmed</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Developing Survey Questions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Asking the right questions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Avoiding bad questions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Determining the right sample</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Determining the survey method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>March 2</td>
<td><strong>Surveys and Focus Groups</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue discussion of developing good questions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify and analyze a survey to be shared in class</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What are its strengths and weaknesses?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What are good questions?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What recommendations for further action might you make based on the results?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>March 9</td>
<td><strong>Conduct a Focus Group</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Each team to conduct a focus group on a topic of choice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop questions &amp; probes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Determine sample</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Set the context</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Manage invitations and follow up</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Conduct a focus group</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Gather feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 16</td>
<td><strong>Conduct a Focus Group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue with focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 23</td>
<td><strong>Trust I Cutting edge research techniques and tools</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| March 30 | **Present Research Plan**  
- Present findings or final research plan (10 minutes total)  
- Respond to questions  
- Receive feedback  

**Conduct a Focus Group**  
- Finish remaining focus groups (if needed) |
| April 6 | **Understanding and Creating Measurable Communication Objectives**  
**Guest speaker:** To be confirmed  
**Present Research Plan (Continued)**  
- Present findings or final research plan (10 minutes total)  
- Respond to questions  
- Receive feedback |
| April 13 | **Present Research Plan (Continued)**  
- Present your research plan or findings  
- Gather feedback |
| April 20 | **Metrics Dashboard**  
- Present your metrics dashboard (5 – 10 minutes each)  
- Gather feedback (and refine as needed)  
- Summary discussion |
| April 27 | **Metrics Dashboard & Course Wrap Up**  
- Present your metrics dashboard  
- Summary discussion |
Assignments

The assignments are designed to help you learn the thought process and elements that go into developing a comprehensive research plan. You will receive a great deal of feedback along the way. As you gain practice and confidence, you will be ready to put the elements together to create and share your own research and evaluation plan. You may work with a partner on a research project throughout the course. Please let the instructor know if you will be partnering with someone on a research project.

For each of the assignments below, I strongly encourage you to adapt it to your actual job or interests as long as you meet all requirements of the assignment.

Assignment 1: 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

You will present your argument for funding in class.

Assignment #2. 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 on Blackboard.

Name your interview as follows: **Your Name + Interview**

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**Assignment #3. Develop a Survey**

- Develop a 10-Question Survey on a topic of your choice.
- Develop an introduction for your survey (e.g., email, or script for a phone interview)
- 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 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.

- 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**

You will also post a link to your survey in the discussion forum on Blackboard for others to take and provide feedback on your survey.

- Each student should take and comment on five (5) surveys by your classmates.
- Your comments on others’ surveys count towards your class participation.
- Provide useful and specific feedback.

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**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
• Develop focus group questions
• Develop an invitation to participants
• Develop a follow up communication

In pairs, you will devise a scenario for your focus group. You will set up the classroom, welcome participants, introduce yourselves, and conduct a short 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.

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

Assignment #5: 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 takeways 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 #6: 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.

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**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. (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**

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Summary of Assignments and Dues Dates for Uploading to Blackboard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Management Memo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Conduct an Interview</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb. 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Develop a Survey</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 Conduct a Focus Group</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 Analyze a Poll or Survey</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>April 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 Present Research Plan &amp; Findings</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>April 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7 Develop a Measurement Dashboard</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>April 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</table>

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Management Memo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Conduct an Interview</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>#3 Develop a Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>#4 Conduct a Focus Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>#5 Analyze a Poll or Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>#6 Present Research Plan &amp; Findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>#7 Develop a Measurement Dashboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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The following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

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

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

Angelo Ioffreda is a strategic communications and management consultant and an ICF (International Coach Federation) certified leadership coach. He is the founder and chief engagement officer of io spark communications (www.iospark.biz) of Arlington, VA.

He has more than 25 years of experience helping leaders and organizations more effectively lead, manage, and navigate change, innovate, and engage employees. Angelo has held leadership roles with NII Holdings, IFC, the private sector arm of The World Bank Group, Sodexo, AOL & AOL Time Warner, RLM Strategic Communications, and the U.S. Department of State.

Angelo brings insights and experience from having worked across sectors, industries, and organizations. Areas of expertise include leading and managing change, strategic and leadership communications, strategy development, strategic planning and alignment, metrics and measurement, leadership development, team building, facilitation, organizational effectiveness and transformation, employee and brand engagement, global and cross-cultural communications, and social media and digital strategies. Angelo is certified in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), The Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI), The Leadership Circle Profile 360, and DiSC. He is a fluent Spanish speaker.

Angelo has presented widely on communication topics at conferences by The Conference Board, Melcrum, The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), J. Boye, Marcus Evans, and the Key Leadership program on a variety of communication and leadership topics. During 2011, he served as president of the DC Metro Chapter of IABC, the largest in the U.S. and the second largest in the world.

Angelo is also an adjunct professor in American University’s Key Executive Leadership Program for senior government executives and Key’s MPA program. He authored the chapter on “Communicating to Drive Engagement and Trust” in The Handbook of Federal Government Leadership and Administration: Transforming, Performing, and Innovating in a Complex World.

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