

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Strategic Public Relations

Summer 2016

May 16 – July 18

Course Name

PSPR 6206.PR

3 Credits

Monday, 7:10 – 9:40 p.m.

Alexandria Graduate Education Center

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

Marjorie Kline

Contact Information

Phone Number: (703) 582.6211 mobile

Email Address: marjoriekline@me.com (preferred) or mmkline@gwu.edu (avoid this one)

Communication

Expect email responses within 24 hours. Your fastest option – calls are answered or returned promptly.

Blackboard Site

The option of a Blackboard course site v. email communication will be voted on by the class during our first meeting. If Blackboard is approved, each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester. Blackboard or email will be the primary source for outside classroom communications between the instructor 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

This is an ethics class for heaven's sake. All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students must 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 <https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/>.

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class

We help each other first and foremost. If we experience 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 **1.) the volleyball court in the center of the traffic circle or, if that location not safe, option 2.) at the front door of Burke and Herbert Bank on Jamieson 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/>.

Shelter in Place – General Guidance

Our first reaction in an emergency is to stay where we are. Evacuate only if we hear the fire alarm or someone instructs us to evacuate. If we are outdoors during an incident, proceed into the closest GW building unless told to do otherwise. No matter where we 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 the elevator at the main entrance and the stairwell in front of the elevators. Once we have evacuated the building, proceed to: the courtyard in the center of the traffic island. If the first location is unavailable, we will meet at: Burke and Herbert bank on Jamieson Street.

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 pop-up 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>

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:

Marjorie Kline
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Professor Lawrence Parnell
Director, Strategic Public Relations Program
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Dr. Jack Prostko
Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development
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Suzanne Farrand
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
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THE COURSE – ETHICS IN COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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 Description and Overview

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 the experiences of contemporary business and political leaders.

Course Learning Objectives

The goals of this course will 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 analysis decision-making skills.
5. Refine senior-level verbal and written communication skills.

Course Format

Classes will incorporate lectures, class discussions, trending topics, 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 possibly one guest lecture.

Course Requirements

Classroom and Grading Policies

1. Students are **expected to attend all classes** *unless excused by the professor, in advance, for a valid reason*. Missing one class or more of the 10-week semester will lower the final grade.
2. Students will **respect** the opinions of their classmates. Students can challenge any and all during class discussions.
3. **Class participation is a mandatory part** of the classroom experience and 20 percent of the final grade. Participation is an opportunity for each student to discuss the reading assignments and indicate their preparation and knowledge of the assigned material throughout the semester. Class participation is also an opportunity to gain confidence in verbal communication skills.
4. When assigned a team project, students must fully **collaborate** and participate with team members on all outside assignments. Contact the professor if there are discrepancies.
5. Readings, assignments, and due dates may change due to unforeseen circumstances. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the schedule.
6. Extra credit is not available in the summer semester.
7. Late assignments will drop one grade level.

Participation

Class participation is mandatory and evaluated based on substance (relation to weekly assignments), frequency, and the ability to **concisely** articulate ideas and relate them to assignments and professional experiences. Please note the grading weights listed and remember that attendance and class participation equal 30% of your overall grade. Class preparation and knowledge of the weekly reading assignments and ethics-related current affairs are vital to class discussions and debate.

Essays and Games

Essays must follow guidelines provided by the instructor. Students are required to fully engage with their classmates in assigned interactive games. Games are an in-class mix of exercises combining both independent and in-class work related to decision-making, strategy, collaboration, and action.

Evaluation and Grading Weights

Class Participation	20%
Essay1	10%
Essay/Memo 2	15%
Quiz 1	10%
Quiz 2	15%
Final Exam (reading survey + essay)	20%
Attendance	10%

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

Reading packets will be distributed at the start of the semester. Additional readings will be assigned and available as required throughout the semester. Materials include selected chapters from various authors about ethics, decision-making and public communication. Authors are noted in the syllabus.

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 ONE
May 16th

Topic: Course overview and introductory lecture

Opening lecture about how this class approaches the topic of ethics for professional communicators – including the basics of decision-making, strategy, leadership and core values. In addition, we review course materials, expectations, and class policies. Students receive the semester reading packet. MANDATORY ATTENDANCE

READING COMPLETED FOR TODAY: No readings assigned.

ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: In-class questionnaire and quiz.

WEEK TWO
May 23rd

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.

READING COMPLETED FOR TODAY: Selected chapters from "A Guide to the Political Classics" which focus on Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*.

ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: In-class values game and discussion at the end of class.

WEEK THREE
May 30th

HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY – Class will not meet

WEEK FOUR
June 6th

Topic: Man, Community, Truth and Desire (part 2)

Viewing excerpts from *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 – and how that mix of interests influences ethical choices and decision-making.

READING COMPLETED FOR TODAY: Read "The Ethical Mind," a *Harvard Business Review* interview from March 2007 with psychologist Howard Gardner, author of *Multiple Intelligences*.

ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Preview the film and/or reviews of this film.

+ One page Essay 1 assigned (and due next week/June 13th in class)

WEEK FIVE
June 13th

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 case study, *Paterno vs. Penn State*, written by former ethics student and GSPM graduate, Laurissa Fike.

In addition, students work in teams to identify rapid response solutions during an in-class game, *What's Your Problem?*

READING COMPLETED FOR TODAY: Read *Paterno vs. Penn State*. Also, supplemental reading – chapter 20, "Life's a Campaign" by Chris Matthews.

ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Essay 1 due today (see guidelines on assignment page).
Bring printed copy to class. Are you ready for a quiz about our readings?

WEEK SIX
June 20th

Topic: Leadership, Power, Ethics and Action

This week focuses on discussion and comparison of ancient and contemporary leadership models. How far has humankind evolved?

READING COMPLETED FOR TODAY: Selected chapters from “A Guide to the Political Classics” which focus on Niccolo Machiavelli texts: *The Prince* and *Discourses*.

ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Classroom leadership exercise during class.

+ One page Essay 2 assigned today (due June 27th).

WEEK SEVEN
June 27^h

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

Viewing selects 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.

READING COMPLETED FOR TODAY: Read “When Should a Leader Apologize” by Barbara Kellerman, *Harvard Business Review*, April 2006, and “The Power of One” about Bethany McLean, the reporter who broke the Enron story, *British Vogue*, May 2004, plus selected clips.

ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Essay 2 due. **Bring printed copy to class.**

WEEK EIGHT
Reschedule TBD

Topic: Facts, Lies, Complexity and Temptation

READING COMPLETED FOR TODAY: Read undercover expose, “Their Men In Washington” written by Ken Silverstein, *Harper’s Magazine*, July 2007. Imagine a conference room and trying to pitch a new client for a lucrative new piece of business. Imagine that the “client” is not who he says he is.

READING COMPLETED FOR TODAY: Read “Their Men In Washington” written by Ken Silverstein, *Harper’s Magazine*, July 2007.

ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: None. *Are you ready for a reading quiz?*

WEEK NINE
July 11th

Topic: Finesse, Diplomacy and Other Tactics + Game

READING COMPLETED FOR TODAY: A case study about the rise and fall of former Congressman Aaron Schock, a young star whose career was cut short by an ethics investigation that began when a Washington Post reporter dropped by at his office on the Hill . . . unannounced.

ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Submit advance executive recommendations related to remedy the situation described in this case. See assignment page for instructions.

WEEK TEN
July 18th

Topic: FINAL and Decision-making Exercise

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE IN-CLASS: A final essay and multiple-choice quiz about the primary takeaways from the semester readings.

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