

## **MPPPR 950-01: PR & Corporate Communications Capstone**

**Instructor: Allison Barber**  
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**OFFICE HOURS:**  
**Mondays 4:00-5:00 and by appointment**

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**OFFICE HOURS:**  
**By appointment**

Meeting: Monday, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Clarendon 3101 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA, Suite 250

Term: Spring 2010

### **Course Description**

This course requires students to apply the full range of their strategic communications skills to a real time communications challenge. Working as a team, students respond to a communication problem/opportunity for an organization. While the primary focus is on teamwork, the response also includes individual components: individual insights and reflection paper on the research done for the organization. The senior staff from the organization will participate on the final judging panel as well as your professor. Through both individual and team work, this course will provide an opportunity to explore personal insights and reflection into one's own abilities including skills, leadership, and teamwork. Students will go through a self-assessment process to inventory their skills and to better understand their communications style within teams.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Apply strategic and creative skills to the development of a communication work plan and implementation
- Apply personal code of ethics to communication recommendations through individual exercise
- Apply contemporary tools used to implement communication strategies
- Design a specific work plan that is feasible and can be implemented
- Strengthen teamwork abilities, fine tune communication skills, and broaden leadership capabilities

### **Teaching Philosophy**

This course is based on real time application of the curriculum through active participation by all members of the group. To achieve this goal, it is critical that you come to class prepared for this requirement. The curriculum supports the client project you are working on.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. If circumstances prevent you from attending a class or making it to class before it begins, it is your responsibility to notify me via phone or e-mail prior to the start of class. Missing more than two classes will result in a final grade reduction of 1/2 level. Special circumstances should be discussed with me ahead of time.

### **Group work**

Throughout the semester you will be working closely with your team. It is important that early on you share schedules with your teammates. It is up to you to determine the best times to work together on the project outside of class. If there are any problems that arise within your team please see me immediately. Teams will

be assessing team member participation and effort at the end of the semester. Your teammate's assessment of you can impact your grade.

### **Work Submitted and Presented**

You are expected to submit work on time and of high quality. All typed text should be in 12-point font, double spaced and referenced following APA guidelines. Please include your group name, the assignment title, page numbers and the date on all written submissions.

Assignments should be turned in during class. Assignments that are submitted late will receive a reduction for each day it is late.

### **Evaluation**

Developing a strategic plan is an evolving process therefore students will be provided constant feedback but will not be graded on the plan until the final product. The final grade will be based upon the groups' deliverables throughout the process of the response development as outlined above. The final presentation will be evaluated by the prospective clients using a scorecard that will be provided in advance. In addition, you will be required to complete individual exercises that demonstrate your insights into the client's challenge in addition to how you would apply your personal code of ethics to a client scenario.

### **Summary of Assignments**

Below are short descriptions of the assignments required for this class. Please note that additional information as well as criteria for grading will be provided as a separate document.

#### Quick Fires:

Students will be asked to participate in five "quick fire" in-class writing assignments (the first is not graded; the next four will be) addressing one key component of the strategic plan. Students will be graded on their ability to think strategically, creatively and realistically. Each assignment will be weighted toward a specific element of the strategic plan.

#### Individual Plan Assignment:

Students will be asked to create a 5-6 page limited communication plan for a corporation or non-profit organization of their choice including the core problem, goal, objectives, target audiences and key messages. The students will need to be familiar with the organization or will have to do preliminary research in order to have adequate insights for their plan and will be asked to focus on a very narrow communication issue.

#### Ethics Assignment:

Students will be presented with a scenario that presents an ethical dilemma in which students are to apply their personal code of ethics, and will write a paper (no more than 5 pages) reflecting on and examining the dilemma and how the student would apply his/her personal code of ethics.

#### Final Written Proposal:

All teams will turn in a final written proposal that will have integrated feedback and insights provided during the draft phases, adhere to page limitation (30) and format requirements, and be packaged in a final format for the client.

#### Presentation:

Each team will give a presentation on the final proposal to members of their client's staff.

#### Team Evaluation:

You will evaluate your team members on the quality of contribution, level of engagement, spirit of

teamwork, reliability, research ability, strategic insights, and creativity for your team. Team grading will happen twice throughout the semester.

### Grading

#### Individual Projects:

- Quick Fires 5@ 20 points each – 100 points
- Individual Plan – 50
- Ethics Assignment – 50 points
- Team Evaluation – 40 points

#### Team Projects:

- Final Written Proposal – 100 points
- Presentation – 60 points

### **Total Points—400**

### **Ethics Statement**

As signatories to the Georgetown University Honor Pledge, and indeed as good scholars and citizens you are expected to uphold academic honesty in all aspects of this course. You are expected to be familiar with the letter and spirit of the Standards of Conduct outlined in the Georgetown Honor System and on the Honor Council website. As faculty, I too am obligated to uphold the Honor System and report all suspected cases of academic dishonesty. For more information, please visit:

<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/he/index/html>.

### **Honor System**

Students 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/he/index.html>.

### **Georgetown University Honor Pledge**

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: to be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

### **The Writing Center**

The Writing Center is located in Lauinger Library 217A and is available to all Georgetown students. With general questions and for hours, contact the Writing Center at 202-687-4246 or

[writingcenter@georgetown.edu](mailto:writingcenter@georgetown.edu). The Writing Center offers assistance in topic development, general organization, guidance on paper revisions, and specific or recurring structural problems with writing. Consultants are not trained to proofread papers for grammar or spelling errors, but rather to help individuals improve their own critical thinking, revision, and editing skills. Contact the Writing Center Director, Maggie Debelius, at [debelium@georgetown.edu](mailto:debelium@georgetown.edu) with specific issues.

### **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.

**Required Books**

Wilson, L. & Ogden, J.  
Strategic Communications Planning  
 Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company  
 2008, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition  
 ISBN: 978-0-7575-4887-1

Ries, A. & Ries, L.  
The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR  
 Harper Business  
 2002

Rath, T.  
StrengthsFinder 2.0: A New and Upgraded Edition of the Online Test from Gallup's Now, Discover Your Strengths  
 Gallup Press  
 2007

Article: <http://www.ries.com/100/The-principles-of-marketing-can-be-summarized-in-one-word:-FOCVS.html>

**Optional Reading:**

Ries, A., & Trout, J.  
Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind, 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition  
 McGraw-Hill  
 2000

| Date                       | Discussion Topics   | Deliverables   |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Wednesday, January 13      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review syllabus</li> <li>• Intro to Playbook</li> <li>• Assign Individual Plan</li> <li>• Quick Fire 1 (in class, non-graded)</li> </ul>             |  |
| Monday, January 25         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Quick Fire 1</li> <li>• Review Playbook</li> <li>• Brief client overviews</li> </ul>  |  |
| Monday, Feb 1              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick Fire 2</li> <li>• Client profiles distributed</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Individual Plan ideas/concepts</li> </ul> |
| Saturday, Feb 6 (optional) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playbook Boot Camp</li> <li>• <i>Time and location TBD</i></li> </ul>  |  |
| Monday, Feb 8              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick Fire 3</li> <li>• Review Quick Fire 2</li> <li>• Complete client preferences</li> <li>• Individual Plan discussions/troubleshooting</li> </ul> |  |

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|------------------|---|---|
| Monday, Feb 15   | NO CLASS: PRESIDENTS' DAY   |   |
| Monday, Feb 22   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Quick Fire 3</li> <li>• Quick Fire 4</li> <li>• Client assignments</li> <li>• Break into teams</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Plans are due</li> </ul>  |
| Monday, March 1  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients visit classroom</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background Research &amp; Situation Analysis</li> </ul>  |
| Monday, March 8  | NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK   |   |
| Monday, March 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Quick Fire 4</li> <li>• Team work</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised Background Research &amp; Situation Analysis (based on client visit)</li> </ul>                            |
| Monday, March 22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick Fire 5</li> <li>• Ethics assigned</li> <li>• Team work</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core Problem</li> <li>• Goals &amp; Objectives</li> </ul>  |
| Monday, March 29 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Quick Fire 5</li> <li>• Team work</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Messages and Key Publics</li> </ul>  |
| Monday, April 5  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review plans</li> <li>• Team evaluations (Part 1)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies and Tactics</li> <li>• Budgets, Timelines, &amp; Evaluation</li> <li>• Ethics assignment due</li> </ul> |
| Monday, April 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation skills review</li> <li>• Class discussion/feedback</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Plan due</li> </ul>  |
| Monday, April 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan presentations, first round</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present to client</li> </ul>   |
| Monday, April 26 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan presentations, second round</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present to client</li> </ul>   |
| Monday, May 3    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Evaluations (Part 2)</li> <li>• Class Evaluations</li> </ul>  |   |