

# Course Syllabus MPPR 750-01

## Course Description:

### *The Intersection of Offline and Online Public Relations*

This course analyzes the intersection of “offline” and “online” (and everything in between) public relations in the United States, examining the underpinnings and basics of public relations and how and where it intersects with the world of monitoring and influencing stakeholder opinion online and in social media.

In the first half of the semester, students will focus on the “basics” of public relations: how it functions within organizations; its historical origins; what’s it like to do it for a living; its theoretical underpinnings; how ethics and professionalism apply; and finally how public relations fit together: communications, public opinion, and the “media”.

In the second half of the semester, students will learn how a new set of influencers – people like you and me – intersect with traditional public relations and how the theory and practice of public relations is evolving in an ever more networked and “social” world. Students will also get hands-on experience monitoring and assessing public opinion of a corporation or issue, as well as creating their own strategies to help influence public opinion.

**This syllabus could change.** Especially in the world of public relations, events will occur that present us with real-time opportunities for learning. Bring an adventurous spirit to this course.

## Date and Times:

Monday evenings (First class on Wednesday, September 2, 2009)  
5:30 – 7:30pm – 3101 Wilson Boulevard, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor in Arlington, VA

We are right across the street from the Clarendon metro stop. There is a parking garage in the building (be sure to tell the attendants that you are with Georgetown to get the discounted rate) as well as metered street parking in the area. You can also check with the school to find the best option for you. Please remember that punctuality is critical; it is disruptive for other students if someone arrives late.

## Course Objectives:

The overarching goal of this class is to offer students the opportunity to get an introduction to the world of public relations, first in the “offline” world and second in the “online” world.

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a fundamental understanding of "offline" public relations, its ethics, foundation, practice and successful execution.
2. Analyze public relations case studies to determine their overall effectiveness.
3. Understand how the Internet and social media has changed the world of public relations, including the principles of influencing audiences online.
4. Write and present effectively for a variety of audiences.
5. Identify, comprehend and analyze successes or failures in the world of offline/online reputation management.

### **What will determine your understanding and/or mastery of these concepts?**

1. Successful completion and on-time delivery of assignments.
2. Ability to communicate effectively using the written word, including the ability to:
  - Organize thoughts logically and concisely;
  - Write within certain standards (Chicago style vs. AP style) and media channels (press release vs. blog).
3. Verbal presentation skills, including the ability to:
  - Clearly and concisely organize and present a topic;
  - Begin and finish a presentation in the time allotted; and
  - Field and answer questions from classmates and faculty accurately and concisely.
4. Ability to work within a group of your classmates by:
  - Assign roles, responsibilities and deadlines;
  - Meet outside of classroom hours to prepare your final project;
  - Get along; and
  - Produce a final project that is error free, well presented and demonstrates complete understanding and mastery of the topics covered during the semester.

### **Georgetown University Honor System**

Read it. Understand it. Live it. Especially the [section on plagiarism](#).

#### **Honor System**

You are expected to abide by the Georgetown University Honor System. If you have not already done so, please familiarize yourself with the material and information posted on the Honor Council's website: <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/index.html>. I will be using TurnItIn.com this semester, a tool to ensure that no one – accidentally or otherwise – violates the GU Honor System.

#### **Academic Resource Center**

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center ([arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)) for further information. The Center is located in the

Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

## **How and When to Contact Me:**

The Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies is made up of both students and faculty, most of whom have “day jobs.” I am no exception. I work for a PR firm and have demanding schedule. However, you are one of my top priorities. Please try to give me at least 24 hours to get back to you. There are three ways to contact me:

1. *Email.* My email address is Rachel.Kennedy@gmail.com. If you have a question or comment or are required to email me for an assignment, I will check this frequently. Under most circumstances, I am able to respond to email within 24 hours.
2. *Office hours.* I will keep office hours at the campus 30 minutes before class and a maximum of 30 minutes after class ends.
3. *Home.* On nights on which we do not have class, I can be reached at my home number: 202-543-180 between 8:00 and no later than 10:00 pm.
4. *Mobile:* If you have an **emergency** and need to contact me – meaning that it cannot wait – I can be reached on my cell at: 202-297-4262. **Use this only if your inquiry cannot wait.** Like most of you, I have a daytime job and a family that require my full attention.
5. *Twitter:* If you want to know what I’m thinking about, doing or discovering, feel free to follow me at [www.twitter.com/rcaggiano](http://www.twitter.com/rcaggiano). I’d like to know what’s going on with you too, so send let me know your Twitter handle.

## **Absentee Policy:**

With the understanding that most students have full-time jobs, you are expected to miss no more than **two classes**. Each additional class missed will result in lowering your final grade by one letter grade for each class missed. As for the two, allowed absences, I will be accommodating to a certain extent given this reality provided that:

- If you are going to miss a class, you email me with as much advance notice as possible;
- Even if you miss a class, you still meet the goals for the week, including turning in assignments on time; and
- Follow the “buddy system.” During the first class, I will encourage all of you to find one or more “buddies.” You will exchange contact information in case one of you needs to miss a class; your buddy will catch you up.
- Tell me how to reach you in an emergency – cell phone number or email. I will use this in case of emergency to alert you of something like a class cancellation due to bad weather.

## Course Requirements:

**Note:** All students must have or obtain an email account. Prior to using any company related resources (e.g., hardware, software, e-mail account, etc.) You should confirm that use of these resources is permissible. Computers will be required for this course. If you have a laptop, you have the option of bringing it to class, as there is wireless available.

1. **ASSIGNMENT #1 - Summary of important topics happening in the real world.** (10 points). Each student will be responsible for reading a variety of current news/public relations publications. Each week, one or two students will be responsible for presenting the topline events that have been covered in popular publications. We will begin class with these discussions plus a brief discussion of the presented information.

<http://www.thedailyinfluence.com/> (click on the Public Relations tab)

**Objective:** In a low-pressure environment, students will practice presentation skills as well as go over real events in the real world.

**ASSIGNMENT #2 - Case/Analysis:** (20 points). Students will perform a written analysis of a prominent public relations campaign, assessing its effectiveness and providing sound reasoning for conclusions drawn. You will prepare a five-page summary of the case study and make a 10-15 minute-presentation to the class highlighting your findings. This will be graded as follows: a maximum of 15 points for the written analysis and a maximum of five points for the presentation and successfully answering student questions during the Q&A session. **This paper must be grammar and typo-free and written in AP style.**

**Due date: this does not have a "hard" due date; when it is due will be determined by the date for which you will sign up (sometime between September 21 and November 2).**

**Objective:** Demonstrate **via applied learning** that you understand the underlying principles of successful public relations activities and you can make a sound judgment of a successful or unsuccessful campaign. Moreover, you will be judged on your ability to make a concise, on-time and succinct presentation of your topic.

2. **ASSIGNMENT #3 – Individual Monitoring and Recommendations Project:** (25 points) Using available, publicly accessible monitoring tools, you will select a person, organization or issue with reputational challenges to follow for three weeks. Students will then prepare a 10-page recommendations report on how to help "solve" the public relations problem. This assignment will combine online and offline learning and recommendations. Topics will be approved in advance by the instructor. **This paper must be grammar and typo-free and written in AP style.**

**Objective:** Demonstrate **via applied learning** that you can put together, using online and offline tools, a picture of a reputational challenge faced by a

person or organization. Based upon everything that we have read, you will diagnose the problem and recommend solutions.

**Due date: November 9**

3. **ASSIGNMENT #4 - Group Project:** (30 points). Students will be divided into groups and will choose a topic for analysis, gauging the effectiveness of an online public relations campaign. Teams will be responsible for making a 30-minute presentation to the class and instructor (a) identifying the key stakeholders in the debate, (b) analyzing the strategies, tools and tactics used (c) gauging their effectiveness in measurable ways (e.g., how did this campaign “move the needle” based upon its objectives) and (d) leading the conference discussion on this article. This assignment will be graded in the following manner:

- **The group** will receive a maximum of 25 points for successfully meeting the above criteria; and
- Within 24 hours after your team’s group presentation, each team member will email the instructor, rating your classmates’ overall participation and contribution to the successful completion of the project. You will evaluate all of your team members, giving a maximum of five points (zero is the lowest and five is the highest) and a paragraph explaining your reasoning behind your evaluation. The instructor will then take the average of the other team member evaluations and include it as an “individual” score. The final “deliverable” of this project will be a **PowerPoint presentation – not a written paper.**

**Objective:** Demonstrate **via applied learning**, that, as a group you can a) assign roles and rely upon each others’ strengths, and b) put a “capstone” on your learnings and demonstrate to me that you understand:

1. The fundamentals of good public relations;
2. How to measure success or failure; and
3. How offline and online public relations intersect and impact each other.

**Due dates: Depending upon which group you are in, this project will be due either on November 30 or December 7.**

4. **Class Participation:** (15 points). You are required to participate in the discussions that will be held during class time. You will be expected to offer thoughtful comments, raise issues and respond to classmates and the faculty with reasoned and meaningful responses. Please note that participation means both **talking and listening**. Included in the class participation grade is commenting on our class wiki (or Facebook group). Each week, you will be expected to post a meaningful, thoughtful comment or question – or response to a classmate’s post. Note: a post in its entirety of “I agree” doesn’t count.

**Objective:** By actively participating and making meaningful contributions to the class, you have a grasp of the concepts that we are discussing – or you can ask for clarification when required.

**All assignments, unless otherwise indicated, must be submitted via email to me no later than 5:00 pm the on the day that they are due. No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval. All late papers will be depreciated at the rate of one letter per day missed.**

### **Letters of Recommendation**

I prefer not to issue any letters of recommendation until students have successfully completed a semester. If you have questions about this, please ask.

## Assignments and Due Dates

Week	Session Dates	Readings, Assignments, and Due Dates
<b>1</b>	Session #1 - September 2	Theme: Introduction, getting to know you, guidelines for success in the course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class introduction and discussion of course objectives.</li> <li>• Be prepared to speak for 5 minutes about what you hope to learn and get out of the course.</li> <li>• Participate in questionnaire exercise.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	Session #2 - September 14	Theme: Introduction to public relations and how it functions within organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events presentations (Pamela Grant &amp; Heather Melman)</li> <li>• Read <a href="#">Effective Public Relations</a> by Cutlip, Center and Broom, Chapters #1 and #3</li> <li>• Read "<a href="#">Why PR Matters in a Down Economy</a>" – and be prepared to discuss.</li> <li>• <b>Think about and carefully choose your case study for analyzing an effective public relations campaign (ASSIGNMENT #2 - Mid-Term: Case/Analysis) and be prepared to explain your selection during class.</b></li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	Session #3 - September 21	Theme: What are the historical origins of public relations and what's it like to do it for a living? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events presentations (Vanessa Thebaud &amp; Rob Whitney)</li> <li>• Read <a href="#">Effective Public Relations</a> by Cutlip, Center and Broom, Chapters #2, #4, #5 and #7</li> <li>• Read "<a href="#">Careers in Public Relations</a>" and be prepared to discuss.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	Session #4 - September 28	Theme: Theoretical underpinnings of public relations and how ethics and professionalism apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events presentations (Julie Bartoszek &amp; LuRon Flynn)</li> <li>• Read <a href="#">Effective Public Relations</a> by Cutlip, Center and Broom Chapters #8 and #9</li> <li>• <b>Case analysis presenters</b></li> <li>• Read the "<a href="#">You are Asking Me to Do What?!?</a>" PowerPoint presentation from Joe Brennan, PhD, University of Toledo.</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	Session #5 - October 5	Theme: Measuring Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events presentations (Kevin Caldwell &amp; Ami Martinez)</li> <li>• Read <a href="#">Measuring Public Relations: The Data-Driven</a></li> </ul>

		<p><a href="#">Communicator's Guide to Success</a> by Katie Dalehayne Paine, Chapters #1-4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case analysis</li> </ul>
6	Session #6 - October 12	<p>Theme: Measuring Trust and Mistrust in Public Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events presentations (Nikiforos Gkrestas &amp; Susanne Seward)</li> <li>• Read <a href="#">Measuring Public Relations: The Data-Driven Communicator's Guide to Success</a> by Katie Dalehayne Paine, Chapters #5, #6, and #7</li> <li>• Case analysis presenters</li> </ul>
7	Session #7 - October 19	<p>Theme: The "real world" of online influencing – how online public relationships work and what happens when a crisis hits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events presentation (Jean Mackell &amp; Cosima Wadhwa)</li> <li>• Listen to PR Week podcast and be prepared to discuss in class</li> <li>• Read <a href="#">Measuring Public Relations: The Data-Driven Communicator's Guide to Success</a> by Katie Dalehayne Paine, chapters #10 and #15.</li> <li>• Case analysis presenters (seventh and eighth students) Students will present their ideas to the instructor for approval for the <b>individual</b> monitoring and recommendations project (Assignment #3).</li> </ul>
8	Session # 8 - October 26	<p>Theme: How impacting public opinion online works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events presentation (Tara Young)</li> <li>• The basics on monitoring online – print, online, blogs and how to measure them.</li> <li>• Read <a href="#">Public Relations Online: Lasting Concepts for Changing Media</a> by Tom Kelleher chapters #1, #3 and #4.</li> <li>• Read <i>HBR Case Study: "Saving the Internet"</i> and be prepared to discuss Discussion of <b>"Issues Management in a Networked World"</b></li> <li>• Case analysis presenters (ninth and tenth students)</li> </ul>
9	Session #9 - November 2	<p>Theme: Commerce and Issue-Driven Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events presentation (Lavinia Smith)</li> <li>• Students will be assigned teams for the final, group project (Assignment #4).</li> <li>• Read <b>HBR Case Study, "We Googled You."</b></li> <li>• Read <a href="#">Public Relations Online: Lasting Concepts for Changing Media</a> by Tom Kelleher, Chapters #7 and #8</li> <li>• Listen to PR Week podcast and be prepared to discuss in class</li> <li>• Case analysis presenters (eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth students)</li> </ul>

<b>10</b>	Session #10 November 9	<p>Theme: Managing Issue Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events presentation (Nancy Sun)</li> <li>• Students will send their plan to the instructor for the final, <b>group</b> project. This must be emailed to me no later than 5:00 pm.</li> <li>• Read <a href="#">Public Relations Online: Lasting Concepts for Changing Media</a> by Tom Kelleher, Chapters #9 and #10</li> <li>• Listen to PR Week podcast and be prepared to discuss</li> <li>• Case analysis presenters (fourteenth and fifteenth students)</li> <li>• <b>Individual Monitoring and Recommendations project (Assignment #3) paper due by the beginning of class.</b></li> </ul>
<b>11</b>	Session #11 - November 16	<p>Theme: Online Crisis Management – and Measuring It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events presentation (Liz O'Brien)</li> <li>• Listen to PR Week podcast and be prepared</li> <li>• Read <a href="#">Measuring Public Relations: The Data-Driven Communicator's Guide to Success</a> by Katie Dalehaye Paine, Chapter #11</li> <li>• Case analysis presenters</li> <li>• In-class project team preparation time.</li> </ul>
<b>12</b>	Session #12 November 23	<p>Theme: What does this all mean? Measurement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current events presentation (Amaka Gboneme)</li> <li>• Case analysis presenters</li> <li>• Listen to PR Week podcast and be prepared to discuss.</li> <li>• Tentative: In-class project team preparation time.</li> </ul>
<b>13</b>	Session #13 November 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Final group presentations, first groups (Assignment #4).</b></li> </ul>
<b>14</b>	Session #14 December 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Final group presentations – second groups (Assignment #4).</b></li> <li>• End of semester.</li> </ul>