

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Strategic Public Relations

Fall 2016

August 29/December 5

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 trace the history and development of Modern Public Relations, survey the major theories that guide strategic public relations and examine how they are applied by business, government and non-profit communications professionals. It will also introduce the student to strategic communication planning and current tactics to accomplish your communications objectives. In subsequent classes in the SPR program, you will delve into many of 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 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 strategic public relations campaign. Lectures and readings will cover key campaign components and how we 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

NEW:

Public Relations Strategies and Tactics – Wilcox; Cameron and Reber; Pearson 11th Edition; ISBN 10:0-133-80937-4; 978-0-133-80937-4

Corporate Communication. Paul A. Argenti. Sixth Edition. McGraw Hill Irwin, 2012. ISBN-10: 0073403172; ISBN-13: 978-0073403175

Strategic Planning for Public Relations. Ronald D. Smith. 4th Edition. Routledge 2013. ISBN – 978-0-415-50676-2 (paperback) 978-0-203-08124-2 (e-book)

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

Public Relations Writing: Form & Style. Doug Newsom and Jim Haynes. Tenth Edition. Wadsworth Cengage Advantage Books, 2013. ISBN-10: 1133307310; ISBN-13: 978-1133307310

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

Applying Communication Theory for Professional Life. Marianne Dainton and Elaine D. Zelley, 3rd Edition. Sage Publications, Inc., 2015. ISBN 978-1-4522-7564

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. Membership is strongly recommended for GW SPR students. Check the site for information on discounted PR student membership rates.

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 are expected.

Note: You may have an opportunity to revise your initial assignments (1 and 2) 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 week they are due.

Assignment #1

TOPIC: Essay – The Role of Strategic Public Relations Today

750 - 1,000-word (3-4 pages, double-spaced) Individual assignment.

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 either a corporate, non–profit or government/political setting.

Questions/topics to address: What are the key skills to have – e.g. media relations, social media expertise, research and budget development? What other assets are valuable such as creativity, situational awareness and high ethical standards? Who is doing it well (e.g. cite a government, corporate or non profit examples and defend/explain)? What makes them effective? What can we observe and learn from them?

This exercise is designed to help the instructor assess your writing skills and level and get you thinking about current events from an SPR point of view.

Assignment #2

750-word book review - Individual assignment.

Assigned – Week 4, due Week 5

Read a book from the suggested list (*to be posted on Black Board*)

Analyze how the author's ideas/theories relate to the practice of strategic public relations. Focus on analyzing the concepts and relating them to SPR, rather than summarizing the book.

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 presentation).

Group project (*groups will be formed/approved by Prof in class*).

The class will divide into 3-4 person groups – depending on the size of the class. Each team will prepare an in depth analysis of a case that focuses on one 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 be set aside on a rotating basis for two-three group presentations per week (weeks 9 and 10). The presentation should involve all group members and last no more than 20 minutes. The presentation will be part of the grade for the project.

NOTE: Group members will be asked privately to provide the instructor with feedback on the group's work and 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 business/government and this task will help improve your ability to work as part of a team. It will also provide an opportunity to develop or enhance your oral presentation and speaking skills.

Assignment #4 - Term paper: Individual assignment.

Assigned Week 10 – due Week 13

Required interim steps: Outline to be completed/turned in *Week 11*, draft in *Week 12*

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

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 the 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).

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.

Schedule NOTES:

No class November 8 (Election Day – On line activity/assignment TBD)

No class November 22 – Thanksgiving Week

LAST class is December 6

Evaluation and Grading –

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed (see page 3)	Due Date (papers/projects due before start of class)	Weight
1,000-word Op Ed	2, 4	Week 2	12.5%
750-word Book Review	1,4	Week 5	12.5%
Group Project	3	Week 9	25%
Term Paper	3,4	Week 13	35%
Class Participation*	1,2	Ongoing	15%
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 do 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 performance, or inability to submit the assignment</u> .

- 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