

Course Syllabus
MPPR 750-01
The Intersection of Offline and Online Public Relations

Faculty: Chris Lisi, President of Lisi Communications (www.LisiCommunications.com)
Chris@LisiCommunications.com (202) 549-0696

Rachel Caggiano, Vice President of Digital Influence, Ogilvy Public Relations
(blog.ogilvypr.com)
Rachel.Kennedy@gmail.com (202) 297-4262

Schedule: Monday evenings, 5:30 – 7:00 pm (first class on Wednesday, January 13th)

Location: 3101 Wilson Boulevard, 2nd Floor in Arlington, VA

Office Hours: By appointment

Term: Spring 2010

Course Description: This course will analyze 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.

We will focus on the “basics” of public relations: what is it; 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”.

We will also 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 learn how to monitor and assess public opinion of a corporation, issue or person, as well as how to develop their own strategies to help influence public opinion.

The class will feature multiple experts in the field to provide students with a first-hand real-world perspective on the issues.

Course Objectives: By the end of this class, students can expect to have a comprehensive understanding of what public relations is and how it functions online and offline.

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

1. Demonstrate a fundamental understanding of 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, as well as demonstrate critical thinking and communications skills in a group setting.
 5. Identify, comprehend and analyze successes or failures in the world of reputation management.

Teaching Philosophy: This course combines actual case studies, current public relations and reputation management issues, guest speakers, group discussions and student presentations for an interactive and engaging learning environment. Reading assignments, in-class presentations and required interaction with fellow students and guest speakers are designed to help students learn to think critically and communicate effectively. Students are expected to come fully prepared to class, engage (and lead) discussions and ask thoughtful questions. Professional etiquette with regards to mobile devices and laptops is expected.

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

Work Submitted and Presented: Assignments are expected to be of high quality and submitted in the correct format. Assignments will be considered for writing, content, and professional appearance. All written work is to be typed, double-spaced, with a 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Please use APA format. Assignments should be e-mailed to us prior to the start of class on the day it is due and a hard copy turned in at the beginning of class. Late work will be deducted one letter grade for each day it is late. If you must miss a class, you are still required to turn in assignments due that day.

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, we too are 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, We commit ourselves to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: to be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct ourselves honorably, as responsible members of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Academic Resource Center: If you believe you have a disability, contact the Academic Resource Center (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 Reading:

- *Various Articles from PR trade publications.* We will post relevant articles to the class wiki (theintersection.posterous.com) one week prior to each class.
- *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies* by Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff (purchase at amazon.com)
- *Cutlip and Center's Effective Public Relations (10th Edition)* – selected readings to be distributed in class, no need to purchase book
- *Guerilla PR 2.0: Wage an Effective Publicity Campaign without Going Broke* by Michael Levine (purchase at amazon.com)
- *The New Rules of Marketing and PR* by David Meerman Scott (purchase at amazon.com)

Grading:

Grading is compatible with Georgetown University's grading scale for graduate coursework. An A is equivalent to a maximum of 100 points. Grading will be determined based on the degree to which the activity/assignment is responsive, insightful, well-organized and well-written, timely, complete, and demonstrates understanding of the subject matter.

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	88-89
B	84-87
B-	80-83
C	70-79
F	69 or lower

A percentage breakdown of grading is as follows:

- 1) Class Discussions (10%)
- 2) Class Note Taking + Posting (10%)
- 3) Guest Speaker Engagement + Participation (10%)
- 4) Case analysis paper/presentation (30%)
- 5) Group presentations (40%)

Assignments: Each of these will help you understand the fundamentals of good public relations; how to measure success or failure; and how offline and online efforts intersect and impact each other.

- **Assignment #1:** Each week students will be responsible for being able to give a brief summary of the assigned reading(s) and asking and answering questions to facilitate a lively discussion. Points will be assessed based on frequency of entering into the conversation as well as demonstration of having read and digested the reading.
- **Assignment #2:** Each week, 1-2 students (depending on class size) will be assigned to take notes on the class discussion. They will be required to post the notes to the class wiki within 48 hours of the class and noting each student who participated in the discussion. Points will be assessed based on meeting the deadline for posting as well as taking an accurate account of the discussion.
- **Assignment #3:** Each time there is a guest speaker students must come prepared to ask one question about the speakers' topic or professional background in PR.
- **Assignment #4:** Students will perform a written analysis of a prominent public relations campaign, assessing its effectiveness and providing sound reasoning for conclusions drawn. The analysis must be based on key principles outlined in class lectures as well as in the assigned readings. Students will prepare a five-page summary of the case study and make a 10- to 15-minute presentation to the class highlighting the findings.

This will be graded as follows:

a maximum of 15 points for the written analysis and a maximum of five (5) 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 APA style with proper citation.

- **Assignment #5:** 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 instructors (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.

Course Schedule:

Please note speakers may change because of last minute scheduling conflicts.

WEEK ONE, 1/13

- Lecture: Overview of Course Objectives; Introduction to PR (Caggiano, Lisi)
- Discussion: Assign Students for Each Week’s Discussion Leadership (Assignment #1) + Class Note Taking (Assignment #2); Review Guest Speaker Engagement Rules (Assignment #3)
- *Reading: Effective Public Relations, chapters #1 and #3, Articles on Tiger Woods and Sarah Palin*

WEEK TWO, 1/18

No Class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

WEEK THREE, 1/25

- Lecture: Public Relations vs. Advertising; Why PR Matters. (Lisi)
- *Reading: Why PR Matters in a Down Economy (PR Week article)*

WEEK FOUR, 2/1

- Lecture: PR as a Profession, Internal & External Communications (Caggiano)
- Guest Speaker: Jon Haber, former President of Trial Lawyers Association
- *Reading: Effective Public Relations, chapters #2, #4, #5 and #7*

WEEK FIVE, 2/8

- Lecture: The Changing Rules of Marketing and PR (Lisi)
- Guest Speaker: Eric Smith, Organizing America (*Invited*)
- *Reading: Article on the Obama campaign database*

WEEK SIX, 2/15

No Class – President’s Day

WEEK SEVEN, 2/22 (Caggiano and Lisi)

- Assignment #4: Case Analysis **Papers Due**
- Class Presentations

WEEK EIGHT, 3/1 (Caggiano and Lisi)

- Class Presentations continued

WEEK NINE, 3/8

No Class – Spring Break

WEEK TEN, 3/15

- Lecture: Managing a Crisis with PR (Caggiano)
- Guest Speaker: Rob Mathias, Managing Director, Ogilvy Washington
- *Reading: Article on Salahi's vs White House managing PR*

WEEK ELEVEN, 3/22

- Lecture: Building Influential Communities Online (Lisi)
- Guest Speaker: Andrew Noyes, Manager of Public Policy Communications, Facebook
- *Reading: Groundswell, Article about Facebook's growth and its power*

WEEK TWELVE, 3/29

- Lecture: Measuring Public Relations (Lisi)
- Guest Speaker: Jason Young, General Manager of ASGK's DC office
- *Reading: Jason to supply 2 articles before class*

WEEK THIRTEEN, 4/5

- Lecture: Online Public Relations: Political Advocacy on the Web (Lisi)
- Guest Speakers: Laura Gross and Abbey Franke, Scott Circle Communications/worked on Gore's Alliance for Climate Protection campaign (*Invited*)
- *Reading: The New Rules of Marketing + PR, chapters #4, #5, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, Laura and Abbey to supply articles about the campaign before class*

WEEK FOURTEEN, 4/12

- Lecture: Online Word of Mouth and the Changing Set of Influencers (Caggiano)
- Guest Speaker: Virginia Miracle, SVP, 360 Digital Influence
- *Reading: www.environmentalmarketing.com + selected articles*

WEEK FIFTEEN, 4/19 (Caggiano)

- Lecture: Search Engine Optimization: The Long Tail of Search and How to Get Noticed Online (Caggiano)
- Guest Speaker: George Assimakoupoulos, EyeTraffic Media
- *Reading: George to supply articles*

WEEK SIXTEEN, 4/26 (Caggiano and Lisi)

All Final **Papers Due**

Final Presentations

WEEK SEVENTEEN, 5/3 (Caggiano and Lisi)

Final Presentations continued