M.P.S. in Strategic Public Relations
Fall 2015
August 26/December 2

Course Name
PSPR 6201.PR
3 Credits

Tuesdays/7:00-9:15 p.m.
Alexandria Graduate Education Center
1925 Ballenger (near King Street metro)

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor
Lawrence J. Parnell

Contact Information
Phone Number: (703) 299 4150 (o); (571) 334 6872 (cell, 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 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 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.

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

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

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

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

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 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.

Course Description and Overview
This graduate course (PSPR 6201) will survey the major theories that guide strategic public relations, (SPR) and the practice of it by business, government and non-profits – in both the domestic and international arenas. It will also introduce the student to strategic communication planning and tactics to accomplish your communications objectives. In your subsequent classes in the SPR program, you will delve into many of these 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 increasing role of social media in state of the art 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 public relations campaign. Lectures and readings will cover a strategic PR campaign’s components and measuring its effectiveness.

NOTE: Readings for each week should be completed BEFORE coming to class. Students will be expected to post discussion points on the class Black Board site ahead of class (e.g. by Sunday evening before our Tuesday class). The instructor will review the postings and incorporate and/or develop the themes and observations into class discussions and lectures.

Course Learning Objectives
After completing this course, students will:

1. Understand the context in which public relations operates and the dynamics changing the profession, its work, and its value to clients and society;
2. Develop and utilize capabilities essential to performing the multifaceted role of a public relations professional;
3. Develop, implement, and assess a comprehensive public relations strategy that includes social media technologies;
4. Strengthen writing and presentation skills relevant to public relations roles through group/individual assignments and class discussions.
Required Textbooks


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 Institute for Public Relations** – offers a free website with a wealth of research, scholarly and practice-based papers, articles and publications on current trends and practices in PR.
Assignments

All assignments will be graded in terms of the quality of the analysis, critical thinking and writing. 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 AP style (consult the stylebook) and APA style for citations. Graduate school level spelling, grammar and composition are expected.

Note: You may have an opportunity to revise your op-ed and book review assignments (1 and 2) for a higher grade – with the instructor’s consent and approval.

Assignment #1

750 - 1,000-word op ed. Individual assignment.

TOPIC: Public Relations: Opinion piece – The Role of Strategic Public Relations Today

Assigned Week 2; due Week 3 - before class.

Research and prepare a piece of persuasive writing on the key elements of strategic public relations in a corporate, non–profit or government/political setting.

What are the key skills to have – e.g. media relations, social media expertise, research and budget development as well as creativity, situational awareness and high ethical standards? Who is doing it well (e.g. government, corporate, non profit examples)? What makes them effective? What can we observe and learn from them?

Assignment #2

750-word book review - Individual assignment.

Assigned – Week 4, due Week 5

Read a book from the suggested list (to come) and relate the topic/conclusions to the practice of Strategic Public Relations (SPR)

Choose one of the books from the reading list and analyze how the author’s ideas/theory relate to the practice of strategic public relations. Focus on analyzing the concepts and relating them to SPR, rather than just summarizing the book’s ideas.

This exercise is designed to demonstrate your understanding of the challenges and opportunities that public relations professionals confront on a daily basis, and to strengthen your ability to express an opinion persuasively and concisely.
Assignment #3
Assigned week 6 – due week 9

Case Study - (20-page paper plus PowerPoint). Group project.

The class will divide into several teams – depending on the size of the class. Each team will prepare an in depth analysis of one case that focuses on an area we are covering in class – e.g. Crisis and Issues Management; Media Relations, Corporate and Financial communications; Government and Political Communications; CSR etc. The topic must be submitted to and approved by the instructor prior to beginning work.

Class time will set aside on a rotating basis for one or two group presentations per week in the latter half of the semester. The presentation should involve all group members and last no more than 20 minutes. NOTE: Group members will be asked privately to provide the instructor with feedback on the group’s work and the contributions of each member.

Assignment #4

Assigned Week 10 – due Week 13

Term paper - Individual assignment.

Your analysis of how a company, non-profit, government agency, or politician or government official uses public relations and assess their effectiveness in a current day situation– include “next steps” recommendations.

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

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

Outline your subject’s public relations efforts and the context in which they work.
### Evaluation and Grading –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Learning Objective(s) Addressed</th>
<th>Due Date (papers/projects due before start of class)</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,000-word Op Ed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750-word Book Review</td>
<td></td>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td></td>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation*</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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*Class participation is defined as contributing to and participating in class discussions, group work and activity by contributing new ideas or interpretations of the topic/issue being discussed. It does not mean simply attending class. However, if you do miss a class, participation points cannot be made up. Participation also includes completing a course evaluation at the end of the class, during the evaluation period.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade*</th>
<th>Grading Standard</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100 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-</td>
<td>90-93 Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89 Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82 You’ve completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79 Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76 Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72 (lowest grade to pass) Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 70 Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* If an assignment is late, it will be accepted but your grade will be affected. Please be conscious of this.
Class Schedule Overview
(Note: final, detailed schedule to be distributed Week 1)

September 1

Class One
Public Relations Overview: Definition, History and Trends

Readings:
This is P.R., Chapters 1 – 3.
Corporate Communication, Chapter 1 and 2


September 8

Class Two
Overview of Communications Theory and its Application to Strategic PR

Readings:
This is PR – Newsom/Turk and Kruckerberg – Chapter 5

Strategic Planning for Public Relations/Smith – pages 142-168

September 15

Class 3
Strategic Planning for Public Relations

Readings:
Newsom, Turk and Kruckerberg - Chapters 4,10
Corporate Communication/Argenti, Chapter 2 – pages 27 - 44
Smith - Phase Two – Strategy; Three – Tactics; Pages 93-328
September 22

Class Four
PR Tactics Overview:
Media Relations

Readings:
Newsom/Turk/Kruckerberg, Chapter 9
Argenti - Chapter 6

Pew Media Research 2014 (to be posted on Black Board)

Guest Speaker – TBD

September 29

Class Five
PR Tactics:
Internal Communications

Readings:
Argenti – Chapter 7
More to come...

October 6

Class Six
PR Tactics:
Social Media – Strategic Use and Effective Monitoring in SPR

Group Project teams formed – Project assigned

Readings:
Electronic reserves – to come
Cision Research and others

Guest Speaker/Tech Demo – Meltwater/Sysomos/Cision tbd
October 13

Class Seven
PR Tactics:
Research and Measurement

Readings:
Newsom, Turk and Kruckerberg – Part 2 – Chapters 3 and 4
Smith – Phase 4 and Appendix A

October 20

Class Eight
PR Tactics:
Crisis and Issues Management

Readings
Argenti – Chapter 10
Newsom/Turk/Kruckerberg – Chapter 12

October 27

Class Nine
PR Tactics:
Government and Political Communications - Overview

Guest speaker:
Maria Cardona - Principal - Dewey Square Group and member of GSPM Advisory Board

Readings:
Argenti – Chapter 9

*Cinema SPR Film #1 – watch “Wag the Dog” film – available on Amazon or other platforms

November 3
Class Ten
Financial Communications – Overview
Guest Instructor - SPR Prof Karen Vahouny

Readings:
Argenti – Chapters 3 and 8

Cinema SPR: watch either “Too Big to Fail” or “Wall Street” – available on Amazon or other platforms

November 10

Class Eleven
Public Opinion and Strategic Public Relations - Overview

Guest instructor – SPR Prof Dr. Ben Zingman

Readings:
Cinema SPR #4 – “Thank You for Smoking”

November 17

Class Twelve
PR Tactics: CSR/Sustainability Communications

Co-Instructor – SPR Prof Megan Kindelan

Readings –
Argenti – Corporate Communications - Chapter 5
Argenti – Digital Strategies for Powerful Corporate Communications – CSR chapter (e-reserve)

NO class November 24 – Thanksgiving Break
December 1

Class Thirteen - Final Presentations: Students

During this class, students will provide a brief summary of their term paper in a moderated discussion, lead by the instructor.

Each student will provide a brief presentation assessing the public relations process, theories involved and capabilities of a company, non-profit, etc. The instructor will lead a short Q&A/discussion with questions from your classmates, (see below).

Readings:

All final papers are to be posted on Blackboard by Sunday evening, November 29, 2015.

Class members must read two (2) of the papers and post questions/observations by Monday end of day to help the author prepare/focus their remarks to the class.

December 8 – Last Class

Time/Location TBD

Tentative: Panel discussion with SPR alums and Capstone students.
Topics include: Which classes (electives) should I take? Are the GSPM global residencies a good option for me? How do I pick a goof topic for my Capstone?
Also, career and networking advice – how to leverage your time in the program and create job opportunities after you graduate.
Guests and experts – to be determined...

Informal Networking Reception to follow