019:268:EXW Strategic Planning for the Communication Professional

Fall 2013

Instructor: M. Linda Wastyn, Ph.D.  
E-mail: lwastyn@uiowa.edu; Linda@WastynAssoc.com  
Phone: (563) 210-1321  
Office hours: By appointment

Course Description
Use of a 10 step strategic planning model to discuss ways that an effective strategic planning process can be developed to effectively respond to a changing environment; strategic planning for an organization, department, specific project, and personal growth; ways that strategic thinking can help develop strategic thinking skills that transfer to any part of a career.

Course Objectives
At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to understand, discuss and write about the following issues:

1. The value of the strategic planning process
2. What constitutes an effective strategic planning process
3. How to initiate and agree on a strategic planning process
4. How to clarify organizational mandates and mission
5. How to assess the environment to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
6. How to identify strategic issues facing the organization
7. How to formulate and adopt strategies and plans to manage those issues
8. How to establish an effective organizational vision for the future
9. How to implement strategies and plans successfully
10. The importance of reassessing and revising strategies and plans
11. How leadership roles make strategic planning work
12. How to get started with strategic planning
13. How strategic planning can be applied to communication planning and everyday life

Course Text

Optional Text
**Assigned Readings** (all are posted on ICON)


**Assignments**

Unless otherwise specified in class, collaboration of ideas is allowed on all assignments, but all written work must be an individual student’s performance. That is, students may discuss ideas with classmates and ask classmates to proof written work, but the substance of the written work must be an individual student’s work. When in doubt, please ask!

**Brief Papers (6).** At assigned times throughout the course, prepare a 3-5 page paper that answers the question of the week (see schedule for specifics). This paper should answer the questions asked, based on the major tenets of the readings. Use quotes from the readings to support the claims made in your paper. In grading this paper, I am looking for a brief synthesis of the material for the week with the majority of the paper focused on a well-articulated and defended opinion of the reading based on the question(s) posed. Your overall grade is determined by the quality of your reaction; that is, how well do you develop and support your opinion based on the major ideas presented in the readings? Papers that only summarize the readings will receive no more than 6 points. Reaction papers are due at the beginning of class; late reaction papers are not accepted without prior consent of the instructor. (DUE as assigned; 10 points each, 25% of grade)

**Attendance/Participation:** Students are expected to attend class and contribute to the class discussion as the course will have much more of an interactive than lecture orientation with discussion as an important part of each class sessions. Attendance and participation will be assessed with 5 possible points each week which cannot be made up. Excessive use of cell phones, e-mail and other electronic devices including using the “chat” function for non-class discussions during class will lower your grade for that week. (DUE weekly; 10% of grade)

**Discussion Posts:** Each week, I will post a discussion question on ICON based on the readings that week or prior class discussions. I will also ask each week for any questions or reactions you have to the readings, class discussions, or class in general. Each person must make at least one original post to each question and react to at least one other person’s post each week. I will have questions posted by Wednesday at noon each week (unless otherwise noted) with posts due by class time the following Monday. Each week you can earn up to 5 points for your posts. (DUE weekly; 15% of grade)

**Final Project:** Students will either assess or develop a strategic planning process as part of a course-long project that will culminate in a formal in-class presentation during finals week. Students who choose to assess an existing strategic planning process must have adequate access to the strategic planning documents and process to complete this assignment. Students who choose to develop a strategic
planning process and strategic plan will, by necessity, need to improvise certain steps. That is, you might
develop an inclusive process comprised of committees and subcommittees as the most effective process
for your organization. Because of time, however, you may need to assume that process is working and
present products (e.g., mission, environmental scan, vision) that you develop yourself. For those
developing a process, I will focus my evaluation on your rationale for the process and products you
develop, not the products themselves (that is, as long as your mission statement meets the criteria of a
good mission statement, what is says is immaterial for the evaluation of your paper).

Both projects require that students assess or develop:
- The process for planning including the personnel involved
- The organization’s mission and process for developing or reviewing its mission and mandates
- The organization’s environmental scan and the process for developing that scan
- The identification of strategic issues and how those emanate from the environmental scan
- The development of strategies that take advantage of opportunities or overcome threats
- The development of an organizational vision (including its placement in the process)
- The implementation of the plan and the role of leadership in the implementation process
- The ongoing assessment of the plan and the role of leadership in this process

All students will turn in a written paper that is free of excessive spelling and grammatical errors. The “A”
paper will include all of the steps/elements noted above with a clear, compelling and well-referenced
rationale for each. It will clearly, consistently and appropriately tie planning concepts back to planning
theory. The “B” paper will include all or most of the elements noted above with some rationale and/or
inaccuracies of planning theory. It will provide some ties to theory that are incomplete and/or
inaccurate. The “C” paper will miss key elements in the planning process, provide little or no rationale
for the choices or conclusions reached and/or make very few or no reference to planning theory.
References need not go beyond that which we read in class, although you are welcome to conduct
outside research for your project if you choose. If you are critiquing an organization’s existing process,
please include in an attachment any documents that will help to substantiate the claims made in your
paper (such as the organization’s mission statement). Be sure to get permission for any proprietary
information you use, and please mark accordingly. (DUE: Wednesday, December 18, 8 AM; 40% of
grade)

Final Presentation: All students will present their final projects in class during finals week. Time limits
will likely be around 10 minutes depending on the number of students and will be strictly enforced.
Presentations should provide an overview of the organization, a brief description of the planning
process developed or analyzed, noting any surprises or exceptional circumstances, and an analysis of the
strength or weaknesses of this approach. The “A” presentation will be easy to understand and follow,
provide unique insights into the planning process beyond a “reporting of the facts,” and tie neatly and
multiple times to class concepts. The “B” presentation will be overall easy to understand and follow, will
provide a limited number of unique insights into the planning process and/or overly rely on “reporting
the facts,” and will have limited ties to planning theory. The “C” presentation will be disorganized,
disjointed, overly factual and/or have no ties to planning concepts. (DUE: December 16; 10% of grade)
Please note that Adobe Connect cannot support all types of presentation materials. If you plan to include presentation materials beyond a simple PowerPoint, please let me know if advance so we can work with the Office of Continuing Education to assure compatibility with Adobe Connect.

**Attendance Policy and Participation**
You are adults and coming to class is strictly up to you. From my experience, however, students with poor attendance receive lower grades as they miss much of the class discussion that can clarify the readings and expectations and enhance overall learning. As a graduate level class, active participation in class discussions is expected, and much of the knowledge you gain will come from your active participation in these discussions. If you desire a passing grade, come to class and participate fully. If you cannot attend a class session, please let me know as soon as you can (before the class you miss rather than after). For classes that you do miss, you are responsible from making up any missed work including getting notes from classmates.

**Miscellaneous**
If you need to reach me, leave me an e-mail or call my cell. Please call only during reasonable hours.

All written work must be submitted via the class ICON site (unless otherwise noted) and must be in Microsoft Word. All of my grading assumes that you produce professional, high quality, academic work. Written work should conform to the APA style guide and be free of excessive spelling and grammatical errors. Please proof your work. I should not be the first person to read your assignment! Assignments must be turned in on time unless you make prior arrangements. Late work will lose one letter grade for each day it is late.

Conduct in this course begins with the assumption of a positive educational atmosphere that promotes academic integrity including the right to discuss organizational issues openly and freely without the threat of disclose by classmates. All discussions stay within the confines of the classroom.

**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/ for more information.

Academic Honesty
All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS 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 by the Registrar generally by the tenth day of classes. 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 date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint
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.
Class Schedule
This syllabus is subject to revision. All changes will be communicated in class or posted on ICON.

Week 1: August 26 – Introduction to Strategic Planning and the Class

Pre-class work: Please complete the following before class:
- Read: Gladwell, “The Bakeoff”
- Review the syllabus and class assignments; think of an organization for your final project
- Answer Discussion Question #1

In class, we will introduce ourselves to each other, discuss the course expectations and assignments, and begin to discuss the importance of strategic planning using The Bakeoff as a starting point.

Week 2: September 2 – NO CLASS (Labor Day)

Week 3: September 9 – Introduction to Strategic Planning

Pre-class work: Please complete the following before class:
- Read: Montgomery, The Strategist, chapters 1-3
- Read: Kay, “What is Strategy?” in Mintzberg et al., pp. 23-25
- Read: Mintzberg, “Five Ps for Strategy” in Mintzberg et al., pp. 26-28
- Answer Discussion Question #2
- Reaction Paper #1 due at the beginning of class
- Have your final project decided or ready to discuss with the class

In class, we will begin to discuss strategic planning, what it entails and its importance for organizations. Each student will also explain which organization he or she will use for the final project and provide a rationale for that decision. You should leave class with your plan for the final project firmly established.

Reaction Paper #1: These first readings provide an overview of the strategic planning process and its role in organizations. Given that this program focuses on strategic communication, discuss why you think you are learning about strategic planning as part of a communication curriculum. Include in your discussion the benefits you think that knowing about strategic planning will have for you and your organization.

Week 4: September 16 – Importance and Structure of Strategic Planning

Pre-class work: Please complete the following before class:
- Read: Bryson, chapter 2
- Read: Steiner, chapter 3
- Read: Mintzberg, “Rethinking Strategic Planning”
• Answer Discussion Question 3

**In class,** we will discuss in-depth the strategic planning process including the decisions you need to make when designing a process. We will also discuss the potential benefits and pitfalls of strategic planning to arrive at some conclusions on what organizational factors should be present for successful strategic planning.

**Week 5: September 23 – Planning to Plan**

**Pre-class work:** Please complete the following before class:
- Read: Steiner, chapter 4
- Read: Powers & Powers, “How to orchestrate participatory strategic planning”
- Read: Opatz & Hutchinson, “Building trust through strategic planning”
- Answer Discussion Question 4

**In class,** we will discuss the steps needed to effectively plan a strategic planning process, applying these steps to the organizations you have chosen for your final project as well as a mock strategic plan for the Masters of Strategic Communication Program that we will conduct in class.

**Week 6: September 30 – Understanding Mission Statements**

**Pre-class work:** Please complete the following before class:
- Read: Montgomery, *The Strategist*, chapters 4-6
- Answer Discussion Question 5

**In class,** we will discuss mission statement and their utility in the planning process as well as work on developing and critiquing organizational mission statements.

**Week 7: October 7 – Developing Mission Statements**

**Pre-class work:** Please complete the following before class:
- Read: “How to Write a Mission Statement that Isn’t Dumb”
- Answer Discussion Question 6
- Find and bring to class an example of a “good” organizational mission statement and a “poor” organizational mission statement and be ready to discuss these
- Reaction Paper #2 due at the beginning of class.

**In class,** we will work on developing and critiquing organizational mission statements.

**Reaction Paper #2:** Using one of the mission statements you found for class this week (either the “good” or the “poor” mission statement), discuss its merits or drawbacks. Where does it meet Allison and
Kaye’s criteria for a good mission statement? Where does it fail? How would you suggest the organization improve this mission statement (if at all)?

**Week 8: October 14 – Using the Organizational Context to Plan for the Future**

**Pre-class work:** Please complete the following before class:
- Read: Smith, “Analyzing the Organization”
- Read: Birnbaum, “Strategic Thinking: A Four Piece Puzzle,” pp. 3-28
- Answer Discussion Question 7

**In class,** we will discuss organizational context and the importance of understanding the environment when conducting a strategic planning process.

**Week 9: October 21 – Using Organizational Context: Part II**

**Pre-class work:** Please complete the following before class:
- Read: Downs & Adrian, chapter 12
- Read: MacMillian, “Competitive Strategies for Not-for-Profit Organizations”
- Answer Discussion Question 8
- Reaction Paper #3 due at the beginning of class

**In class,** we will conduct our own SWOT analysis and complete a MacMillan Matrix to practice using these in an organizational context.

**Reaction Paper #3:** The authors for weeks 8 and 9 talk about the importance of scanning the environment to keep your plan grounded in reality and to enhance strategic thinking, learning, and acting. Discuss the importance of a good environmental scan, drawing from the readings and your own experience. How does a good environmental scan enhance an organization’s strategic thinking, learning, and acting?

**Week 10: October 28 – The Key Steps: Identifying Strategic Issues**

**Pre-class work:** Please complete the following before class:
- Read: Rumelt, chapters 4 & 5
- Read: Camillus, “Strategy as a wicked problem”
- Answer Discussion Question 9

**In class,** we will discuss the importance of identifying organizational issues and develop possible organizational issues for the organizations you are studying and for our mock strategic plan.

**Reaction Paper #4:** This week, we will talk about strategic thinking and identifying an organization’s strategic issues. According to Birnbaum, strategic thinking is concerned with doing the right thing, not
doing things right. Birnbaum says that strategic thinking is now more important than ever before. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Is this different for for-profit organizations and not-for-profits?

Week 11: November 4 – Writing the Strategic Plan

**Pre-class work:** Please complete the following before class:
- Read: Allison & Kaye, chapter 6
- Find and bring to class examples of strategic plans
- Answer Discussion Question 10

In **class**, we will discuss the elements of a strategic plan – the tactics used to overcome the strategic issues identified the prior week – and continue to use our mock planning scenario to demonstrate how we develop the tactics.

Week 12: November 11 – Organizational Vision and its Role in Planning

**Pre-class work:** Please complete the following before class:
- Read: Allison & Kaye, pp. 99-107 (from the chapter posted for week 3)
- Read: Mintzberg, “Strategy Safari,” chapter 5
- Read: Sashkin & Sashkin, “Leadership that matters”
- Answer Discussion Question 11

In **class**, we will discuss the importance of vision statements, alternative views of vision statements and the role of leadership in developing a vision, and develop and critique organizational vision statements.

Week 13: November 18 – Organizational Vision and its Role in Planning: Part II

**Pre-class work:** Please complete the following before class:
- Read: Collins, “Aligning with Vision and Values”
- Find and bring to class an example of a “good” and “poor” vision statement
- Answer Discussion Question 12
- Reaction Paper #5 due at the beginning of class

**Reaction Paper #6:** Some planners puts the visioning process near the end of the strategic planning process; others (such as Allison and Kaye) argue that an organization should develop its vision near the beginning the process when looking at mission and values. Discuss the benefits and drawbacks to each placement in the strategic planning process. When do you think is the most optimal time to conduct a visioning process? Why? Include any organizational conditions to your answer.

Week 14: November 25 – Happy Thanksgiving! (No class)
**Week 15: December 2 – The Often Forgotten Steps: Implementation and Assessment**

**Pre-class work:** Please complete the following before class:

- Read: Paris, “Moving the strategic plan off the shelf”
- Read: Rowley & Sherman, “Implementing the strategic plan”
- Review: Sample strategic plans posted in ICON for Augustana College and Millikin University
- Answer Discussion Question 13
- Find and bring to class an example of an implementation plan or the product from a strategic planning process; be prepared to discuss its merits and drawbacks

**In class,** we will discuss the implementation and assessment phase of strategic planning as the often forgotten and overlooked phases.

**Week 16: December 9 – Role of Leadership in Strategic Planning**

**Pre-class work:**

- Read: Montgomery, *The Strategist*, chapter 7-8
- Read: Hughes, R.L. & Beatty, K.C., “Becoming a Strategic Leader,” chapter 1
- Answer Discussion Question 14
- Reaction Paper #6 due at the beginning of class

**In class,** we will conclude the course by bringing it all together, discussing the entire planning process, its advantages and pitfalls for an organization, and focusing on the roles that leaders play in the planning process and that planning plays in leadership.

**Reaction Paper #6:** Now that we’ve completed the class, review your first reaction paper and how your thinking about strategic planning and leadership has changed or not changed. Specifically, discuss what you now think is the role of strategic planning for effective leadership. Also include what role an effective leader (that is, one who exerts leadership not one who sits at the top of the organization) plays in strategic planning.

**December 16 – Final Project Presentations**

**In class,** each student will present his or her final project. Time limits will be determined based on the number of students enrolled. See assignment for details.

Please note that Adobe Connect cannot support all types of presentation materials. If you plan to include presentation materials beyond a simple PowerPoint, please let me know in advance so we can work with the Office of Continuing Education to assure compatibility with Adobe Connect.

Final paper due **Wednesday, December 18 at 8:00 AM** via ICON.