BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor
Lesley Lopez

Contact Information
Phone Number: (909) 709-7864
Email Address: lesleyjlopez@gmail.com

Communication
Students can reach the instructor via email or GChat during business hours. When emailing the instructor, please write “PSPR 6202” in the subject line and use only lesleyjlopez@gmail.com. Additionally, the instructor will be available before class each week to address any pending questions or concerns.

Blackboard Site
A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site each week for reading and information about assignments, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between instructors and 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://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html.

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 on Carlyle Street 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 is mandatory. If you need to miss a class it is your responsibility to notify the instructor IN ADVANCE and make sure any assignments due that week reach the instructor on time to receive full credit. It is also the student’s responsibility to get lecture notes from a classmate and complete the readings as assigned. Regardless of the reason for missing a class, you will not be able to make up missed class participation points.

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 | 703-29- 4150

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 Overview
In this course, we will examine the fundamentals of writing as the necessary foundation for professional communications. The course comprises two thematic sections: developing writing skills and public relations applications for writing. Through challenging assignments, grammar exercises and rigorous practice, this course supports the student’s achievement of program goals 1 and 2 (see above list) in particular.

Course Learning Objectives
- Strengthening the writing process: developing skills for brainstorming, organizing structure, drafting, editing and revising.
- Cultivating language skills for more effective expression: understanding of grammar, building skills for persuasive writing and mastering techniques.

Course Requirements
- Formatting matters. All work for this class should be typed, have 1” margins and use 12-point Times-Roman font. All press releases, speeches and op-eds must be formatted to fit the medium.
- Punctuality matters. Each class will begin promptly and with a short creative writing exercise, that counts toward the participation grade. Being late is not only disruptive to the classroom environment; it is disruptive to students’ grades.
- When turning in work via email, please put (PSPR 6202) in the subject line.
- Students must use Associated Press style.
- Printed work is due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Late work will be marked down a grade for each class it is late. If a student will miss class, emailing an assignment is acceptable.
- Neatness, punctuation, and grammar count as a significant part of your grade. Any assignment with more than four grammatical errors will be returned with a failing grade. After the midterm, any assignment with more than two grammatical errors will be returned to the student without a grade.
- When a guest speaker visits, students will turn in a one-page essay about the speaker at the beginning of the following class. This is in lieu of in class writing.
• Each week, students will participate in a discussion topic on Blackboard. New topics will be posted after class each Wednesday night and in order to receive participation credit for the week, students must comment before the following class.

Evaluation and Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Assignments</td>
<td>On Going</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Class and Online Participation</td>
<td>On Going</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Project</td>
<td>Oct. 14</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

<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- (lowest grade to pass)</td>
<td>70-72 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>
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</table>

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

Required Text and Learning Materials
Public Relations Writing: The Essentials of Style and Format by Thomas H. Bivins, either 7th or 8th edition

The Political Speechwriter’s Companion: A Guide for Writers and Speakers by Robert Lehrman

Words That Work: It’s Not What You Say, It’s What People Hear by Frank Luntz


I will distribute additional handout materials, including articles, blogs, essays and research studies, in class and Blackboard on an ad hoc basis.

**Tentative Course Calendar**

*The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.

**Week 1: Intros**
Skills Assessment and Classmates Biographies

**Week 2: Grammar Review I/Editing**
Reading: Bivins, Chapter 1
Strunk and White, Chapter 1, 5
Advanced Refresher: Flesch and Lass, Chapters 16-19
Assignment due: Bring in samples of your work to be peer edited
In class: Editing exercises

**Week 3: Grammar Review II/Understanding Messenger and Message**
Reading: Bivins, Chapter 2, 4
Strunk and White, Chapter 2-4
Advanced Refresher: Flesch and Lass, Chapters 7, 8 19-29
In class: “The $20 Ask”

**Week 4: Writing for and with the Media**
Reading: Bivins, Chapter 5
Assignment due: Write a news article comprising 300-400 words.
In class: Guest Speakers- Working with Journalists

**Week 5: Press Releases**
Bivins, Chapter 6
Assignment due: Use a press release to write a 400 to 500-word news article.
In class: Press release prompts

**Week 6: More Press Releases**
Reading: Posted on Blackboard
Assignment due: Bring in three examples of press releases and write a 500-word summary of what makes them effective or weak and your own guide on “how to write a press release.”
In class: “Power Hour” of case studies

Week 7: Midterm Project Due

Week 8: Op-eds/ Egos, Pathos, Logos
Reading: Lehrman, Chapters 2
Luntz, Chapter 11
Assignment due: Bring in three op-eds and write a one-page assessment of each based on the readings.
In class: Diagramming EPL to different audiences

Week 9: Op-eds
Reading: Posted on Blackboard
Assignment Due: Write an op-ed on the subject of your choice (500-750 words).
In class: Editing

Week 10: Speeches I
Reading: Bivins, Chapter 10
Lehrman, Chapter
Luntz, Chapter 1
Assignment Due: Turn your op-ed into a 5-minute speech
In class: Analysis of recognizable speeches and types of speeches

Week 11: Speeches II/Monroe’s Motivational Sequence (MMS)
Lehrman, Chapter 5, 7
Advanced Reading: Lehrman, Chapters 6-9, 11-14
Assignment due: Submit final project pitch
In class: Diagramming and presenting MMS speeches

Week 12: Crisis Management
Reading: Posted on Blackboard
In class: Case studies and prompts
Assignment Due: Edit and rewrite speech to last 10 minutes.

Week 13:
Guest Lecture- Wrap up

Week 14: Final Project and Presentations Due

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.