ABOUT THE CLASS / COURSE OBJECTIVES
The term “strategic communication” covers a wide range of communication and relationship building practices: public relations, advocacy/activism, marketing. By the end of the term, you should 1) have solid knowledge of concepts, terms, and practices of public relations and strategic communication in a variety of settings, 2) understand how organizations use communicate to advance their interests, and 3) have experience analyzing public relations/strat comm problems. Throughout the class we’ll balance two perspectives: as students, you will read academic research and journalistic accounts and ask questions about the role of public relations and strategic communication; as potential practitioners, you will read textbooks and industry publications to become familiar with the field.

SJMC LEARNING OUTCOMES
The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment, we have identified particular learning outcomes that every student should obtain by the time they earn a JMC degree. You can find more information about these learning outcomes here http://clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/undergraduate-programs/assessment. This course contributes to the following areas:

- Understand the principles of media literacy and develop the skills necessary to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages across multiple media domains. *Much media content is strategic communication.*
- Understand that clear, concise, correct writing is at the heart of journalistic expression and that reporting and communicating it effectively requires a knowledge and achievement of the highest, professionally-accepted standards in all work. *You’ll practice professional writing formats.*
- Understand the diversity of groups (including communities defined by gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion and sexual orientation) in a global society in relationship to communications. *Effective strategic communication is audience based.*
- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press in real space and cyberspace, and demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and their historical development. *Public relations and strategic communication have guidelines similar to—but different from—journalism.*
- Understand the history of media in the context of industries and identify transformations in audiences, engagement, and business practice over time. *What we know as public relations and strategic communication developed to meet communication needs of organizations.*

READING

This is a breezy text that provides a broad context for the profession now. We’ll add to it in class and through reading in other books, journals, web as posted on ICON. You’ll also do regular reading and listening to keep up with news generally and in the media/pr industry.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN CLASS
A mixture of lecture and discussion with problem solving exercises, group work, guest speakers, and videos. You should prepare for class by reading assigned material from textbook, public relations trade publications, and other sources. Public relations practitioners must keep up with news and issues; classes will include discussion of current events. I will count on you all to make this a good class by being active participants. Ask questions, share your thoughts and reactions—tell a joke (and give me a break by laughing at my sorry attempts).
ASSIGNMENTS/EVALUATION

Exams and quizzes 225 pts
Three exams cover lecture, reading, and discussion + current events. Exam format is short answer, matching terms, some multiple choice, short essay.

Public relations research and writing 150 pts
Analysis of publics (75) Research-based analysis of audiences for an organization of your choice.
Case (75) Summary and analysis of a contemporary public relations problem/situation of your choice.

News/trends/media 25 pts
Set up news reader account (5)
News of the week or Topics (10)
Read/respond to longform articles (10)

Class preparation and participation 35 pts
Occasional short research / writing assignments to prepare for class discussion / in-class group work. (Must be in class to receive credit)

Total- 435 pts / Final grade (A+ not used)
404 = A 317 = C
391 = A- 304 = C-
378 = B+ 291 = D+
361 = B 274 = D
348 = B- 261 = D-
335 = C+ below 261 = F

ATTENDANCE AND CLASSROOM POLICIES

I expect that you will come to every class. That’s your responsibility; I won’t keep track. Exams will be difficult if you miss a lot class—we’ll cover material that is not in the reading. Unannounced participation points may be given for in-class activities.

You are responsible for all material, assignments, and schedule changes whether or not you attend class.

Please talk with me if class or an assignment conflicts with a religious observance.

I discourage students from using laptops or tablets during class and will sometimes ask they be closed. Studies show that students who take notes by hand get better grades. A screen is a distraction and a physical and psychological barrier between you and the rest of us. You are less likely to talk, less likely to pay attention to discussion, and less likely to remember what we do.

This will be an informal and, I hope, friendly and enjoyable class. Please respect your classmates, the J- School, and me by following these guidelines:

• no cell phones (that means turned off, put away, no checking messages or texting—really!)
• no food unless you bring enough to share (water, coffee, soda ok—don’t leave cups, cans)

Arriving late or leaving early may occasionally be unavoidable, but please don’t make it a habit. If you have an on-going conflict with this class, please resolve it or drop the class.
EXAM AND ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

Exams must be taken as scheduled. If you have an unavoidable conflict, talk with me in advance. In an emergency or illness, be in touch as soon as you can, in advance if possible. Exams missed because of mandatory participation in recognized student org activities may be rescheduled consistent with CLAS/university policies. Please talk with me if class obligations conflict with a religious observance.

Please submit your work as specified for each assignment. For major writing assignments, you will upload a copy to an ICON dropbox and also turn in hard copy. In some cases, I will ask for hard copy OR ICON submission—read assignment carefully. Pages must be stapled. If not, I will base your grade on the first page. Unless I tell you otherwise, assignments must be typed. Please note: I will not accept assignments by e-mail.

Always keep a copy of your assignments. We all do our best, but papers or electronically submitted material can go astray. You are responsible for providing a copy if necessary.

Representing the work of someone else as your own or getting credit in two classes for the same work is academic dishonesty. While I encourage you to discuss assignments with others, I expect that anything you hand in is your own research, analysis, and writing. I expect that each person in a group has contributed equally and can provide a full description of his or her effort. Work for this class must be original—not revised versions of research or writing you have done or are doing for another class. Please talk with me if you have questions or want to discuss specific situations.

Late work is accepted only in cases of illness or other emergencies that you have discussed with me. Note: computer or printer problems do not count as emergencies; plan ahead; remember to back up your work.

Correct and careful writing is a basic expectation for all assignments.

OVERVIEW OF SCHEDULE TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXAMS

FULL DETAILS ON ICON / MAY CHANGE

Week of

THE BIG PICTURE

Jan 19/21 Intro to class / Definitions and basics / organizations/field
Jan 26/28 (continued)
Feb 2/4 Publics and connections / Origins of public relations as a practice
Feb 9/11 Legal and ethical issues (analysis of publics assignment due*)
Feb 16/18 catch up / Exam one*

PR / STRAT COMM PLANNING PROCESS

Feb 23/25 Research/audiences/communication
Mar 1/3 Strategies and tactics
Mar 8/10 Opinion, issues, persuasion
Mar 15/17 S P R I N G  B R E A K
Mar 22/24 Putting it together
Mar 29 /31 catch up / Exam two*

STRAT COMM / PR IN ACTION

Apr 5/7 Corporations / Govt relations
Apr 12/14 Media relations /Nonprofits
Apr 19/21 Marketing
 Apr 26/28 catch up / Exam three*
May 3/5 Group work and presentations (case analysis due*)

*Detailed reading and assignment schedules will be posted on ICON. Exam, assignment dates may be changed. You are responsible for all changes announced in class or posted on ICON.