The Graduate School of Political Management  
George Washington University  

PSPR 6206  
Ethics in Communications and Public Relations  
Alexandria Campus, Monday, 7:10 to 9:40 p.m.  
Summer 2013

Professor Marjorie Kline  
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703.582.6211 (please call before 5 p.m.  Expect a response within 24 hours)

Course Description
This course explores the pursuit of ethical standards and excellence in public communications within the context of corporate, political, media and personal expectations. **Ethics in Communications and Public Relations** will take a pragmatic look at how the drive for power, success and rapid response pressurizes the workplace and those tasked with creating and delivering key messages to target audiences.

As Marshall McLuhan said, “To bring order into this jangled sphere man must find its center.” Therefore, the coursework and assignments will balance the ethical and moral guidance offered by classical social philosophers with experiences of contemporary business and political leaders.

Course Objectives
The goals of this course are to help students develop ethical standards appropriate for communications professionals working in the media, political or corporate environment.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
1. Identify common barriers to ethical communications.
2. Develop a framework of behavior and standards for ethical leadership as a communications professional.
3. Become a more effective counsel and/or leader during crisis communications scenarios.
4. Develop senior-level decision-making skills.

Format and procedures
Most classes will incorporate current events and decision-making games for a practical perspective on ethical challenges facing communications professionals in the political, business and media arenas. We will also use film, media clips and guest lectures.

Grading Weights and Procedures

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay/s (1-2) and 2 Quizzes</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid Decision-making Game</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam and Essays</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Exams and Quizzes
Quizzes and final exams are a mix of short quizzes, a final multiple-choice reading survey and in-class, decision-making games with strategy and role development.

Participation
Class participation is mandatory and evaluated based on substance, frequency, and the ability to articulate ideas and relate them to assignments and professional experiences.

Classroom and Grading Policies
The course combines lecture, class discussion of the weekly assignment, current events and activities. Students are expected to attend all classes unless excused in advance. Class participation is a mandatory part of the classroom experience and final grade. Late assignments will drop one grade level.

Disclaimer
Readings, assignments, and due dates may change due to unforeseen circumstances. You will be advised of any changes during class via the weekly assignment page.

Required Text
Reading packets will be distributed throughout the semester. Materials include selected chapters from various authors about ethics, decision-making and public communication. Authors include (but not exclusively): Howard Gardener, Steve Pinker, Daniel Goleman, as well as clips/analysis/readings from Plato, Aristotle, and Niccolo Machiavelli.

GW academic integrity information
Please refer to http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html

GW disability services statement
Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

GW classroom emergency preparedness and response information
(From The Office of Emergency Management in collaboration with the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, 2010-2011 Academic Year)

To Report an Emergency or Suspicious Activity
Call the GW Police Department at 202-994-6111 (Foggy Bottom) or 202-242-6111 (Mount Vernon). If the line is unavailable or you are calling from another University location or off campus, dial 911.

Shelter in Place – General Guidance
Your first reaction in an emergency should be to stay where you are. Evacuate only if you hear the fire alarm or someone instructs you to evacuate. If you are outdoors during an incident, proceed into the closest GW building unless you are told to do otherwise. No matter where you are on campus, the basic steps of “sheltering in place” are:
• Shelter-in-place in an interior room, above ground level, and with the fewest windows. If there is a large group of people inside a particular building, several rooms may be necessary.
• Shut and lock all windows (locking will form a tighter seal), close exterior doors, and stay away from glass doors and windows.
• Turn off air conditioners, heaters, and fans. Close vents to ventilation systems as you are able (Facilities staff will turn off ventilation systems as quickly as possible).
• Make a list of the people with you and call the list in to GWPD (see numbers above) so they know where you are.
• Visit GW Campus Advisories http://CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu or call the GW Information Line at 202-994-5050 for incident updates. If possible, turn on a radio or television and listen for further instructions. If your e-mail address or mobile device is registered with Alert DC, check for alert notifications.
• Make yourself comfortable and look after one another. You will get word as soon as it is safe to come out.

Evacuation
We will always evacuate if the fire alarm sounds or if the building we are in becomes unsafe. In the event of an evacuation, please quickly gather your personal belongings (purse, keys, cell phone, GWorld card, etc.) and proceed to the nearest exit. Do not use the elevator.
Two ways out of the building are ________________________________ and ________________
Once we have evacuated the building, proceed to: ________________________________.
If the first location is unavailable, we will meet at: ________________________________.

Alert DC
Alert DC provides free notification by e-mail or text message during an emergency. Visit GW Campus Advisories for a link and instructions on how to sign up for alerts pertaining to GW. If you receive an Alert DC notification during class, please share the information immediately.

GW Alert
GW Alert provides popup notification to desktop and laptop computers during an emergency. In the event that we receive an alert to the computer in our classroom, we will follow the instructions given. You are also encouraged to download this application to your personal computer. Visit GW Campus Advisories to learn how.

Additional information about GW emergency preparedness is at http://CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu
Weekly Topics/Reading Assignments/Due Dates

WEEK ONE
May 20th

Topic: Course overview and introductory lecture
ASSIGNMENT: No readings assigned. Students receive semester reading packets.

WEEK TWO
May 27th

HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY – Class will not meet

WEEK THREE
June 3rd

Topic: Man, Community, Truth and Desire
This week focuses on selected ideas introduced by two social/political philosophers. First, Plato’s Republic explores the ideals of truth, justice and punishment in the context of creating a harmonious community comprised of guardians, soldiers and moneymakers. Second, Aristotle’s Politics examines this philosopher’s beliefs that “Good laws make good men” and that man’s acquisitive tendency has a corrupting influence on healthy societies.
ASSIGNMENT: Selected chapters from “A Guide to the Political Classics” which focus on Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Politics.

WEEK FOUR
June 10th

Topic: Man, Community, Truth and Desire (part 2)
Viewing of Inside Job, a documentary released in 2010 that examines the conflicts of interest underlying the global financial crisis of 2008. The film examines the intertwined interests of financiers, politicians, regulators, academia and the media.

+ Essay assigned (and due next week/June 17th in class)

WEEK FIVE
June 17th

Topic: Leadership and Decision-making Case Study + Game
This week examines the principals of ethical decision-making and leadership in a crisis scenario based on a new PSPR case study, Paterno vs. Penn State. In addition, students work in teams to identify rapid response solutions during an in-class game, What’s Your Problem?
ASSIGNMENT: Read *Paterno vs. Penn State*, written by Laurissa Fike. Also, supplemental reading – chapter 20, “Life’s a Campaign” by Chris Matthews.

* First essay due today

**WEEK SIX**
**June 24th**

**Topic: Leadership, Power, Ethics and Action**
This week focuses on discussion and comparison of ancient and contemporary leadership models.

ASSIGNMENT: Selected chapters from “A Guide to the Political Classics” which focus on two Niccolo Machiavelli texts: *The Prince* and *Discourses*. Plus, selected personal profiles of Andy Fastow, Martha Stewart, and Jack Welch.

**WEEK SEVEN**
**July 1st**

**Topic: Leadership, Power, Ethics and Action (part 2)**

*Viewing of Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room*, a documentary about how the media helped unleash a federal criminal investigation and the ongoing influence of the Enron story in politics, business and media.


+ Essay assigned (and due next week/July 8th in class)

**WEEK EIGHT**
**July 8th**

**Topic: Finesse, Diplomacy and Other Tactics + Game**
This week we discuss how we communicate under pressure and what influences our ability to deliver honest, clear messages. In addition, students work as teams to identify rapid response solutions during an in-class game.

ASSIGNMENT: Read chapter 8, “The Stuff of Thought” by Steven Pinker.

* Second essay due today

**WEEK NINE**
**July 15th**

**Topic: Facts, Lies, Complexity and Temptation**

*Guest Speaker: Ken Silverstein, journalist and former Washington Bureau of Chief of Harper’s.*


**WEEK TEN**
**July 22nd**

**Topic: FINAL Decision-making Exercise**
ASSIGNMENT: In-class, interactive role-play game plus final essay.