

Syllabus: Contemporary Public Diplomacy: Changes and Challenges

Course Number and Section: SIS 730-004

January 28 and February 4, 2023

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. — SIS Room 355

Instructor: Lynne Weil, lweil@american.edu

Description: Contemporary U.S. public diplomacy is done in an ever-increasing variety of ways, including interaction between students, entertainers, educators and activists. PD professionals today need to be digitally literate as well as sensitive to how social media are used differently from country to country. They must be prepared to stay on top of emerging trends and meet the shifting priorities of national security. This class will combine recent readings on PD topics, discussion of a variety of U.S. PD programs in the public and private sectors, and practical exercises to help students navigate the changing landscape of contemporary public diplomacy.

Course learning objectives: This course provides an overview of current and emerging trends in public diplomacy, the many tools available to PD professionals, and the hurdles that they face. Students will learn about recent shifts in the focus of PD and how they affect the field, delve into the opportunities and main challenges in carrying out effective programs, and build a toolkit for managing today's PD environment. Students will learn how U.S. public diplomacy is tied to shifting national security priorities and how top-level PD leadership sets the agenda in response. They will gain skills that are essential to working-level PD professionals, including choosing and using the right communications tools for different situations, setting goals that are consistent with policy, and developing strategic outreach plans.

Topics, assignments, reading material

For January 28 class: *Topics will include defining public diplomacy, surveying its current state, examining recent major shifts in emphasis, and setting long- and short-term goals. A workshop, guest speakers and classroom simulations will help students become familiar with current PD tactics and tools.*

Read the following items for this class:

U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy: [2022 Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting](#) (published December 2022) – You need only consider the Executive Summary (pp. 1-14) and Recommendations (pp. 15-19). Note: An announcement sent to you via Canvas also pointed out the opportunity to attend/watch the Commission's [January 25 public meeting](#) about this year's report.

Medium: [Senator Patrick Leahy recognizes World Learning's global impact in statement to US Senate](#), by World Learning (published December 2022)

Office of Congressman Ted Lieu: [Reps. Lieu and Wilson Applaud State Department's New Subnational Diplomacy Office](#) (published October 3, 2022) – Note: At the bottom of this news release is a link to a May 2022 article by Rep. Lieu about the rising importance of subnational diplomacy that is worth reading, but not required for this c.

[Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy: The Nexus of U.S. Public Diplomacy and Citizen Diplomacy](#), by Sherry Lee Mueller, Ph.D. (published January 23, 2020). – A PDF of this chapter has been uploaded to Canvas.

The Washington Post: [Restoring the Voice of America after Trump “wrecking ball” won’t be easy. But it’s worth saving.](#) By Margaret Sullivan (published December 13, 2020)

Listen to this radio piece:

[NPR: USAGM Chief Fires Trump Allies](#), by David Folkenflik (aired January 22, 2021)

Watch this video:

CBS News: [Radio Free Europe: Cold War-Era broadcaster’s mission still relevant in 2023](#), by Bill Whitaker (aired January 1, 2023)

And skim these items:

[USC Center for Public Diplomacy Blog](#) – Browse recent entries and be ready to discuss subjects that you found especially interesting.

LinkedIn profile for morning guest speaker [Irina Karmanova](#)

LinkedIn profile for afternoon guest speaker [Dan Morrison](#)

For February 4 class: *During the week between classes, students will come up with a one-page outreach plan using a mix of traditional public diplomacy techniques and digital tools including social media. They’ll either (1) take on the challenge of pushing back against propaganda from an adversary such as Russia, China or Iran that is being deliberately spread within a third country of their choice (outside the United States) or (2) propose various “smart power” approaches to countering violent extremist ideology being spread by non-state actors and/or foreign government-supported entities in a country of their choice (outside the United States).*

Topics for the February 4 class will include deeper dives into how federally funded PD resources and programs have shifted to respond to recent national security imperatives, pressures on high-level decision-making in PD policy, how digital diplomacy has affected the field, and careers in PD. This class session will include student discussions of their writing assignments.

All students read the following items for this class:

Harvard Kennedy School of Government: [A U.S. Diplomatic Service for the 21st Century](#) by Nicholas Burns, Marc Grossman and Marcie Ries (published November 2020) – The Executive Summary and “10 Actions” section, both found on this web page, are required reading; reading [the full report](#) is optional.

The Hill: [How to Fix the U.S. Public Diplomacy Deficit: Restore USIA](#), by Evan Cooper and Robert A. Manning (published February 13, 2021)

Defense 360: [Bad Idea: The Misguided Quest to Recreate USIA](#), by Kristin Lord (published December 4, 2020)

Public Diplomacy Council of America: [New Report on U.S. Strategic Communications Moots a Czar or New Agency](#), by JB Johnson (published January 2023). Note: This is a blog that links to [the November 2022 report](#) it describes; the report itself is very interesting – but is also long, and therefore not required reading for our course.

U.S. Department of State: [Global Engagement Center homepage](#) (updated December 2022) – Read about the GEC’s mission and vision; check out its latest news, including an announcement and the bio of the new GEC Coordinator, Special Envoy James P. Rubin.

Public Diplomacy Council of America: Public Diplomacy at the Foreign Policy Table, By Gordon Duguid (published February 21, 2022) – A PDF of this article has been uploaded to Canvas.

And skim these items:

LinkedIn profile for morning guest speaker [Gordon Duguid](#)

The White House: [National Security Strategy](#) (published October 2022) – Look especially for messaging points that may be primarily intended for overseas audiences.

For those whose one-page proposals will focus on pushing back against propaganda by one of the United States’ adversaries, you may want to consider the ideas raised in these resources:

Congressional Executive-Commission on China: [Annual Report 2022](#) (published November 2022). Search for “disinformation” and “propaganda.”

U.S. Department of State Global Engagement Center: [Special Report on Russia’s Pillars of Disinformation and Propaganda](#), August 2021

U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy: [Public Diplomacy and the New “Old” War: Countering State-Sponsored Disinformation](#) (published September 2020)

For those whose one-page proposals will focus on countering violent extremism, you may wish to consider some of the ideas raised in these resources:

U.S. Institute of Peace: [Lessons from Strengthening Capacity in Countering Violent Extremism](#), by Jeff Kentrell and Nate Wilson (published May 22, 2018)

USC Center on Public Diplomacy, [Netwar in Cyberia: Decoding the Media Mujahidin](#), by Ali Fischer (published November 8, 2018)

U.S. Agency for International Development, [Countering Violent Extremism](#) (published April 21, 2021) – Note also the policy report posted to this page, as well as the links at the bottom that will take you to further resources.

Grading policy: Students enroll in this course on a Pass/Fail basis. Absence from either of the two classes due to circumstances within a student’s control will result in a failing grade; students who miss the first class due to circumstances beyond their control – such as illness, accident, religious observance or representing the university at off-campus activities – will not be able to get credit for this course. Anyone who misses all or part of the second class must present reasonable documentation of their excuse for absence and will be required to submit assignments by a date agreed upon with me.

Class participation: Participation is an important element of this course. The more engaged you are, the more interesting the class will be. I define participation broadly because students have various levels of comfort when it comes to taking part in class.

You are expected to complete all assigned readings before coming to class and to take part in small-group and whole-class discussions. The purpose of the classroom discussions is to help us all develop meaningful interpretations of the ideas conveyed in the readings. Come to class having carefully read the assigned readings, and be prepared with questions, comments and criticisms based on them. Active participation in group activities as well as deep engagement in course discussions reflecting an understanding of the readings – not just personal opinions – are required for a passing grade. Please see me either before or just after class on our first day – or as needed, during a break – if you have any concerns about taking part in such discussions.

University-Wide Policies

Academic Integrity: Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the university’s [Academic Integrity Code](#). By registering for this course, students have acknowledged their awareness of the Academic Integrity Code and they are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly and disciplinary action will be taken should violations occur. This includes cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism.

Defining and Reporting Discrimination and Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policy: American University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy or parenting, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual’s genetic information or any other bases under applicable federal and local laws and regulations (collectively “Protected Bases”) in its programs and activities. The University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and stalking.

As a faculty member, I am required to report discriminatory or harassing conduct to the university if I witness it or become aware of it – regardless of the location of the incident. There are four confidential resources on campus if you wish to speak to someone who is not required to report: Counseling Center, victim advocates in OASIS, medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center. If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with [University Police](#) (202-885-2527), the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) (dos@american.edu or 202-885-3300), or the [Title IX Office](#) (202-885-8080 or TitleIX@american.edu). For more information, including a list of supportive resources on and off-campus, contact [OASIS](#) (oasis@american.edu or 202-885-7070) or check out the [Support Guide on the Title IX webpage](#).

Review the complete [Discrimination and Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).

Defining and Reporting Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy: American University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity that it operates, which includes admission and employment. Consistent with the procedures set forth and referenced in this Policy, the University will take steps to eliminate Title IX Sexual 2 Harassment, prevent its recurrence, and remedy any discriminatory effects for members of the AU Community.

It is the responsibility of every member of the AU Community to foster an environment free of Title IX Sexual Harassment. All members of the AU Community are encouraged to take reasonable and prudent actions to prevent or stop an act of Title IX Sexual Harassment. Taking action may include direct intervention when safe to do so, enlisting the assistance of friends, contacting law enforcement, or seeking assistance from a person in authority.

AU Community members employed by the University (including student employees, such as teaching assistants, resident assistants, and orientation leaders) and individuals covered by the University’s Out-of-State Staffing Policy have a duty to report Title IX Sexual Harassment to the [Title IX Coordinator](#) (202-885-8080), when they become aware of such conduct.

Review the complete [Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy](#).

Policy on Wearing Protective Masks in the Classroom: If a student declines to wear a face mask or shield in a classroom, a faculty member is required to give the student a chance to comply before referring the matter to the dean of students. Students who do not abide by the requirements will first be offered a disposable face mask, if possible. If they refuse to comply, they will be asked to leave campus, but not before being given options of how they can be served virtually. University police are not responsible for enforcement and should not be contacted if possible.

Emergency Preparedness: In the event of an emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the University be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or the use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU email and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any emergency-related absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU email regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the [AU website](#), and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college specific information.

Student Code of Conduct: The central commitment of American University is the development of thoughtful, responsible human beings in the context of a challenging yet supportive academic community. The [Student Code of Conduct](#) is designed to benefit the American University community and to assist in forming the highest standards of ethics and morals among its members. By registering for this course, students have acknowledged their awareness of the Student Code of Conduct and they are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code.

Religious Observances: Students will be provided the opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. Please send this notification through email to the professor. For additional information, see American University's [religious observances policy](#).

Use of Student Work: The professor will use academic work that you complete for educational purposes in this course during this semester. Your registration and continued enrollment constitute your consent.

Academic Support Services

[Academic Success Coaching](#) is a free one-on-one meeting between a student and a professional academic coach to build or enhance time management, organizational, reading, notetaking, test taking and study skills. Students can work with an academic coach to develop an academic action plan, better understand how to break down large assignments, and discuss overcoming procrastination. Coaching services are open to all students. (Location in Clark Hall Rooms 106/113 – Schedule appointments on the [Academic Coaching You Can Book Me](#) – academiccoaching@american.edu)

The [ASAC Tutoring Lab](#) provides free one-on-one and drop-in tutoring for selected courses in disciplines such as accounting, biology, chemistry and economics. In your 30 minutes or hour appointment, a peer tutor can assist with understanding course content, providing hands-on practice, and discussing best strategies for studying. ([Schedule tutoring appointments on WC Online](#) – tutoring@american.edu)

[International Student & Scholar Services](#) has resources to support academic success and participation in campus life including academic counseling, support for second language learners, response to questions about visas, immigration status and employment and intercultural programs, clubs and other campus resources. (202-885-3350, Butler Pavilion 410).

The [Mathematics & Statistics Tutoring Lab](#) provides free drop-in tutoring and scheduled one-on-one tutoring appointments to American University students for exam review, homework assignments, and understanding concepts. The Lab tutors Mathematics concepts up to Calculus II and Statistics concepts up to Intermediate Statistics. (Drop-in to Don Myers Building Room 103 or [Schedule tutoring appointments on WC Online](#))

[Supplemental Instruction](#) (SI) is a free group tutoring program that supports historically challenging courses in disciplines such as accounting, biology, chemistry and economics. SI Leaders facilitate weekly group review sessions that reiterate course content. In your one- or two-hour session, an SI Leader can assist with learning course concepts, facilitating group learning, and sharing best strategies for studying and note taking. (siprogram@american.edu)

The [Writing Center](#) offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address your assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work. (Bender Library – 1st Floor Commons – [Schedule tutoring appointments on WC Online](#) – 202-885-2991)

Student Support Services

[The Center for Diversity & Inclusion \(CDI\)](#) is dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, multicultural, first-generation, and women's experiences on campus and to advancing AU's commitment to respecting and valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy. It is located on the 2nd floor of Mary Graydon Center (202-885-3651, MGC 201 & 202).

The Counseling Center offers a variety of psychological services, online resources, and referrals to off-campus mental health care. Please visit the Center's website for more information: www.american.edu/counseling.

The Office of the Dean of Students offers individual meetings to discuss issues that impact the student experience including academic, social, and personal matters. Staff work with students and make referrals to appropriate campus resources for resolution.

Additionally, while academic regulations state that medical absences are to be excused, if faculty require correspondence to verify the student's explanation, medical documentation should be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students ("DOS"). The DOS staff will review the documentation and verify the medical excuse. Faculty have the discretion to approve absences and do not need permission from the Office of the Dean of Students to excuse absences. Students should be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students only if faculty require further proof or if they have concerns about the impact of absences on the student's ability to succeed (202-885-3300; Butler Pavilion 408; www.american.edu/dos)

Students facing challenges securing food or housing should be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students (www.american.edu/dos or 202-885-3300) for support and referral to resources.

[The Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence, OASIS](#), which is housed within the Health Promotion & Advocacy Center, provides free and confidential advocacy services for students who have experienced sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, sexual harassment, and/or stalking. These services are available during office hours, Monday through Friday to all students and to friends and family members of survivors. To schedule an appointment with one of the two confidential victim advocates, book via <http://auhpac.youcanbook.me>. The advocates are also available via email (oasis@american.edu) or by phone (202-885-7070). OASIS is located in Hughes Hall, Suite 105.

As stated in [the American University Discrimination and Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policy](#):

"American University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy or parenting, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information or any other bases under applicable federal and local laws and regulations (collectively "Protected Bases") in its programs and activities. The University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and stalking."

The above website includes further details, including how to report instances of discrimination and your responsibilities as a member of the campus community in relation to the policy; you are strongly encouraged to familiarize yourself further with this policy.

Class rosters and University data systems are provided to faculty with the student's legal name and legal gender marker. As a student, you are able to change how your preferred/proper name shows up through email, Blackboard, and on your AU ID Card. This option is helpful for various student populations, including but not limited to: students who abbreviate their first name; students who use their middle name; international students; and transgender students. As a faculty member, I am committed to using your proper name and pronouns. We will take time during our first class together to do introductions, at which point you can share with all members of our learning community what name and pronouns you use, as you are comfortable. Should you want to update your preferred/proper name, you can do so by looking at the [guidelines and frequently asked questions](#) from the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

If you wish to receive accommodations for a disability, please notify me with a memo from the Academic Support and Access Center. As accommodations are not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is strongly recommended. To register with a disability or for questions about disability accommodations, contact the Academic Support and Access Center at 202-885-3360 or asac@american.edu. For more information, visit AU's [Disability Accommodations web page](#).