

GPRL 6107: Graduate Seminar in Public Relations Education

Course Outline, Spring 2010 (via distance)

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Or message through course site

Course Overview

Few people who become teachers in programs to prepare public communicators (public relations, science communication, journalism, corporate communications etc) have any educational background that would support the appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills required of successful educators. In fact, few people who teach at the post-secondary level in any discipline have such preparation. GPRL 6107 has three overarching goals:

- To provide basic preparation for those practitioners/students who wish to transition into educational positions.
- To establish a context for post-secondary education in public communication disciplines.
- To explore the context of higher education so that students can identify areas of education that require further scholarly scrutiny.

Teaching and Learning Platform

This course is taught in its entirety via the course management platform called Moodle. Asynchronous in nature, the course allows for maximum flexibility for individual students. While adhering precisely to

deadlines set, students are invited to pursue the intervening course requirements at their leisure. Familiarity with Moodle is essential to success in this course

Course Structure

This distance course is divided into three on-line workshops with varying duration bookended by an introductory workshop and a summative workshop.

Workshop	Topic	Activities & Assignments
Introduction	Introduction to the Course Content, Approach, Readings & Evaluation Criteria	Course outline & syllabus Begin reading Consider focus of final "Course Presentation" assignment
W/S 1	The Context of Post-Secondary Education in Public Communication	Reading Blog post "On becoming a teacher" assignment
W/S 2	Some Theoretical Foundations for Teaching & Learning	Reading Blog Post Online discussion
W/S 3	Pedagogical Skills for New Educators (a) Course preparation (b) Course delivery	Reading Blog post Online discussion Development of course outline etc.
Summary	Course Presentations & Peer Review	Individual presentation of course outlines & teaching philosophies Peer review forum participation

PLEASE SEE THE CALENDAR OF DATES AND DEADLINES POSTED ON THE SITE FOR DETAILS ABOUT WHEN AND HOW EACH MODULE WILL BE COVERED.

Communication

All regular communication will be done via email and our virtual classroom: our Moodle site. I will also be having telephone and email office hours TBA. For fastest response please email me at biomed@hfx.eastlink.ca.

Course Pre-Requisites

Admission to the MA (PR) or MPR program and successful completion of all qualifying requirements if applicable, or permission of the instructor.

Course Objectives

In addition to the overall goals articulated above, the following constitute the objectives that you will work toward achieving and upon which the evaluation tools are based.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Discuss issues affecting post-secondary education in Canada and other parts of the world in both professional and academic disciplines.
- 2) Discuss the personal transformation from practitioner/student to teacher/professor.
- 3) Demonstrate the ability to use scholarship of teaching & learning as the basis for course planning and delivery.
- 4) Critique past and present curricular innovation, particularly the role of experiential and service learning.
- 5) Identify a variety of learning styles and develop learning activities that relate to the different styles.
- 6) Assess your own personal teaching and learning style.
- 7) Discuss assessment and evaluation strategies that are related to course objectives and reflect academic rigor.
- 8) Write a personal teaching and learning philosophy statement.
- 9) Identify the components of a teaching portfolio.
- 10) Identify opportunities for research on issues in education in public communication.

Course Reading

In order for you to be fully engaged in this course – the materials and the assignments – it is essential that you complete all of the assigned readings.

Course readings will include the following book and a series of journal articles that are presented within each workshop.

Côté, J. & Allahar, A. (2007). *Ivory tower blues: A university system in crisis*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. (This text must be read in its entirety during Workshop 1.)

Evaluation Plan

The following assignments will constitute your evaluation for this course:

“On Becoming a Teacher” personal reflection	20%	Due: May 23
Peer engagement: Blog & peer review	30%	Due: Blog ongoing Due: PR June 25
Course outline, teaching philosophy & class materials	50%	Due: June 20

Details of Assignments

The student assignments are designed to measure student achievement in the three domains: knowledge, attitudes & skills – and are as follows:

1 -“On becoming a teacher”: Personal reflection on the transition from practitioner/student to teacher/professor

The purposes of this assignment which is worth a total of **20%** of your final grade for GPRL 6107 are as follows:

1. To provide you with an opportunity to explore your personal resonance with the material presented by the authors of *Ivory Tower Blues*.
2. To provide you with an opportunity to examine your own assessment of yourself as a teacher.
3. To assess your ability to synthesize ideas that create a context for post-secondary education in public relations and other communication disciplines.

The paper will be a narrative essay. It will be 1000 and the word count will be indicated on the cover page. It will constitute a personal reflection on the material presented in workshop 1 and as such will have a personal approach professionally presented. This is not an academic paper so scholarly writing style for both the narrative and the source citation is inappropriate. However, it is important that you footnote your references to materials. Be consistent in your approach.

You will email your paper to me by **May 23, 2010 (midnight Atlantic Time)**.



File Format

Papers should be prepared using MS Word™. If you are working on a Mac please save it both as a .doc(x) document and as an .rtf file.

The files should be named as follows:

YourLastname_yourfirstname_6107_workshop1.doc

2- Peer Engagement

Your participation in your own learning is important and your engagement with your peers is an important way of engaging with the content in a distance course. Therefore the purposes of this aspect of your evaluation are as follows:

1. To provide you with an opportunity to interact with both your professor and your classmates;
2. To provide an opportunity for further engagement in constructing your own learning;
3. To assess your ability to synthesize your understanding of educational issues and strategies.

The Components

There are two main components to peer engagement in this course which is worth **30%** of your overall grade.

The Class Blog

We will maintain a blog throughout this course. You are required to make one blog post for each of the three content workshops and respond to at least three posts by others (the professor, your peers or guest bloggers). The entries should be thoughtful, well-written, and topical and should consider the reader. These posts should be between 300-500 words and be posted prior to the beginning of the next workshop

Peer Review Forum

Each student is required to post his/her final assignment on the peer review forum in the concluding module section on the web site. Each student is required to post a review of all of his/her classmates' submissions. The review should assess content, presentation and the extent to which the materials reflect a solid application of the theoretical and pedagogical foundations discussed in the course. The reviews should be 300-400 words. ***Due: June 25, 2010 (Midnight Atlantic Time).***

Your grade for peer engagement will be a cumulative one based on all aspects of the assignment. Each post/submission will not be graded individually.

3- Pedagogical Skills: Course outline, personal teaching philosophy statement and class preparation.

This final assignment is worth **50%** of your final grade which is a substantial portion. Therefore, it will require a considerable time commitment.

The purposes of this assignment are as follows:

1. To provide you with an opportunity to consider your own personal philosophy of teaching and learning and how this might apply to an actual teaching situation.
2. To assess your ability to apply theoretical concepts to a practical teaching/learning situation.

The Components

There are three components to this assignment.

1. **Your Teaching/Learning Philosophy Statement:** You will create a personal statement on your philosophy of teaching and learning and reflect on how this will be applied in the development of a course outline and teaching materials.
2. **The Course Outline:** You will create a complete course outline for a 12-week on-campus course for 30 students based on **one** of the following course descriptions:
 - a. **Baccalaureate Courses**¹
 - i. Foundations of Public Relations
 - ii. Persuasive Public Relations Writing
 - iii. Public Relations Ethics
 - iv. Crisis Communication Management
 - b. **Diploma-level courses**²
 - i. Public Relations Presentation Skills: “In public relations, effective presentation techniques are essential. This course helps students acquire skills to present with confidence to a variety of stakeholders.”
 - ii. Public Relations in the Non-Profit Environment: “Through class discussions, case studies and assigned readings, students will develop an understanding of the differences in the communications function in corporate, non-profit and public sectors.”

¹ These courses are part of the MSVU BPR curriculum. Please refer to the undergraduate calendar for complete descriptions and pre-requisites.

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/undergradprograms/default.aspx>

² These courses are offered by Humber College in their PR diploma program. For a complete description of the program visit <http://www.humber.ca/program/04761>

3. **Sample Class Preparation:** Once the course outline and syllabus are completed, select one of the planned classes and prepare to teach it. Develop course notes, A/V materials etc. that would permit you to walk into a classroom and teach a group of 30 students.

ALL THREE OF THESE COMPONENTS MUST BE POSTED FOR PEER REVIEW ON THE DESIGNATED FORUM ON THE COURSE SITE. IF YOU WISH TO CONNECT TO VIDEOS/AUDIOS/SLIDES ETC. PLEASE INCLUDE THE APPROPRIATE LINKS. IN ADDITION, MATERIALS ARE TO BE EMAILED TO ME BY ...

DUE DATE: JUNE 20, 2010 (MIDNIGHT ATLANTIC TIME).



Course Policies & Student Responsibilities

Each individual student is responsible for the following:

- Reading carefully every piece of material on the site; reading every forum and news post, watching/ listening to posted videos and podcasts, reviewing any slide presentations, participating in the forum discussions & posting to the class blog; reading all suggested readings.
- All assignments have strict **deadlines** to which we will adhere unless you are in a coma. Late assignments will lose 20% per day starting on the day that they are late. If you are going to have difficulty meeting a deadline, discuss it with me **in advance** and it may be possible for us to make other fair arrangements if I am convinced of the validity and seriousness of your problem.
- This is grad school: you are expected to demonstrate a highly developed ability to work independently.
- You play a vital role in contributing to and maintaining the culture of academic integrity expected of everyone at MSVU. Statement on Plagiarism and Cheating: “University regulations on Plagiarism and Cheating and academic offenses will be strictly enforced. These regulations including applicable procedures and penalties are detailed in the University Calendar and are posted on Department notice boards and on the website at www.msvu.ca on the Current Student’s page under Academic Offenses.” I am well aware of the Web paper mills and I will seek out the source of any paper that looks fishy to me. If you have any questions about these expectations, please ask me about them.
- “Correct use of language is one of the criteria included in the evaluation of written assignments.” MSVU Calendar
- Adhere to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association for preparation of academic papers. This is a departmental policy; there are actually no academic papers required for this course.
- Class Cancellation policy: <http://www.msvu.ca/distance/Cancellation%20Policy.asp>



Department of Communication Studies Writing Competence Requirement

BASIC WRITING COMPETENCE IS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR PASSING THIS COURSE

Writing competence is a requirement in all department courses, and it must be demonstrated in all classes at both the undergraduate and graduate level. This means that students who fail more than one assignment in this course due to a lack of writing competence will not pass, regardless of the accumulation of points they achieve through team work, class participation, etc.

The department plays a significant role in developing student writing; however, it does not offer instruction in basic writing skills because these skills are beneath the academic level at which undergraduate and graduate courses occur. The faculty presumes that every student's general education included twelve years of writing-skills training, and therefore expects an English language competence in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and semantics. The responsibility to achieve that minimal standard lies with the student. Graduate students are expected to have writing skills considerably above those of an undergraduate.

The professor will not suspend this requirement by virtue of a student's willingness to obtain remedial writing instruction. Public Communication fields are writing intensive; the department requires the actual existence of writing skills, rather than the hope or the promise of these skills, as a condition for advancing students.

Research

Students who conduct research involving human participants must have their research reviewed in accordance with the *MSVU Policies and Procedures for Ethics Review of Research* before starting the research. Check with your course professor or Chair of the Department about proper procedure.

Resources

- MSVU Grad Studies Calendar <http://www.msvu.ca/calendar/graduate.asp>
- MSVU Library <http://www.msvu.ca/library/>
- MSVU Writing Resource Centre http://www.msvu.ca/student_affairs/WRC/index.asp
- Distance Learning and Continuing Education <http://www.msvu.ca/Distance/index.asp>
- MSVU Student Affairs http://www.msvu.ca/student_affairs/index.asp
- Distance Learning Student guide http://www.msvu.ca/distance/DLCE_Student_Guides/DLCE_Student_Guide.pdf