Syllabus for
Topics in Mass Communication
Business of Media: Profits, People & Power
JMC 3185:0002

Spring Semester 2016
Room 1140 Main Library
Wednesday 6:30 – 9:00 pm

Charles Munro, Instructor
- Phone: 319 862-1739. (Available 24/7; always leave message on voicemail)
- E-mail: charles-munro@uiowa.edu.
- Office hours: Tuesday/Wednesday 2:30-4:00 pm in E328 AJB or by appointment

Textbook (Required):

Additional Source (Strongly Recommended):
- The Wall Street Journal special student rate: 15 weeks for $15.00. Subscribe at: student.wsj.com

Periodicals and journals (Recommended):
- Industry publications such as Television Week, Communicator, Advertising Age, PR Week, Business Week, and Media Ethics. Many of these are available are available through the UI library “Libguide.” Check links on the course ICON site.

Course description:
Most journalism and strategic communication courses teach you about the best application of journalistic or persuasive communication. Few expose students to the economics and management of competitive businesses. I have designed this course to develop your understanding of how modern-day businesses succeed or fail. Since this is a course offered by a journalism school, you will find that a good grounding in the fundamentals of journalism will be particularly useful. You will study about how companies in the media and technology industries are managed and which are best positioned for future success. These companies operate in the public glare and offer rich opportunities for critical observation and class discussions.

Who should take this course?
This course is geared to students planning a career in commercial or non-profit businesses in such fields as politics, public service, business administration, marketing, public relations, and journalism. It is also for students who may wish to start their own businesses in the future.
**Classroom and concept:**
This class is designed to be taken in a new 45-seat TILE classroom. TILE is an acronym for “Transform, Interact, Learn and Engage” [http://tile.uiowa.edu](http://tile.uiowa.edu). The classrooms are designed with seating in small clusters that promote the concept of students collaborating in class to discover and develop course learnings. Lectures are minimal. Additionally, classroom technology promotes sharing visual ideas with the larger class.

**Note:** Since the objective of the TILE classroom architecture is to challenge students to learn by group participation, you should be aware that grading is done both individually and collectively. You will work individually and in breakout teams to analyze and solve “real world” media challenges. If you are more comfortable with the traditional classroom setup and individual grading, this will be an adjustment!

**Learning outcomes:**
The School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) 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 an SJMC degree. You can find more information about these learning outcomes at the following link: [http://clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/undergraduate-programs/assessment](http://clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/undergraduate-programs/assessment).

We regularly assess the curriculum to determine whether students are achieving these outcomes. This course has content to help you achieve proficiency in two areas specific to the SJMC learning outcomes.

**Law and ethics** as demonstrated by your:
- knowledge of the history of the First Amendment and awareness of the rights protected by the First Amendment in different media contexts,
- knowledge of the main areas of media law, including libel, invasion of privacy, obscenity, commercial speech, intellectual property, and freedom of the press,
- ability to anticipate and recognize ethical issues when they arise and to reason through them taking multiple perspectives and contexts into account,
- ability to explain their ethical approaches and reasoning about a particular dilemma in terms that can be understood by a diverse group of people.

**Media literacy** as demonstrated by your ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages across multiple media domains and to
- demonstrate knowledge of the basic tenets of media literacy and how media literacy relates to their personal media habits and professional development,
- develop critical thinking skills to analyze and interpret media messages through an understanding of media practices and institutions,
- create and disseminate media messages in various forms.
Achieving outcomes:
My hope is that by the end of this course you will view media industries in an enlightened manner that will help you develop professional career skills by:
✓ building an understanding of actors, processes, institutions, and best practices toward managing in media through individual research and analyzing case studies,
✓ encouraging you to explore theories, concepts, structures, and economics both individually and in breakout teams,
✓ working on ways to solve “real world” media challenges,
✓ participating in class discussions firmly grounded in personal observation of media practices,
✓ regular reading of periodical literature to ensure are always prepared to discuss latest in the competitive business environment.

Instructor approach:
My approach will draw on my 40-year experience as a manager of and consultant to media companies domestically and from a decade of teaching at the university level. My experience has shown me that the techniques, issues, and approaches we will cover are common to managing in all kinds of media organizations.

Class format:
People who succeed in media businesses are clear, focused thinkers able to comprehend issues quickly and discuss them succinctly. Discussion will be an important feature of the course. Students will post weekly “Hot Topics” on ICON to spark thoughtful discussion of issues with classmates. Some readings and scenarios are intended to be thought provoking. So read critically, take notes, ask questions, and share your thoughts with the class or on ICON. If you are finding assignments too time burdensome, please see me. (See also “Accommodations” below.)

How you will be graded:
Your course grade will be determined by the following combination of quizzes, exams, papers, and reports throughout the semester. Note how some assignments are weighted.

TRACKING TEST – 10%

CASE STUDY PAPER – 20%

MIDTERM EXAM – 20%

PARTICIPATION (Weekly Topics Posts + Discussions) – 10%

TEAM ORAL REPORT – 10%

GROUP CLIENT PROJECT – 20%

FINAL EXAM – 10%
**Standards for grading**

Each graded assignment will have an accompanying explanation of specific grading standards. On quizzes and exams, possible points are posted on each question.

As a general proposition the highest point scores go to submissions that exemplify these broad standards:

- **Written work** showed you have a clear grasp of the chosen topic, you articulated the issue clearly, identified its key points, and provided appropriate analysis or context (e.g. arguments for and against) that demonstrates your understanding of subject matter. Your facts are correct. You used a variety of sources and cited them well. “A” papers are well edited, succinct (not wordy), conform to style guidelines, and promptly completed.

- **Team oral presentation** was logically organized; key points were clearly explained and supported by visual aids. Your team was able to defend recommendations for action. Your sources appropriately referenced. The report demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the subject and good preparation. “A” oral presentations are thought provoking and command audience attention.

Application of these standards in grading must necessarily include a degree of subjectivity. *If you have concerns about the application of these standards or simply questions about how their interpretation, please contact me to discuss.*

**Determining your letter grade:**

Each assignment receives a point score with 100% as maximum. The points represent my judgment of how well your work meets the standards posted for each assignment. The percentage/grade equivalents are:

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Your final course grade will be the sum of all percentages with multiples for the assignments that carry greater weight. I will post grades as promptly as possible. You can view your grade progress on the course ICON site at any time during the semester.
**Participation.** This course moves quickly and we meet only once a week. Information from lectures can be recovered later in a classmate’s notes but you cannot replicate being part of a class discussion, which is by nature a spontaneous event. Thus, arriving late for the start of class or missing a class for any reason deprives you of a valuable learning experience. Therefore, I expect you to attend all sessions, participate in all assignments, and engage in all class discussions and in all projects.

If you absolutely must miss a class, notify me in advance. If you are in need of special accommodation, see “Accommodations for Disabilities” (p.7). **Present or not, you are responsible for course requirements, many of which are announced only in class.**

**Collaborating on assignments:**
Some course assignments require working in a group. In those assignments you will be expected to collaborate with classmates. Examples include developing solutions to scenarios, critically evaluating challenging situations, and completing final team projects. In group assignments each student is expected to contribute equal parts to the assignment’s completion. That means that in some cases individual grades are influenced by the overall achievement of the group. These are, nevertheless, valuable experiences given that teamwork the trend in all business.

If you do not wish to work on collaborative projects, you must see me to make special arrangements for an alternative self-study.

**Planning your time:**
University policy sets a weekly standard of two hours outside of class work for every course hour. That means you should expect up to 6 hours per week working on reading or on course projects. When working with classmates in a team, you must coordinate your availability with your team mates.

**Leading class discussion:**
Discussion will be an important feature of the course. At some time in the semester all students will be assigned to lead a group discussion. I expect discussion leaders to spark thoughtful discussion of issues. Managers must be clear, focused thinkers able to comprehend issues quickly and discuss them succinctly.

**Self-study project (graduate students only):**
Graduate students will be required to complete an additional project on a topic requiring self-study. If you are a graduate student, please see me at the beginning of the semester to develop this assignment.
Communicating with the instructor and complaints:
I regard student communication as my highest priority. No student should ever feel constrained, intimidated, or in any way discouraged from using any of the following means to communicate concerns or complaints about this course:

- Remaining after class. Never leave a course session with an unanswered question.
- Posting your concern on the ICON site set up so that any student can communicate with me anonymously. Go to ICON > Surveys > “Just Saying.” I check it frequently.
- Scheduling an appointment or drop in during office hours to discuss course content, procedures, standards, your grade, or to discuss a matter of personal concern.
- Telephoning my numbers on page one. Leave voicemail. I always call back!

Unresolved complaints procedure:
You may take a complaint (or suggestion) involving course content, class material, grading, or instruction that you feel is not resolved to your satisfaction to the Director of the UI School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Dr. David Ryfe either by visiting him in room E305 AJB, by phone at 319-335-3486, or by sending an email to david-ryfe@uiowa.edu.

Rules and Policies:
This course is subject to rules and policies established by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. I have excerpted several of the more important ones on the next page. Please take a moment to review them. If you have questions, please ask.
**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences rules and policies:**
You should take a few moments to read the important rules and policies that follow. They describe policies that apply to all of us who teach, learn, and administer in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. They also describe your rights to accommodation and the complaint procedure beyond that contained in the above paragraph.

**Administrative Home**
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at [http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

**Electronic Communication**
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences (Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11).

**Accommodations for Disabilities**
A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See [www.uiowa.edu/~sds/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/) for more information.

**Academic Honesty**
All CLAS students have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

**CLAS Final Examination Policies**
The final examination schedule for each class is announced around the fifth week of the semester by the Registrar. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. **No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes.** All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the dates and times of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar’s web site.

**Making a Suggestion or a Complaint**
As specified on the preceding page, students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

**Understanding Sexual Harassment**
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

**Reacting Safely to Severe Weather**
In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Department of Public Safety website.
### Course plan

This list of topics is subject to change as class dynamics evolve during the course. You are responsible for changes announced in class session or posted on our ICON site.

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<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments Ready for Class Session</th>
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| 1  | Wed 1/20 | **Foundations**  
* Divide into groups and teams  
* Discuss TILE and objectives  

**Dual Approaches:**  
* **Macro** (business literacy)  
* **Micro** (personal management)  

**Boundaries and Axioms**  
* Market sectors  
* Marketplaces and competition  
* Introduction to “Ten Axioms”  

In class: research stock market sectors list at: [www.investorguide.com/sector_list.cgi](http://www.investorguide.com/sector_list.cgi).

Assign first hot topic for next week. Work with teammates.  
Submit “First Submission” (see last page below) to ICON Dropbox before end of class. |
| 2  | Wed 1/27 | **Change: What Drives It?**  
* Business of Media Axioms  
* Battling oblivion  
* Time poverty  
* Success (measures)  

**Power of Consumers to Set Value**  
* (*Walk to Old Cap Mall to see business response to power of consumers.*)  

**The Structure of a Public Company**  
* Public vs. private  
* Why change shape and size  

Present first assigned team hot topic  
Begin weekly “Hot Topic” posts to ICON > Discussions. One post/week + reply to at least one post each week.  
Read Herrick:  
* Chapter 1 (overview)  
* Chapter 9 (pp. 171-195)  
* Chapter 10.  
Read, “Definition of Important Terms” (ICON) |
| 3  | Wed 2/3 | **The Mind of a Manager**  
* Management thinking: challenges and dilemmas  
* When small build; when big buy  
* Demystifying management: a definition  

Read Herrick, Chapter 2 |

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<th><strong>Managing People</strong></th>
<th><strong>Read, “Employee Appraisal and Review” (ICON)</strong></th>
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<td>- Behavior vs. morale</td>
<td><strong>Read, “Will Happy Workers Deliver?” (ICON)</strong></td>
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<td>- Accountabilities</td>
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<td><strong>Personal planning</strong></td>
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<td>- Setting objectives, measuring success</td>
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<td>- Company culture</td>
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| 4 Wed 2/10 | **Leadership**  | **Read Herrick, Chapters 3 (pp. 61-74) and Chapter 4.**  |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   | - Communication  | **Read, “Lessons from the Cockpit” ICON**  |
|   |   | - Conflict  | **Assign Case Study in class.**  |
|   |   | - Crisis management  | **Begin researching topics.**  |
|   |   | **Tough Tasks**  | **Read: “7 Tips for a Compassionate Layoff” (ICON)**  |
|   |   | - Managing Layoffs in Tough Times  |   |
|   |   | - Working with Unions  |   |
|   |   | - Management Styles  |   |

| 5 Wed 2/17 | **Building and Managing a Brand**  | **Read Herrick, Chapter 9 (pp. 227-233)**  |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   | - Every manager is a brand manager  | **Report progress on Case Study topics**  |
|   |   | - Marketing vs. sales  |   |
|   |   | - The “P’s” of promotion  |   |
|   |   | **Guest speaker: Lynn Manternach, President, MindFire Communications**  |   |
|   |   | **TRACKING TEST** (end of class session)  |   |

| 6 Wed 2/24 | **Media Ethics, Regulations, and Laws**  | **Read Herrick Chapter 6**  |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   | - Why media management is distinctive  | **Finalize Case Study topic**  |
|   |   | - Groupthink, Analysis Paralysis  |   |
|   |   | - Group scenarios  |   |

| 7 Wed 3/2 | **Demystifying Financial Management**  | **Read Herrick, Chapter 8 (pp. 200-209 and pp. 212-215)**  |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   | - Numbers don’t lie  | **Review study guide for Midterm Exam (ICON)**  |
|   |   | - How companies show successes/hide failures  | **Submit Case Study for peer review; make revising in class.**  |
|   |   | - Company reports  |   |
|   |   | - Debt – uses and abuses  |   |

| 8 Wed 3/9 | **MIDTERM EXAM**  | **SUBMIT CASE STUDY**  |
|---|---|---|---|

<p>| 9 Wed 3/16 | <strong>Spring Break</strong>  |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   | No classes  |   |</p>
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| 3/23 | Wed | Working in Professional Teams | Read Herrick, Chapter 9 (pp. 234-250)  
       |     | Qualities of a successful team | Read “Characteristics of a Functional Team at Work” (ICON)  
       |     | Research | Assign Group Client Project  
       |     | Methodologies | Assign Team Oral Report  
       |     | Applications | |
| 3/30 | Wed | Strategic Planning | Meet with your group in class  
       |     | Making a strategic action plan |  
       |     | Building tactics, timelines |  
       |     | Examples | |
| 4/6  | Wed | GROUP CLIENT PRESENTATIONS | Sign up for Team Oral Report times  
       |     | Submit individual Group Client Presentation report | |
| 4/13 | Wed | Entrepreneurship: Working Together/Working Solo | Read Herrick, Chapter 11  
       |     | Success/Failure | Read “Embracing Failure”  
       |     | Reasons why people go it alone | Meet with your team | |
| 4/20 | Wed | TEAM ORAL REPORTS | Team Oral Reports (per signup sheet) | |
| 4/27 | Wed | TEAM ORAL REPORTS | Team Oral Reports (per signup sheet) | |
| 5/4  | Wed | TEAM ORAL REPORTS | Team Oral Reports (per signup sheet) | **FINAL EXAM** posted on ICON Dropbox to submit on scheduled exam time.*  
       |     | Final course session. | *Final exam times TBD. |

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*Final exam times TBD.
FIRST SUBMISSION

Part One: Personal Objectives

Please provide short answers (jot notes) to the following six questions. We will discuss some of them in class. Post the rest on ICON Dropbox.

1) What interested you in taking this course? (One sentence answer, please. If it was because of the time it is available, say so.)

2) Have you ever held a supervisory (management) position of any kind? If so, what lessons did you learn from the experience? If not, share an observation of what you feel are the most important qualities of a supervisor.

3) What comes to mind when you think about the term “media industry”?

4) Have you worked in any media industry, (i.e., a company that provides news or entertainment programs or software for a mass audience)?

5) What is your career objective? If you aren’t sure, which way are you leaning?

6) What would you like to get from this course that might help you achieve that objective?

Part Two:

Autobiography

Submit to ICON Dropbox

Write a one to one-page autobiography describing a job or other group experiences that have influenced you. Refer to impressions you have about any business you have observed or worked for. If you have supervised people, describe the context and experience. When you have finished, read and comment on the ideas expressed in the article in Part Three below.

Part Three:

“Maybe Management Isn’t Your Style”

Read on ICON Content and Submit Comments to Dropbox (75-100 words)