Course Description and Goals

The term “strategic communication” covers a lot of territory: public relations, advocacy/activism, health communication, marketing communication, investor relations, fundraising, media relations, lobbying, content marketing. All have at their core the planned effort to influence others by providing information and developing relationships. This course introduces students to the multifaceted world of strategic communication practice in the 21st century.

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. You’ll also adopt one of most important habits of successful strat comm pros – curiosity and keeping up with news from a variety of sources.

Additionally, ethics and the concept of principled public relations will be woven through all discussions and assignments throughout the course. Now more than ever, it is important for strategic communication professionals to be ethical and principled in their decision making and actions. This course will help you embark on your professional career with the ethical focus and training you’ll need to be effective practitioners in an era of misinformation, disinformation, and “fake news.”
This course introduces you to the concepts of strategic communications and helps you develop the skills needed for advanced coursework. By the end of the course, you will understand:

- Strategic communication concepts, terms, and practices in a variety of settings
- How organizations and causes use strategic communication to achieve goals
- The role of planning, research, and evaluation in strategic communication campaigns
- How to analyze strategic communication problems, publics, and stakeholders
- Regulatory, legal and ethical considerations in strategic communication
- The interdependence of strategic communication practices, media content, and new media technologies
- The history, scope, and structure of the strategic communication industry both in the United States and globally

Additionally, you will begin to develop your skill set for writing mechanics, AP Style, writing for the web, and editing.

**SJMC Learning Objectives**

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. This course, which is a foundation course for majors, contributes to the following areas:

- Media Literacy: 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.
- Writing and Storytelling: 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 some professional writing formats.
- Multiculturalism: 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.
- Law and Ethics: 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.
- Media History: 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.

[Click here](#) for the complete SJMC Assessment Plan.

**Required Textbook/Media**

The **required book** for this course is *Public Relations, 1st edition*, by Tom Kelleher. (ISBN 978-0190201470 (pbk), Routledge, © 2016). The price ranges from approx. $66 Loose Leaf to approx. $83 new. The book is available at the University Bookstore in the IMU or Amazon. There is also a reserve copy in the J-School Resource Center.

Because many organizational style guides are based on AP Style, you will be expected to learn the basics for this class. The University of Iowa provides access to the AP Stylebook Online for students through the Journalism and Mass Communication subject guide at the University of Iowa Libraries website: [http://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/jmc](http://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/jmc).

I will also post additional readings to the appropriate ICON module.
Course Structure and Assessment

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).

You will be assessed on both individual and group assignments. Individually, you will provide responses to readings, complete in-class exercises, and take exams. In groups, you will develop and present a case study analysis based on class lecture and readings.

Course Work

Exams: This course is designed as an overview of the principles of strategic communication. To that end, it is important that you understand key concepts and definitions. You will have three exams that will cover lecture, reading, and class discussion (including current events). The typical exam format will be a mix of short answer, matching terms, multiple choice, short essay. The exams at the end of Sections A and B will cover those sections, while your final exam will cover the whole class. More details will be provided in class and via ICON.

Group Case Analysis and Presentation: In addition to the ability to write, the ability to present your ideas to large and small groups is essential to a successful career in strategic communication. Furthermore, you will rarely find yourself working on a project solo. In fact, you will often find yourself assigned to work with a group which may have varied—and at times opposing—approaches to a problem. This assignment is designed to help you build those skills. In this assignment, you will apply the concepts and definitions you have learned throughout the class within key strategic communication contexts. More details will be provided in class and via ICON.

Reading Checks: For most classes with assigned reading, you will be required to complete a short quiz or provide a short answer to a discussion question. These reading checks are designed to ensure you are paying attention to the key concepts for the class. More details will be provided in class and on ICON. Please note: Reading checks will be due EOD (11:59 pm) the day before class. It is your responsibility to pay attention to ICON and/or the syllabus to determine when reading checks are due – I will not remind you about them.

Reading Checks will be graded on a 0-2 scale (reading checks not done will automatically receive a 0, while incomplete or late reading checks will automatically receive a 1). While you cannot make up Reading Checks, I will drop your lowest three scores at the end of the semester.

In-class Exercises: These activities, such as one-minute papers, practice quizzes, and discussion questions, will help you analyze and apply the key concepts and definitions for the corresponding module. More details will be provided in class and ICON. Please note: In-class Exercises will be due EOC (4:45 pm) through ICON – it is your responsibility to make sure you turn your exercise in on time.

In-class Exercises will be graded on a 0-2 scale (exercises not done will automatically receive a 0, while incomplete or late exercises will automatically receive a 1). While you cannot make up In-class Exercises, I will drop your lowest three scores at the end of the semester.

Participation: Participation is key to this class. We will have discussion about many issues related to strategic communication and current events. Please note that participation is based on quality – i.e. just because you speak once in every class and/or dominate the discussion does not mean you get 100% on participation.
Grading Criteria
Final course grades will be assessed based on your performance in the following areas:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Exercises</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Final course grades will be assigned as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100% to 94.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>&lt; 94.0% to 90.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>&lt; 90.0% to 87.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>&lt; 87.0% to 84.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>&lt; 84.0% to 80.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>&lt; 80.0% to 77.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>&lt; 77.0% to 74.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>&lt; 74.0% to 70.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>&lt; 67.0% to 64.0%</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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<td>&lt; 61.0% to 0.0%</td>
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Course and University Policies

Course Policies
Class Discussion: I expect you to come to class having done the reading and prepared to participate in class discussion. Occasionally, we may discuss sensitive and/or controversial issues in class. While I do encourage disagreement and discussion (with each other and with me), I ask that we remain civil and respectful. We will work together during the first week of class to develop rules of decorum for class discussions that we all will be responsible for adhering to and enforcing.

News Content: In addition to your reading, I expect you to keep up with current events. It’s important to know what’s going on in the world, and what issues your clients (today and in the future) face or will face. It makes you a more effective practitioner! While I don’t have news quizzes scheduled for this class, I will start implementing them if you are not keeping up with the news.

Due Dates and Missed Deadlines: Assignments are due at the time specified on ICON. All assignments (except the three exams) will be turned in through ICON. Late assignments (even 1 minute late) will receive a reduced grade unless you and I agree before the assignment is due that it can be late. Do not email me to ask when an assignment is due – ICON will have the most up-to-date information about assignment due dates.
Attendance: Class attendance is imperative. I will not take attendance in this class, however, for many classes you will complete in-class exercises (one-minute responses, group work, etc.) that will be turned in at the end of class. If you miss class, you will miss the opportunity to turn these in (see In-class Exercises above for more details on the grading). I understand that at times during the term you may have an important obligation that keeps you from class, so I will drop your three lowest grades.

Technology in Class: We live in a technological society, and I have no problem with the use of laptops in class. You are adults - Just remember that you will get out of this class what you put into it. We will work together the first week of class to develop a technology policy that we will all be responsible for adhering to and enforcing. If laptops (or other electronics) become a problem in class, I WILL ban them.

Workload: You are also expected to spend enough time outside of the classroom on the readings and assignments. The CLAS student workload guidelines advise that each semester hour of class time should entail around two hours each week of outside preparation for the average student. This means that in a 3-semester-hour course like this one, students should expect 6 additional hours of outside work per week on average.

Online Communication: I am always happy to answer any e-mails with questions, comments or concerns. However, they should be sent through your Hawk e-mail account or ICON (see Electronic Communication in University/CLAS Policies below). I will respond to your e-mail in a timely manner (within 24-48 hours). On weekends, e-mail responses might be slower. Do not email me the night before an exam/assignment is due and expect a response before class the next day.

I expect to see proper e-mail etiquette. These are two good websites to guide you on proper way to write e-mails, not just for this class, but for the rest of your career:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/636/01/
https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087#.nih9hwtvw

Office Hours: I am always happy to meet with you in-person to answer questions as well. My office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus, and I suggest you use those times to introduce yourself and/or clarify any questions you have about the material. If you cannot meet during my office hours, you may email me to set up a different time. However, do not email me to ask when my office hours are – check the syllabus or ICON.

University/CLAS Policies

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 https://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: The University of Iowa is committed to providing an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (which includes but is not limited to mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related conditions). A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor’s office to make particular arrangements. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between the student, instructor, and SDS. See https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/ for information.
Nondiscrimination in the Classroom: The University of Iowa is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, diversity@uiowa.edu, or visit diversity.uiowa.edu.

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 fifth week 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 Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator 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.

THE IOWA DOZEN

We learn to: (1) write correctly and clearly; (2) conduct research and gather information responsibly; (3) edit and evaluate carefully; (4) use media technologies thoughtfully; (5) apply statistical concepts appropriately

We value: (6) First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups; (7) a diverse global community; (8) creativity and independence; (9) truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity

We explore: (10) communication theories and concepts; (11) media institutions and practices; (12) the role of media in shaping cultures
# Course Calendar

This is a tentative course outline. Throughout the semester, changes might be necessary. Any changes will be announced immediately on ICON and in class.

## SECTION A: THE BIG PICTURE: CONCEPTS, CAREERS, CLEARING UP CONFUSIONS

### Week 1 | Introduction to Strategic Communication (January 16, 18)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Overview of the class assignments and expectations
- Learn strat comm definitions and basics
- Discuss importance of ethics and diversity in strat comm

**Due Dates:**
- Reading Check 1/17 EOD

**Class Topics and Readings:**
- **Tuesday – Intro**
  - Review Syllabus
  - Introductions
  - Technology/Discussion Policy

- **Thursday – Principled Public Relations**
  - READ Kelleher, Ch. 1

### Week 2 | Working in Strategic Communication and PR (January 23, 25)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Learn jobs/industries in strat comm
- Define, analyze and discuss media convergence and its effects
- Examine role of PR in democracy
- Discuss ethics and diversity issues

**Due Dates:**
- Reading Check 1/22 EOD
- Reading Check 1/24 EOD

**Class Topics and Readings:**
- **Thursday – Careers in Strategic Communication**
  - READ Kelleher, Ch. 14

- **Tuesday - Convergence and Integrated Communication**
  - READ Kelleher, Ch. 3

### Week 3 | Origins of Strategic Communication and PR (January 30, February 1)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Learn global history of strat comm
- Analyze PR models and apply to real-world situations
- Discuss ethics and diversity issues

**Due Dates:**
- Reading Check 1/29 EOD
- Reading Check 1/31 EOD

**Class Topics and Readings:**
- **Tuesday – PR Models through the Ages**
  - READ Kelleher, Ch. 2

- **Thursday – Global Strategic Communication**
  - READ Kelleher, Ch. 13
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Relationship Management and Legal Issues (February 6, 8)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Objectives:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Class Topics and Readings:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Identify stakeholders and publics</td>
<td>Tuesday – Relationship Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Analyze organization-public relationships</td>
<td>▪ READ Kelleher, Ch. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Evaluate corporate social responsibility</td>
<td>Thursday - Legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Discuss legal and ethical issues</td>
<td>▪ READ Kelleher, Ch. 11</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Due Dates:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Reading Check 2/5 EOD</td>
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<td>□ Reading Check 2/7 EOD</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Review and Exam A (February 13, 15)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Due Dates:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Class Topics and Readings:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Section A Exam 2/15 EOC</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ REVIEW FOR SECTION A EXAM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thursday</td>
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<td>▪ SECTION A EXAM</td>
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</tbody>
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**SECTION B – PR/STRAT COMM PLANNING PROCESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Planning Overview and Research (February 20, 22)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Objectives:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Class Topics and Readings:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Understand the role of research in strat comm</td>
<td>Tuesday – Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Understand the basics of strat comm planning</td>
<td>▪ Read Kelleher, Ch. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Due Dates:</strong></td>
<td>Thursday – Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Reading Check 2/19 EOD</td>
<td>▪ Read Kelleher Ch. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Reading Check 2/21 EOD</td>
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</table>
### Week 7 | Audiences/Persuasion (February 27, March 1)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Identify key publics and define target audiences
- Define elements of the behavioral framework
- Discuss ethics of persuasion

**Due Dates:**
- Reading Check 2/26 EOD
- Reading Check 2/28 EOD

**Class Topics and Readings:**
- **Tuesday - Audiences**
  - READ TBD on ICON
- **Thursday - Persuasion**
  - READ Applying Behavioral Principles on ICON

### Week 8 | Goals and Objectives (March 6, 8)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Distinguish between goals and objectives
- Develop goals that strategically align with an organization’s mission
- Develop SMART objectives that align with strategic goals

**Due Dates:**
- Reading Check 3/7 EOD

**Class Topics and Readings:**
- **Tuesday - TBD**
  - READ TBD on ICON
- **Thursday – Goals and Objectives**
  - READ TBD on ICON

### Week 9 | SPRING BREAK!!!!! (March 13, 15)

### Week 10 | Implementation and Evaluation (March 20, 22)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Define key concepts related to implementation and evaluation of strat comm plans
- Analyze effective strategies and tactics
- Define and apply industry standards for measuring strat comm outcomes

**Due Dates:**
- Reading Check 3/19 EOD
- Reading Check 3/21 EOD

**Class Topics and Readings:**
- **Tuesday – Implementation and Evaluation**
  - READ Kelleher Ch. 7, 8
- **Thursday – NO CLASS**
  - No class – take some time to review for Section B Exam
### Week 11 | Messages and Creative Concepts (March 27, 29)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Discuss key purposes of good writing
- Analyze and apply basic approaches required for cross-platform message development
- Learn AP style basics

**Due Dates:**
- Reading Check 3/26 EOD
- Reading Check 3/28 EOD

**Class Topics and Readings:**
- **Tuesday - Writing**
  - READ Kelleher Ch. 9

- **Thursday – Multimedia and Mobile**
  - READ Kelleher Ch. 10

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### Week 12 | Review and Exam B (April 3, 5)

**Due Dates:**
- Section B Exam 4/5 EOC

**Class Topics and Readings:**
- **Tuesday - REVIEW**
  - REVIEW FOR SECTION B EXAM

- **Thursday - EXAM**
  - SECTION B EXAM

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### SECTION C – STRAT COMM AND PR IN ACTION

### Week 13 | Strat Comm for Organizations (April 10,12)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Learn basics of issues management and discuss real-world case studies
- Learn basics of crisis communication and discuss real-world case studies

**Due Dates:**
- Reading Check 4/9 EOD
- Reading Check 4/11 EOD

**Class Topics and Readings:**
- **Tuesday – Issues and Crises**
  - READ Kelleher Ch. 12

- **Thursday – Corporate Communications**
  - READ TBD on ICON
  - In-class work on case study group project
### Week 14 | Social Media and Content Marketing (April 17, 19)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Learn basics of social media marketing and discuss real-world case studies
- Learn basics of content marketing and discuss real-world case studies

**Due Dates:**
- Reading Check 4/16 EOD
- Reading Check 4/18 EOD

**Class Topics and Readings:**

**Tuesday – Content Marketing**
- READ TBD on ICON

**Thursday – Social Media**
- READ TBD on ICON
- In-class work on case study group project

### Week 15 | Government/Public Affairs and Advocacy (April 24, 26)

**Learning Objectives:**
- Learn basics of government/public affairs and discuss real-world case studies
- Learn basics of advocacy and discuss real-world case studies
- Learn

**Due Dates:**
- Reading Check 4/23 EOD
- Reading Check 4/25 EOD

**Class Topics and Readings:**

**Tuesday – Government/Public Affairs**
- READ TBD on ICON
- In-class work on case study group project

**Thursday – Advocacy and NGOs**
- READ TBD on ICON
- In-class work on case study group project

### Week 16 | PRESENTATIONS and Review (May 1, 3)

**Due Dates:**
- **Group Presentations 5/1**

**Class Topics and Readings:**

**Tuesday – PRESENTATIONS**
- Group Case Study Presentations

**Thursday – PRESENTATIONS; REVIEW**
- Finish Group Case Study Presentations if needed
- Review for Final Exam