Overview

Every year, more than 1.5 million nonprofit organizations help people in need, advocate for causes, support research, arts and culture, enhance opportunities for public and/or their members. Our work this term is to learn about how nonprofit organizations communicate with their many audiences—people they serve, individuals and organizations that support them, and others engaged in the same mission. We’ll explore branding and message development, fundraising, and advocacy. You’ll put your knowledge into action in work (individually and in a team) for community nonprofits. We’ll also spend time each week keeping up with developments in the nonprofit/fundraising field.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the term, students will

• understand how nonprofit organizations communicate with a range of audiences to achieve mission-related goals
• have created communication materials used by nonprofits
• have experience working with a nonprofit organization in the community.

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 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.
• To demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups (including communities defined by gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion and sexual orientation) in a global society in relationship to communications. You’ll think about how to communicate effectively and with respect for your audiences.
• 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. You’ll explore how strategic communication differs from journalism.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN CLASS

Early in the term, we will use class time to get up to speed on some basic concepts and contexts through discussion and a bit of lecture. From then on, much of the class period will be devoted to exploring a range of nonprofit communication tasks through discussion, examples, and practice, some focused on a nonprofit organization of your choice. Toward the end of the semester, you will work in groups to create material for an Iowa City nonprofit.

TEXTS

Readings posted on ICON, regular reading of nonprofit news media and blogs.
ASSIGNMENTS / EVALUATION

Writing and analysis 50%
- Communication audit / message guide
- Slide presentation
- Fundraising material
- Working with media
- Mission-based content pieces

Strat comm / nonprofit basics 20%
- Demonstrate understanding of concepts and terms early in semester and again at end.

Group project 20%
- Work to be determined

Discussion, preparation, participation 10%
- Includes class activities, presentation of nonprofit news, completion of occasional smaller assignments
- Evaluation midterm and end

COURSE GRADE (A+ not used)

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CLASS POLICIES / ATTENDANCE, ASSIGNMENTS, CLASS EXPECTATIONS

I will keep a record of your attendance and expect you to be here every day. When you miss class, you miss the work we do on those days. I understand you may occasionally be sick or have a family obligation or a club trip or an interview that keeps you from class. You have up to 5 absences for sick/personal/professional leave—that’s far more generous than you will find in most any job. If you miss classes beyond this, your final letter grade may be reduced by 3% for each class missed. For example, a final grade of 88% will reduced to 85% then to 82% ....

Let me know in advance when you can, but please note that all absences count—no "excused" absences beyond the policy. You are responsible for making good decisions.

However, if you encounter a serious health or other situation that significantly interferes with your work, talk with me right away. Also let me know if class or an assignment conflicts with a religious observance.

Assignments must be submitted in the manner and at the time indicated in assignment instructions.
Assignments that are late will lose 10% per day, beginning at the start of class and including weekends and holidays. If you miss an assignment deadline because of an illness or emergency, be in touch right away.

You are responsible for any schedule or assignment changes announced. If you miss class, check ICON and be in touch with a classmate to find out what went on in your absence.
This will be an informal and, I hope, friendly and enjoyable class. Lab/writing courses require you to be an active and attentive participant, and I expect that you will observe the following standards of professional behavior:

- Arrive on time, don’t leave early.
- Don’t eat – unless you are sharing with the class. If you haven’t finished your lunch or snack, put it away before class begins.
- Keep your attention on the work of the class during the 75 minutes we have together. To do otherwise is a waste of your time and shows disrespect to the class—your fellow students and me.
  - Restrict computer screens to course materials during the class period.
  - Stash your phone in your bag—really.
  - Keep ears open, no ear buds.
- Expect consequences. If I observe problems with screen, phone, earbuds, I will notify you by email. After that warning, I’ll record half an absence each day you aren’t focused on our work—no additional warning or notice.

Please note that this class assumes competence in grammar and language usage. I will help you as much as I can, but if you need to do some catch up work, I’ll refer you to the Writing Center. We will follow the SJMC AP Style Guide (provided on ICON).

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. 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.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE / DETAILED SCHEDULES ON ICON**

Week of

**Nonprofit strat comm foundations**
Jan 15 Intro to class / Nonprofit basics
Jan 22 Nonprofit audiences / Strat communication basics

**Planning, branding communicating**
Jan 29 Branding / Messages / Communication strategies (first essay on nonprofit/strat comm concepts due)
Feb 5 continued (communication audit due)
Feb 12 Fundraising/communicating with supporters
Feb 19 continued / (fundraising materials due)
Feb 26 Making the case to community
Mar 5 continued (slide presentations due)
Mar 12 Working with media
Mar 19 SPRING BREAK
Mar 26 Content for sharing
Apr 2 continued (content pieces due)

**Putting it together /working with a client**
Apr 9 Getting organized / meet clients
Apr 16 TBD / group work
Apr 23 TBD/group work
Apr 30 TBD / present

Exam week second essay on nonprofit/strat comm concepts due