

The Graduate School
of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Strategic Public Relations

Spring 2 2022

PSPR 6206

Applied Ethics in PR/PA

Thursdays 6:10 – 8 PM

April 7 – June 9, 2022

Three (3) credits

Arlington Center – room TBD

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

Lawrence J. Parnell
Associate Professor &
Program Director

Contact Information

Phone Number: 202 994 2685
Email: lparnell@gwu.edu

Communication

Instructor is available during office hours before class (4 PM to 6PM) on class nights. Otherwise, I am available via email or we can set up a virtual meeting to discuss classwork, career development and/or other matters impacting your academic performance.

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. This will be the primary venue for 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>.

University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays

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

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/>.

Title IX: Confidentiality and Responsible Employee Statement

The George Washington University (GWU) and its faculty are committed to helping create a safe and open learning environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. GWU strongly encourages all members of the community to take action, seek support and report incidents of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Office. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty members are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Mental Health Services through Colonial Health (counselors are available 24/7 at 202-994-5300 or you can make an appointment to see a counselor in person.). For more information about reporting options and resources at GWU and the community, please visit <https://haven.gwu.edu/>.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend ALL in person classes unless an absence has been excused in advance or due to illness. Students are also expected to participate fully in independent (asynchronous) activities and any virtual classes and to keep their cameras on during the class. If a student is absent from a class, participation points can NOT be made up.

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/all of the following:

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

Suzanne Farrand
Assistant Dean of Students, CPS
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309

Overview: SPR Program and Course: PSPR 6206

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 communications on a sound ethical and financial basis;
4. Working with management and staff/vendors to develop and manage the implementation of effective communications strategies.

Graduate School Expectations

Students enrolled in a graduate program should take their academic responsibilities seriously and be prepared to meet the following expectations:

1. Utilize effective time management skills so as to complete and submit their assignments on their required due dates and times.
2. Have attained a mastery of written communication skills including proper sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and word usage.
3. Understand how to properly format in-text citations and references for resources and information integrated into their written assignments.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Develop a solid understanding of the foundational elements of ethics
2. Apply that knowledge to strategic public relations and public affairs
3. Design and implement ethical strategies to address communications issues and market opportunities for clients or employers.

Course Description and Overview

Format

This is a 10-week class and consists of a combination of in person classes (2 hours/week) and asynchronous student learning activities (approximately 1 hour/week).

Activities include biweekly posts and class discussion of current events involving ethics (*weeks 2,4,6 & 8*) and reviewing video interviews or case studies; (*weeks 3,5,7 & 9*) that address applied ethics in government, non-profit, corporate and agency settings.

Other **activities** (*weeks 1 & 10*) will involve student posts/papers based on individual reflections of applied ethics in PR/PA.

Tests and assignments

There will be short quiz (open book) during week 4. The quiz is designed to assess student's grasp of the fundamentals of ethics theory and practice based on the readings to date.

A personal essay (250-500 words) is due week two. This will be an initial assessment of the ethical challenges students see in their current or future PR/PA work AND how they deal - or plan to deal- with them.

Two class projects will be assigned, and are to be submitted before class the week they are due.

They include:

- 1) research and preparation of an in-depth case study (group project) to be presented in class Week 7
- 2) an essay or short video on professional ethics in PR/PA. . To prepared by each student, due week 10. Ideally this will reflect an enhanced understanding of ethics as compared to the initial essay.

Evaluation and Grading

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed	Due Date	Weight
Assignment 1	PERSONAL ESSAY	Week 2	10%
Test	BASICS OF ETHICS	Week 4	10%
Assignment 2	GROUP PROJECT – CASE STUDY	Week 7	30%
Assignment 3	FINAL PAPER/VIDEO	Week 10	30%
Attendance and Participation	IN PERSON AND VIRTUAL SESSIONS	All	20%
Total			100%

Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

Grade*	Grading 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	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.
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).

Required Text and Learning Materials

1. ***Legal and Ethical Considerations for Public Relations, Third Edition*** by Karla K. Gower, ISBN- 13: 978-1478635819, copyright 2018
2. ***Ethics in Public Relations: A guide to best practice, Third Edition*** by Patricia J. Parsons, ISBN- 13: 978-0749477264, copyright 2016
3. ***Public Relations Ethics How to Practice PR Without Losing Your Soul*** by Dick Martin and Donald K. Wright, ISBN 9781631571466, copyright 2016

Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials

These will be posted on Blackboard – or distributed via email or in class - periodically by the instructor.

Course Calendar

To be distributed separately vis Blackboard before class.

Copyright Statement

Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants only. The recording and rebroadcasting of such material, by any means, is forbidden.