

# Online Masters of Arts in Strategic Communication Program Overview Video

>> Good afternoon, everyone. This Shawna Narter, with American University's Online Masters in Strategic Communication Program. I'm really excited to have everyone in attendance today, we have a great session planned. Before we get into the presentation, I would like to go over some introductory information, to get everyone acclimated with the platform that we're using.

As I mentioned, the webinar is automatically muted so your interface with us will be the questions window, and the go-to-meeting dashboard. Feel free to type questions in throughout the presentation, and we will address them either on the chat itself, or in our Q & A session towards the end of this presentation.

We will provide an archive version of this presentation at the end as well in case you miss anything. So without further delay, let's go ahead and get started. Welcome to American Universities Online Masters in Strategic Communication program, Open House. Our agenda for today is as follows, again my name is Shawna Narter representing our admissions team today.

I'm joined by our esteem faculty and program director, Paula Weissman. After a brief introduction, Paula will be speaking about the master of arts and communication here at American University. We will be covering at some general program objectives, a curriculum overview, introduce you to some of our current faculty members so you can get a feel for their experience and knowledge in the field, as well as some of the courses they teach.

We'll discuss in a bit more details what sets American universities program apart from others in the field. some details about the engage online classroom platform used by our students. At the end of our presentation, we will have time for questions and answers. And I will also quickly run through what is required to apply in our application process.

I do highly encourage everyone to type questions into the chat box, and we will do our best to get to each question. We will also cover specifics about the online program and the application process, like I said throughout. Now, that being said our admissions counselors will also be available at 855, 725, 7614 after this presentation, if you have questions specific to your personal situation.

So without further ado, let's go ahead and get started with the program logistics. Paula Weissman, is a full time professor of public communication and the program director for the school of communications. Masters in strategic communication. Previously, she helped launch the MPS program in integrated marketing communications at Georgetown University's school of continuing studies, and served for several years as administrator and faculty member for Johns Hopkins University's masters in communication program.

Prior to her academic career, she worked for public relations in research firms, including Porter Novelli at a certain group, and a center for the study of services, on a variety of health and social change initiatives. Her research, is focused on how public relations and other strategic communication efforts can be used to facilitate informed health and risk decision making.

I'm going to go ahead and hand it over to our program director here, who's been kind enough to join us today, Paula and she is going to take it from here. So go ahead Paula.

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>> Great, thank you, Shawna. So Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining us today.

Depending on where you're calling in from, it could be daytime could be in the evening. We have students doing our program really from all over now different time zones, which is pretty exciting. And one thing that I would say before we get started, is that if you're considering an online program, which you are, since you're on this webinar.

You should understand that at one point in time, this may have been considered a little less typical, or kind of a non traditional way to get your degree, but we actually know within our disciplines of communications now. Good, maybe 33% or so. The latest surveys show of graduate students getting master's degrees who are thinking about going into the professional workforce or moving forward in the workforce, are doing that online now through online programs.

And so this really is actually becoming the norm. Strategic communication, I want to talk about a little bit because, I often hear from students who are thinking about different degree programs. And it can be a little confusing. I'm sure you've started to do some research, there are programs in public relations, programs in marketing, programs in strategic communication and they overlap a little bit.

It's hard to kinda tell the differences. And so from my perspective and the way that we think about our curriculum here, we aligned towards strategic communication, because that really is a trend throughout the communication disciplines. And public relations, overtime is kinda shifting towards more of a broader strategic communication, conceptualization for various reasons.

Number one, is that we've determined over time through kind of the scholarship, the research, some of the theories, the research methods that are the base of the public relations discipline. That a lot of what you learn in terms of how to change attitudes, beliefs, behaviors to move towards some type of goal that your organization or individual is seeking, the concepts are very similar that you learn.

And so, maybe you're working on a campaign and you're trying to influence health behavior like, get someone to get a preventive cancer screening. Or, maybe you're working on a political campaign, and you're trying to persuade someone to go canvas for candidate, or maybe you're working on an advertising campaign and you're trying to get someone to purchase a specific product.

Or maybe recommend that product online and serve as an influencer. The way we actually gonna get you to those behaviors and outcomes is going to be very similar. In terms of some of the strategies and the way that we will do the research, to figure what are the right levers to press.

And so, that's one of the reasons why a lot of degree programs have started, I think to shift, to strategic communication. When we go to this next slide, I can tell you about another reason. And this other reason is probably something that you all hear about, especially I'm sure some of you are already in the profession.

As this moved towards integration. So because of the digital landscape that we are now in and how it benefit quite sometime, what we're seeing is disciplines kinda blending together just because we have to do our work. And so when we launch campaigns now, we often say that we need to work across paid channels, so that would be paid advertising and that could be traditional advertising, but more so now it's online advertising.

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We need to work across our own channels, this was kind of the original bread and butter of PR so to speak, in terms of media relations, all of that is still important. But also earned is this kind of blending into the space of blogs, and other online channels that are important now, to not just kind of our traditional print and broadcast publications.

We need to work across shared channels, which is social media, working with influencers, and then also our own properties. Like our websites, our own social media channels that we actually own. We have to have a really strong content strategy in place, because what we're trying to do is kind of drive traffic across all of those channels, so people keep hearing our message in multiple places.

And, so we often call that the acronym for that is P-E-S-O. And you probably see that a lot of trade publications, and that's becoming really important. And because of that, it's all blending together. You can't just be PR, you can't just be marketing. You can't just be advertising, you have to have a working knowledge of all.

So that's another reason, I think for strategic communication. In terms of our program outcomes, you will see that a program should always have this program learning outcome stated and what we do when we design curriculum is we agree as a faculty on what our program outcomes are. What do we want students to be able to do when they actually leave our program and then everything backs up from there in terms of how we decide on courses to offer, and the content that we offer.

And you can see here, I'm not gonna read every single one to you. Cuz you can see on the slide, but we really are interested. There's a couple of themes here in terms of really preparing our students to move towards a management level, so that you are able to actually manage complex campaigns.

Working across a variety of channels like I just talked to you about and doing that in a way that you effectively use qualitative, and quantitative research techniques to get to your strategies. And so we can't be successful with our target audiences, unless we really understand them and research is the way to do that.

If you read any industry trade journals and PR strategic communication, advertising, marketing, communication, you will see that it's all about data and analytics and data-driven decision-making now is becoming very important in our field. One of the reasons which I'll talk to you about a little bit later on in the slides that we've actually just launched a new concentration with a heavy focus on analytics, because we want you to understand those things as well and have an opportunity for those classes.

So moving to our next slide here. I can tell you a little bit about the way our curriculum is developed and we have core course requirements that we feel that every student needs to take. You can see them here on the slide, there are five of them. Principles of strategic communication really walks you through the logic on how to develop a very specific communication campaign built on a set of very specific communication objectives that you want to achieve for a client.

In addition to doing the research to come up with strategy and messaging and tactics, you also learn how to create budgets. So it really goes into the nuts and bolts, as well. Writing for strategic communication, I think it kinda goes without saying that we have to write in a variety of formats now for traditional media, for digital media and social spaces, etc.

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And that course really make sure that you're able to do that and to have a consistent message strategy, a consistent brand feel, etc. But you can execute it in different ways across different platforms and media. Research, I already talked about why that's so important. That course reviews qualitative and quantitative methods, and then communication theory.

That's a course I'm gonna show you actually a little bit later. Today, we're gonna pop in to one of my courses, but it's really important even though I think a lot of students coming into the program don't wish to move on and be academics and get PhD's, etc.

And having an understanding of communication theory really can help you be more strategic. So that's an important course for you have and then we do a strategic communication capstone, which really is a project that you work on with your advisor. You enroll into a course and it really is a place for you to pursue your passion, but in a very rigorous way where you work on a research project and you also survey kind of all the background literature in a specific topic area of focus for you.

Electives, so on this slide, you can see various electives that we have in the program and we really tried to kinda build this out in a way that would suit most students in terms of their particular interests. We have electives scheduled here, because they're of core important, I think to the field.

So more and more, for example, ethics is becoming important. When you're working in an online environment, we all know that it can start to become very difficult to understand who the source is of the message, etc. And as communicators for organizations, brands, candidates and individuals, one thing we know is that trust is a incredible important drive.

We've probably all read crisis communication types of snares that actually happen when brands are not authentic and transparent, etc., in their communication and the consumer backlash that can happen very quickly online now. So that's a course that was added probably about a year or so ago. You can see our other offerings here.

I'll talk about them more as I discuss our specific concentrations that we have and how they align. So our first concentration that you can offer you don't have to offer concentration. So the way it works is you will get a graduate degree in strategic communication and the concentrations don't actually physically toward on your diploma, but they are away for us to help students see a path for them to concentrate in a specific area that aligns with their career aspirations.

And if you follow our recommended path, you can feel comfortable putting that on your resume, your LinkedIn profiles, etc., to position yourself for employers. And so one concentration area is advocacy and social impact. We picked this one. This is a real strong suit for us at American University.

We have lots of faculty members who work in the area of social change, so to speak, social justice, etc. And so here, you can see that we offer five courses in this area and you would select three of them if you wanted to do the concentration. Social marketing for social impact is a very interesting course.

I always end up recommending that to students who wanna do this path, because it really digs into a lot of consumer behavior, behavior change theories, etc. That really help you kinda get inside the heads of individuals, so to speak and

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understand different models of how we might shift behaviors from more negative ones to more kinda pro-social positive ones over time.

Political communication is taught by a faculty member that we have here. That course was developed and she is a partner at heart research here in Washington, DC, a major political polling firm. It's a fantastic class. As I said, overtime, we're trying to make sure we're preparing students more in the digital space.

And you can see, we have a class grassroots digital advocacy there. Because a lot of the organizing that you have to do to kind of bring public together around an issue happens online now and there are specific online organizing techniques that you will wanna be aware of. I've already talked about ethics.

And then of course, social media strategies and tactics. That is just almost, I think in my mind becoming something that would kind of raised a threshold in this environment of being almost a core course that I think everyone should take an effect a lot of our students whether they're following a concentration or not will take that course.

So our new concentration that is just actually launching for this fall, so brand new information, is digital strategy and analytics. I'm super excited about this one. I've worked very closely with faculty to develop courses, and as I said, this stems from our understanding now that you really need to be working across those four channels.

So you can see a couple of the classes kind of overlap. Certainly the digital advocacy organizing is still relevant here. Ethics, of course, probably the more relevant when you're working across multiple channels to understand what you need to disclose on different channels. But also our two new courses that we've added to fill out this concentration.

We have a digital strategic communication analytics and certifications. What I love about this course is it teaches you how to use analytics to create messages, strategies etcetera. But through the course of that, in terms of learning about the analytics, you actually get certified in major platforms that are being used in the industry.

And so the social media platform that we are certifying students in at this point in time that we use in that course, is called Meltwater. And so this is used by a lot of PR strategic communication people in industry. And it is a platform that allows you to analyze large volumes of social media data, look at it and track and organization in terms of sentiment, how people feel about an organization an issue or topic that you are tracking and that, In that platform, share a voice in terms of what is your share of voice that you're getting compared to other brands out there on social.

Those are just two examples of common metrics that organizations are looking at now there's many more. So that's one example. Hootsuite is another platform you may have heard of, for social data, digital data that we do some work a little bit to introduce you to in that class as well too.

And you also will get certified in Google Analytics, right? So the web analytics are becoming really important to understand where is traffic coming to your website, which is an owned property. Where are people dropping off? How can you actually improve your website or incoming traffic to it? So that's sort of a really exciting important course I think.

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And the other course that we are still developing, but it will be ready for anyone who enters in the fall cohort to take before you leave the program, will be Digital Marketing for Strategic Communication. And digital marketing, again this is a real good example of PR, strategic communication marketing all blending together.

And these digital marketing strategies are becoming more important than ever to be able to understand how to drive topics. So in that class you cover a variety of topics, but you'll learn about search engine optimization, search engine marketing, how to optimize your content and you will get certified again in an industry platform and that is Google ads.

So that and also you do a little bit with another platform, Facebook Blueprint in that class. And so more and more, it's really important that we have a command of how to kind of purchase, pay, bid for some paid advertising so we're able to implement that. So that cost prepares you to do that.

>> So much for taking the time to go over that for us too. I know, of course, one of the biggest determining factors is making sure that the curriculum lines up for their needs. And it's always helpful to just hear it verbatim from somebody they helped create that and teaches it.

So Paul, if you'd be so kind can you teach us a few minutes here to help us understand a bit more about some of the faculty members that will be teaching and really just explain a bit more in detail overall about what a few of them bring to the classroom in the way of their professional experience or maybe even why they were chosen to teach in a specific area.

>> Yeah, absolutely. So what you see on the slide are several faces here, and all of these faces are my full time faculty colleagues, some of them. Actually, we have a huge division cuz we run one of the biggest PR strat divisions kind of in the country, so we have 23 full time faculty in the division I teach in.

So here are some of them that are very involved in the online program and have been since the beginning. So, one thing before I talk about their backgrounds a little bit is I will say that in our program, we are very committed to having a mix of faculty teach and when I say a mix of faculty, that means full time faculty who they have an office at AU, these are our full time jobs.

And then also, mixing it up with adjunct faculty, and adjunct faculty are people who teach full time, teaching is not their day job. They're in industry they're very senior level. They're working in the communications industry and we contract them to teach a course for us and we feel that that gives the best blend of full time faculty there who are really experts in teaching and curriculum and making sure that we're keeping our online program consistent with what we do on campus cuz we offer the same degree on campus and blending in this kinda cutting edge industry, expertise that we need to keep our program fresh.

Here are our full time faculty on this slide. You can see if you look at the top row and you go all over one you can see that is Corinne Hor and she is a full time faculty member who her expertise is in crisis communication. And she's had a fantastic professional career and she worked The White House, under the Bush administration.

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She was one of the youngest people ever to be appointed as a director of communication. She work for the Office of Management and Budget. So obviously, she saw a lot of crisis situations. There is, as you would in any administration and our students love this class. It's one of our most popular classes in crisis communication.

If you move over keep going on that first row over to the very far right you see the woman with the blue scarf, smiling and that is Rhonda Zarhana. And I would say she's a good example where Corinne is really kinda came to us because she had this very specific professional profile, Rhonda Zarhana she is much of what you would consider kind of a traditional academic.

She's written several books. Her expertise is in public diplomacy. She is very well known in the field Doctor Zarhana has won all kinds of awards from the academic organizations and published many journal articles. At the same time though, because our program always has had this professional orientation that we wanna make sure we're teaching and providing curriculum to students in a way that they can use it in the field.

She's also done a lot of consulting for the State Department and other organizations like that, that make use of her expertise in public diplomacy. Moving on down if you see on the very bottom row. Starting at the left go the second one over, the woman in the blue dress that is Dr. Anya social marketing.

And Anya, her expertise is in social marketing. And so she developed and teaches that social marketing course that I told you as part of the advocacy and social impact concentration, and she has moved between teaching and the professional world going back and forth. She's full time faculty with us now, but she has a pretty active consulting practice as well, too, and she frequently is doing work for the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions.

So hopefully, that gives you a little bit of sense. I won't go through everyone, but our full time faculty, I would say, we're looking for a mix of academic and professional expertise.

>> Thank you so much as always for, for sharing all those super impressive backgrounds. Moving on to other impressive things as well.

Of course, our schools reputation and rankings are a big part of why we see such an excellent cross-section of professionals applying to this program. Can you go ahead and speak a little bit more to some of the awards and honors our program has been granted, please?

>> Yeah, absolutely.

So as you can see here, we've been granted several. These are examples. I think this is for a variety of reasons, the strong faculty that we have, how we link to the industry in the profession in such a deliberate type of way. We have a major research center within the school communication, a couple of them.

And just the strength of our faculty and our curriculum as well too. One of the more recent awards that we won here in the top left is the Top 5 PR Program from PRWeek. And that one is an award that we're very proud of. It's a very difficult rigorous process to go through.

We put together a very detailed application, examples of faculty work, what they're doing. Also, we have to report on student success, outcomes, etc. And it gets judged by a very esteemed panel of judges. So, very proud to have that award and these other ones as well too.

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>> Thank you, and then moving on to, of course, career outlook we get asked about all the time, many students are using this whether it's literally launching a new career to continue to move onward and upward.

Can you speak a little bit too about how what the career outlook looks like for graduates of this program?

>> Yeah, it looks really great just in general. So you can see our stats here, about 95% of the students that leave the program are employed or pursuing an advanced degree or both.

And so that is a statistic that the university actually collects after you graduate from the program. And these numbers, of course, change every year. It's an annual survey but it's always around the mid 90s or so like this. It may go kinda up or down, a point or so, or a couple points in the time that I've been in this role that I've seen it.

So that remains pretty high. I think more important is even to think about however, just what's available out there in the workforce and industry trends. And so if you go to the US department of labor statistics you can always look up for different professions, what the expected growth rates would be.

They usually report data and they reported over what they expect to see and growth trends over a decade. And so right now, if you went and you looked at public relations professions, I think they have a job title designation, a public relations specialist, etc. The growth trend is about 9% between 2014 and 2024 that they expect to grow.

There are other jobs you could look up. Like I said, it's a little tricky just to go on one job title, that's downside of those statistics and so you have to look at other things. So there's other jobs that are in marketing or promotions, or marketing director, those types of things.

And since we're such a blend, I think it makes sense to look at different communication once. But you'll see communication in general, in those types of areas are all growing at least 6 to 9%, 11% or so, over the next decade. So that's one way to look at it.

The other way to look at it I would say, is that you want to pick a program that's going to actually prepare you to be competitive against all the other people who are also thinking that communication seems like a great degree to get at this point in time and they're going to actually go get it too.

It's one of the reasons I think, that I felt pretty strongly about this digital strategy and analytics concentration, I saw a survey by the University of Southern California. They have an institute there, and they do a lot of research on trans and the PR, Strategic communication industry and it produces really fantastic reports every year.

And they did a survey in 2017 and it was PR executives, high level executives around the country. And 87% of them actually said that public relations would no longer explain what they do in five years, because this integration is happening so fast. And so I think you really wanna look at courses carefully on what you're going to get out of it.

The other thing that I tell prospective students is that, you should be looking at job ads. So just go online and start looking up jobs in the PR, marketing communications, strategic communication space and start looking at the skills that they are asking for. Start looking at some of the platforms that they're asking people to be certified in, etc.

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Because that is really a great way to kinda see also how well a degreed program can prepare you. You can see here, we just put a sprinkling of different organizations that our graduates have gone to. This is another just example of how diverse the strategic communication degree is.

You really can end up tailoring it whether you're interested in health or medicine or disability rights or with the financial industry, we have students that go to all different types of organizations with these skills Okay, so the other thing I think is important to think about is student services.

And as I told you, studying online is becoming the norm and we feel really strongly that we need to make sure that we are providing our students with the same level of service that they would get on campus. And so we make sure across all our different areas, that staff are ready and should be ready to meet students whether it's face to face, phone virtually accepted to be able to get those services.

And so one example would be our library. Actually, if you join our program in one of our first classes I think it is, and I know it appears again in my class, there is video from an individual who's really great. His name is Derek Jefferson and he's actually our dedicated School of Communication librarian.

Which means that if you're working on a research paper or project and you are having trouble in library databases, figuring out where can I find this information I need to find, we have a librarian who actually specializes in communication that can help you. And he is available to do consultations with you via phone, via email however you need to do it if you're not on campus.

Our library access is excellent and you won't have any trouble getting the resources that you need. Our writing center, we have a writing center, sometimes students need some extra help and this comes with your tuition. I always tell students, you should take advantage of your tuition dollars. We can all use to improve our writing and sometimes faculty may suggest that students go over there and even if they don't suggest it, you can certainly do that.

And you can submit different drafts of things so they can get a sense of your writing and help you pinpoint some common things that you might be doing to help you kind of clean up your writing a little bit. And they make virtual appointments, so that can all be done virtually.

We have a counselling service that you have full access to via phone, virtual as well too. And then our Career Center is also completely open to you. And so whether you are studying online or on campus, you have the same exact services. And so I think that that's something to check into.

Sometimes when you join an online program, it's not always the case. And I think that these are questions to ask programs that you're joining that you get exactly the same services. So sometimes you may pay less in student fees or something like that. And because of that, you'll find out like, well, yeah, you have some limited career services.

But you really can't go to the center virtually or walk in physically and have someone advise you on your resume or help you with it or walk you through a mock interview or something like that because you may have paid a different level student fees or something like that.

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That's not the case at AU, you can have the same advising appointments. You will also have access to all the same resources in terms of networking sites that we have. We have a career web, there is job and internships that are posted specifically for AU. There's a networking group called handshake where you can introduce and connect with other alumni.

And there are a lot of online workshops and things that get done.

>> Thank you so much for going over all that as well. It's nice to know to especially as you had mentioned, being an online student doesn't mean that you don't get the same resources. So definitely reassuring.

I know that you are gonna be giving us really an in depth look today on the online platform, but just to kind of briefly discuss. So, one of the first thing that makes this program special is the LMS we used for the classroom. We use the product called Engage and it is very different from most traditional LMSs you might be familiar with.

In a sense that Engage is a learning community more cozy resembling social networking platform than other widely used learning management system. So with Engage it was designed for students rather than faculty and as such it is heavily based on collaboration and community. There are several built in features with Engage that makes it easier to interact with classmates and faculty alike.

There are also opportunities to use well known interactive tools such as Zoom, Adobe Connect and other collaboration tools. So, what I know you wanted to go ahead and move into is really just kinda giving us that in depth look at what does it actually look like? The students asked all the time, like sounds great, but what can I expect there?

So I'm gonna go ahead and switch it over to you, Paula to go ahead and take over with your screen. So all right, you should be good.

>> Okay, can you see my screen?

>> Yeah.

>> Great, all right everyone. So what I would like to do is to just kinda give you kinda a brief tour and I'll just point out a few things that you wouldn't notice in our courses regardless of any course that you took in the program.

And so this is my communication theory course, near and dear to my heart, I love teaching this class. When you get to a course you will always land on the homepage. And typically there's some kind of video or welcome possibly from the faculty member. Other times it may be graphics or things like that, that the faculty member wants you to see.

But as you can see, the setup will always be pretty intuitive for you. And so we organize all of our courses down the left menu that you click into the units and I'll show you some of those. All our courses are eight units of content and it will guide you through what you have to do in every unit.

You can see here that you will have your instructor info and if this course was fully loaded and live, you'd be able to kinda click on these things. Here you can see getting to know your instructor. It's a place holder now, but there is a bio video of me.

So it might be a bio video or a written bio of your instructor, etc. And you also have tools up here that easily are connected to email to be able to email your instructor, email anyone in the class, etc. So you are always connected to different communications. You can see here there is of course calendar.

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And when I populate my class, when I go to teach a section and all our other faculty do the same thing too, they will put all your assignments and everything right in your course calendar. So things will populate for you, you'll know exactly when things are due. In the homepage, there's always this Announcements link.

And so a lot of times, your faculty members are sending out announcements to the course. So those we'll push right to the wall here, so you can kinda read it. They would push over in the right here under the Online users, if this was a live course right now.

And they'll also post your email wherever you have it set up to transfer over to your email. Other things about this as Shauna talked about the Zoom tool. If your faculty member decides to do kind of a live session, now our program is completely asynchronous. But sometimes faculty will opt to do that and you don't have to be there at a specific time cuz we're asynchronous.

But if they did decide to do that, they would actually record the session afterwards and send it in case you missed it. But this is also a wonderful tool that we use with our students for online office hours and online appointments. So I do most of my appointments via Zoom with my students, and I love it because it's got the video interface.

So, let's say you turn in a paper to me and I went through and I made some comments and we wanna talk it through. We can connect on Zoom, I can see you, we can see one another. It feels personal, but then also I can literally pull your paper up on screen with my markups and we can scroll through and we can talk to it.

So there's a nice connectionability there too. We try to keep our courses pretty interactive with lots of ways for you to communicate. So you can see here I'm gonna click, this is just an Ask Your Professor forum. So let's say you had a question like, a basic question about an assignment due and you think, others in the class might benefit by this too.

You could just click here and you post the question and your faculty member would respond back. And everyone in the class would be able to see that response, so that's one way. Another opportunity we have, is we have a student lounge. This really is for students to interact with one another about things.

Maybe you want to figure out, hey, who's going to graduation? Or hey, I live in San Francisco, is anybody kind of around that wants to do coffee here, or something like that. Any way you wanna use the student lounge, students can actually do that. As you scroll through, you'll see that on your homepage, all of our courses will be set up the same.

And your syllabus would be loaded here. Whatever writing style your faculty member requires would be live for you there. And so this is pretty much what your homepage is always going to look like. We always have the AU library electronic resource collection. So sometimes I will put articles and they go on the library ears are for you so you don't have to go buy all those books.

They're provided usually in a PDF format, and you would just click right there to get your readings for the week. So moving on, I'm going to take you into a unit. One thing we try and do is we have a lot of multimedia content across the courses. And some courses have different types of media just because the content is well suited to it.

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But essentially, oftentimes you will see that, we actually produced a video for you for a course. So in my course, because it's a theory class, I'd like to kind of give you the lay of the land. So you can understand how the readings and the theories that we're looking at in that unit actually go together.

And so I produced this video. And you can see that you'll just click and you'll play the video. And you can see that we have an interactive transcript in there too because our courses are accessible, ADA compliant. And also sometimes it's just helpful for you if you don't wanna listen to the whole video again, to be able to go back and read it.

Every course is always set up that you have specific objectives in the unit. So these are the learning objectives that your instructor wants you to achieve by the end of the unit. So you know what you're shooting for. And then you'll see the content. It will list out specifically the readings that you need to do.

Sometimes they'll be links, sometimes they'll just get them through the library reserve. But it will direct you exactly how to do that. Any videos in addition that your faculty member wants you to have, here I produced a few other videos because it's the first unit. And I'm trying to get everyone adjusted to the class and what we are gonna be doing.

And then there is typically activities that you would do which sometimes are, activities are always ungraded. There are things that you do typically to prep for some discussion or assignment that you're going to do. But then you'll see that you'll click just about every unit. In most cases, faculty have some kind of discussion where they will have you do something and they will have you post to a discussion board.

It is very specific, what you are going to be doing. And you will interact with your peers and of course your faculty member will provide feedback, too. So in our courses, we're not just driving you to kind of our own video that we produced, because we are a program that likes to be very applied.

I'm always trying to find ways, as are my colleagues to link whatever we're doing to industry, kind of what's happening, etc., different execution. So here is an example of my theory course. We talk about social cognitive theory, which is a theory that a lot of entertainment education programs are built on.

And those are programs that actually use entertainment as a strategy for change. And one popular program that is kind of a iconic program in the entertainment education field is a program in South Africa called Soul City. And so, in this particular discussion, I actually have clips from that program.

And you end up clicking on them and you see a little part of this, it's a dramatic program. And then you go to the discussion board, and you actually discuss the clip that you saw kind of through the lens of the theory. I'm trying to get you to see if in the script writing of the show and all of that, you can identify how the theory actually is working as a base for the program.

Another unit here that I have, Unit 4, this is my social influence unit, and it's actually my favorite unit. I think it's really fun. And we talk about a lot of different social influence theories. And I try to relate the discussion board in here to different social movements.

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And so in this particular case, we linked the theories that we study that week to the MeToo movement. And here's an example of an interactive poster that I put together. And you go on here and all these links are actually live. And so I put together a selection of things.

So you can click on this and it's gonna bring you over to this article about Time magazine. How they called MeToo, the movement the Person Of the Year that year. So you'll be reading about a little background of the movement. Sometimes they are social media kind of links that you're reading.

Sometimes it could be videos, Wikipedia entries, examples of posts, etc. And then I have the students go back to the discussion board and we all kind of talk about the movement. But again through the lens of the learning content. So I hope that this gives you a sense, I guess one more thing that I will show you actually, I didn't show you, that's a discussion board.

But I am going to show you one of our assignments. So your assignments will always be very detailed. They will tell you kind of exactly what you do. Here you can see how to upload your assignment. And we always have on all our assignments throughout the courses, a very specific rubric as well too.

So you'll be able to see exactly what your professor is looking for. And you can obviously always reach out to your faculty member. And then you can go into grades, these are not students. These are actually faculty colleagues that I populated to this course. But as your faculty members are posting grades, you have kind of real time access to that, to see how you're doing in the class.

So I hope that gives you a little bit of a sense of what it looks like to be in one of our courses.

>> Thank you so much. It's always helpful, especially because Engage is so unique in a very good way that a lot of students don't really know what to expect.

So definitely appreciate you walking through that. I'm going to go ahead and switch it back over to me then, right now. Give me one second here. I think we are good, okay, so good to go. So moving on what I wanted to go into, and you just did a wonderful job of discussing the online format itself.

And literally painting the picture for them. What we get asked a lot in addition to that is, students in and out of the DC areas, hey, am I going to be missing out? How does this compare to the actual campus program? Would you mind just touching on that really quickly?

Yeah, I'm glad that you asked me that, it's important. So, we modeled our program exactly after our campus program, in terms of curriculum, but there are a couple differences to keep in mind. So the first difference is, obviously, the modality but also the academic calendar and Format. So, if you were in our campus program, your courses would be 15 weeks in length in the online program, and you'd be taking more than one course at a time.

A lot of our students in the campus program, well, I would say maybe about half of them are full time students. Some of them are going part time, and they're usually taking at least two or more courses at the same time. The way we do the online program, because we know that the vast majority of our students are studying online because they're working, raising families, doing other things.

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We do a session A, session B format. So that means in every semester, session A is the first eight weeks of the semester, session B is the second eight weeks, and you take one course at a time so you can focus on that course. So when you start the program the first course you take is Principles of Strategic Communication.

You take that the first eight weeks, second course you take is a writing course. You take that in the second eight weeks, and you follow through the program like that. And we strongly recommend students do not try and take two courses in the same session, because you have to keep in mind, that because we are following the same curriculum, and we want to hit the same learning outcomes welcome in some standards, you are getting the same content.

So, you're literally getting like a 15 week course, that's compressed down to eight weeks. And so it's intense. You can focus on that one course. But it's pretty intense and we usually recommend to students, that you should estimate that. Probably, a course takes an average of about 15 hours of work time a week.

So that's what you want to kind of plan for schedule. Now, some weeks obviously will be a little lighter. Some weeks a little bit more when you have like a written assignment, or something like that. But that is what it averages is out to. And this workload is consistent with our accreditation requirements, and what a graduate level course should be for us to be able to grant you three credits.

So we really, really feel strongly about keeping the quality of the program the same. Another thing that I should say that is different, is that, at this point in time, because the online program is newer than the campus program, we do not offer as many electives. And so, if you go to our website for the campus program, you will see that there are many more electives, and there are actually four concentrations available on campus, where we have two online.

Now, I know this doesn't help everyone, depending on where you live geographically. But if you happen to be in the local area, and I think we know that almost 55 to 60% of our students, are kind of in the tri-state area. If it works for you to come to campus, you are always welcome to take an elective on campus.

So the way it works is that, you could take up to campus courses as elective, given that I approve it, that it makes sense within your plan of study. And so we could work with you on that.

>> Thank you so much for explaining that, what the workload looks like too.

I'm gonna actually, kind of, combine these next two FAQs on here, because I think they really just kind of go hand in hand. All in all, students just like to see what can I expect? What kind of assignments are there going to be? What kind of projects are there going to be?

Can you give maybe a couple examples. Whether it is out of the Practicum, or Capstone, or just maybe one of your favorite courses overall, to give students an idea of what that might look like. Yeah, absolutely. So, we strive pretty hard to make sure that all the assignments are the types of deliverables that you would produce in the workforce.

Now, there are a couple of courses where you may have exams, but it's really the exception. I think one or two have some exams. And it's one exam, if that, in each class the rest are all deliverables. So when you do principles of strategic communication, obviously we want you to be able to produce a high quality strategic communication plan.

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So you are actually creating a plan like you would in the workforce. Social media strategies and tactics, you develop this social media plan, with kind of example collateral materials. We have a lot of courses that have case simulations. And so, ethics is a really good example, where they have these really interesting previous cases that actually raise communication challenges.

And there are scenarios, interactive scenarios that you kind of click through, and then discuss with the class. So a lot of case applications and project deliverables. In terms of the Capstone class, that's a class that I teach and I love doing it, we really try to make sure that students can flush out an area of expertise that's of interest to them.

And I've had topics that really just run the gamut. And so, I had one individual who the title of his Capstone was the influence of storytelling on donor behavior. He worked for a major university, and wanted to really understand how storytelling can influence donations. I had a young woman who was really interested in social media messages, and how they may influence body image perceptions of other young women.

And we pursued that. I had a Individual who was interested in the advocacy and organizing around the Times up movement. We worked on that. I had someone who was interested in understanding how parents who live in districts of school choice, where they can actually select a school for their students, rather than being prescribed only to one.

How they make the decision making process, to kind of choice out of their home school. So really, as long as your topic for Capstone relates to communication, most faculty are going to work with you on it. Because we want that to be something for Practicum. Students actually, it's a little bit different, they choose a client, and they go to the client, and they ask the client.

What type of challenges are they facing as an organization? And then they work with their faculty adviser to come up with a strategic communication project. And plan to meet the challenge. And so, I've had students work for animal shelters, nonprofit organizations. We've had students work for companies, like Trader Joe's etc.

So one example was a project that a student did to kind of bring Trader Joe's, the supermarket chain, kind of, into the digital space, because they weren't doing a lot in the digital space. And so, that was a challenge for them. But in that class, you actually create a strategic communication plan, and example materials for the client to meet that challenge.

And then you actually present it to them as well too, and the presentation can be virtually. So hopefully, that give you a little bit of a sense the differences is between those two courses.

>> Thank you so much. The last FAQ on here. I feel like, between a couple of different slides, you really did a nice job already, of highlighting between how involved the faculty are, in and out of the class, walking through engage and seeing different ways that they could connect.

And so forth. So I'm actually gonna skip that over. But, please know anybody that's in the Webinar. If there is any way that I can provide more clarity on that, reach out to myself or one of the other admissions counselors, and we'll certainly go over that more in depth.

But, I know Paul did a great job, and especially literally seeing engage. Today, I think that that really helped as well. So I'm gonna go ahead then and move into the scholarship opportunity. Of course, it doesn't hurt to always ask about scholarships and we get asked all the time.

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We do offer select students an online merit scholarship that is up to \$10,000. Admitted students will be eligible for scholarship consideration based on a variety of things. So, academic credentials, professional experience and of course leadership skills. Basically, we can talk through this with you but every applicant is considered for one and it is a case by case basis, in that regard, so do know that.

In terms of the admissions process, like I said, I'm one of the admissions counselors here. I have wonderful colleagues that work as admissions counselors as well. And admissions process is pretty straight forward in the sense that we have the three traditional starts a year. So still working towards fall as you can see right now, then we could come spring, and then back around the summer.

And basically what it is, is a brief online application. Of course a copy of your resume. All official transcripts. There's a statement of purpose, two letters of recommendation, and a \$55 application fee. We get to walk through this all in detail so that you make sure you know where to send what and what the exact guidelines are for it and so forth.

And then of course, most of our students are applying for financial aid. Not a requirement by any means. But since it's so common, we do put that information on there and we can of course provide greater details for you as well. As I mentioned, we are still working towards the fall term right now.

So classes for that would begin on September 2nd. There is still time to work towards that deadline but of course it's right around the corner. So, we would certainly wanna connect with you sooner rather than later. I've recognized some of the names in here that we are working with you if you don't all ready have an admissions counselor that you're working with, please contact one of us.

Again, the number's on the screen it's 855-725-7614. At this point then, I mean that does conclude the presentation part of our open house today. Of course Paulette thank you so much, as always. And thank you for giving us an extra special part of it today by showing up engaged too.

We really appreciated that.

>> Yeah, no, thank you. And thank you everyone for joining and please let us know if you have any follow up questions. I hope that some of you will consider joining our program.

>> Yes yes, excited to work with you guys. Like I said, there's myself, we have other admissions advisers as well.

I believe we got to the questions throughout. But like I said if there are any questions, or at times the moment that this ends you think of one, that's where you'll want to reach out to the contact information on the page if you don't already have a direct go to, for it but we certainly hope the open house has been valuable and look forward to each and every one of you joining us here at American University.

We hope you have a wonderful rest of your day.