Course Name: Strategic Communications for Nonprofits  
Course Term/ Number: Spring 2019

Instructor: Rachel Lopez  
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Additional contact information:  
DEO Contact Information: David-Ryfe@uiowa.edu

Course Meeting time: Wednesday evenings, 5:30 pm–8:00 pm

Recommended Course Materials:

*Everybody Writes: Your Go-To Guide for Creative Ridiculously Good Content*, Ann Handley  

Course will include selected readings from various online publications, in addition to:


*Strategic Communications for Nonprofit Organizations: Seven Steps to Creating a Successful Plan*  

*The New Rules of Marketing and PR: How to Use Social Media, Online Video, Mobile Applications, Blogs, Newsjacking, and Viral Marketing to Reach Buyers Directly*, David Meerman Scott,  

Some Guiding Principles:

“Start with empathy. Continue with utility. Improve with analysis. Optimize with love.” – Jonathon Colman, Facebook Content Strategist on becoming a better writer

Know your opposition; they are your greatest teachers of empathy. Media are the vehicle – your organization should be the driver. Integrity and mission should be the operational forces that drive your comms; otherwise don’t bother – go work on Wall Street. Practice rigorous intellectual curiosity. – Me

Course Description:
This class will examine the components, objectives, and initiatives of strategic communications for nonprofit organizations. We will specifically examine strategies that inspire and persuade diverse audiences and stakeholders through multi-channel communications. As such, there will be great emphasis on audience analysis. In addition to the assigned texts, we will utilize case studies to examine organizational approaches, and identify successful – and unsuccessful – strategies.

Although this course focuses primarily on nonprofits, its teaching modules are applicable to diverse industries. All successful strategic organizational communications rely upon teamwork and collaboration; as such, much of this class will be driven by discussion, which allows us to learn from one another, challenge our own assumptions, and explore new ideas.

Learning Objectives:
Ultimately, students will have a broad understanding of the structures, components, and functions of multi-channel strategic nonprofit communications, leading with empathy for diverse audiences, and mindful of potential legal, ethical, and public policy implications of those initiatives.

Grading Criteria:
Discussion contribution: 30%
Presentation: 10%
Paper 1: 10%
Paper 2: 10%
Paper 3: 20%
Final Presentation: 20%

Assignment Descriptions:
Presentation 1: A 5–10 minute presentation including link or handout that introduces a discovery you’ve made in your readings about strategic communications, especially as it pertains to nonprofits. This will likely require you to follow industry publications, thought leaders, media about specific organizations, etc.

The sources should be critically vetted (you’re welcome to run them past me but use your judgment) but feel free to explore unique and emerging perspectives, case studies, or strategies. You will lead the discussion on industry implications, and your discussion may leave us with more questions than answers – that’s okay. This exercise is about exploration, learning, and progressive thinking. The source should be no more than six month old.

Some potential examples:
Specific campaigns, such as the one we will explore on Day 1, exploring Planned Parenthood’s "Say Abortion" campaign, and…


https://www.moceanic.com/2017/commercial-branding/?inf_contact_key=c7e21743bb203828dc5bf035a6da6689a38dc4da731629bf2dbd5d246ab228f0

Here is a decent list of some nonprofit thought leaders to follow – please feel free to share others:

Assignment 1: S(trengths) W(eaknesses) O(pportunities) T(hreats) analysis of a selected nonprofit organization (you may or may not use this org for your final project)

Assignment 2: Comprehensive audience analysis for a selected nonprofit organization (you may or may not use this org for your final project)

Assignment 3: Internal and external core messages for a selected nonprofit organization (you may or may not use this org for your final project)

Presentation Final: 10–15 minute presentation and 10-pg paper detailing your comprehensive recommendations on a strategic communications strategy for a selected nonprofit organization. Paper should follow AP guidelines; presentation should provide data and visuals, delivered electronically.

**Attendance and participation policy:**
Because discussion contribution is 20% of your grade, and we meet only once per week, attendance is expected and mandatory. That said, life happens. One absence is allowed with no questions asked and no grade impact. Two absences will require extra credit to avoid grade impact. Three absences will impact your grade with no possibility for makeup; any more than three, and you should consider withdrawing from the course. Attendance on both final presentation days is mandatory – we all need an audience!

I consider this classroom a collaborative team whose objective is to acquire strategic communications skills that have real-world applications and implications. As in any team, optimal performance requires engagement from all parties – you all bring something unique to the table!

That said, it’s important to remember that truly powerful engagement depends on give and take: the offering of ideas, respectful critical dialogue, thoughtful questions, and careful listening. It’s symbiotic. I grade on quality, not quantity. Each class meeting has 10 possible engagement points; I will average them at the end of the semester. Please have cameras on during active class discussions.

**Assignment deadlines and late work policy:**
Our careers, especially in communications, are governed by deadlines. As such, I will accept late work up to one week (7 weekdays) past deadline. The assignment will be deducted a partial letter grade (A- to B+ for instance) for each day it is late; past 7 days, the assignment will receive a zero.

**Email Policy:**
Email is the best way to reach me; I generally respond within a few hours. I frequently work weekends, so when I get an opportunity to take one off, I step away from email. I will keep our teams apprised as my schedule fluctuates. I will review assignments in advance, and will take questions up until 24 hours before the due date.

**Pedagogical approach or format of the course:**
A typical session will include
- Brief lecture; discussion on reading
- Student presentation (see assignments); discussion
- Collaborative activity
- Next steps

What will you bring?
- Positive attitude
- Rigorous intellectual curiosity
- Critical thinking
- Respectful dialogue
- Ideas!

Student Resources
IT Email: dce-techsupport@uiowa.edu

ICON Student Guide and Technical Resources

Student Zoom Accounts
University of Iowa Writing Center

Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59-</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Work/reading Due Prior to Class</th>
<th>Class Discussion Topic</th>
<th>Presentations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>1.16.19</td>
<td>Introductions; course and assignment descriptions; presentation sign-ups</td>
<td>Rachel Lopez: Planned Parenthood’s “Say Abortion” campaign</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What makes communications “strategic”? (lecture &amp; discussion)</td>
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<td>What do you hope to take away from this class?</td>
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| Week 2 | 1.23.19 | Readings: [The Barcelona Principles](#)  
Bonk, Ch. 2  
Quizzes:  
AP Style (all)  
Comms experience | Elements of a solid communications plan: from proaction to crisis management (Bonk reading) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 3 | 1.30.19 | [How To Define Your Organization's Values](#), Forbes  
[Mission, Vision, and Values, Lumen Principles of Management](#) | How do we identify organizational values and develop strategic objectives?  
Presenter 1: |
| Week 4 | 2.6.19 | Post to Discussion: Pres 1  
[What Is a SWOT Analysis, and How to Do It Right (With Examples), LivePlan](#)  
[Six Practical Strategies For Discovering Your Next Opportunity, Forbes](#) | SWOT analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats  
Presenter 2: |
| Week 5 | 2.13.19 | Post to Discussion: Pres 2  
Asg. 1 SWOT Analysis DUE  
[The Best Marketing Campaigns of 2018](#) (come to class prepared to discuss the audiences and market conditions for each)  
Meerman Scott, Chs 3 and 10 ( personas) | How do we identify audiences, conduct research for audience segmentation, and respond to market and other contexts?  
Presenter 3: |
| Week 6 | 2.20.19 | Post to Discussion: Pres 3  
[Audience Segmentation: Identifying Your Ideal Customers, Bridge](#)  
[Psychographics Are Just as Important for Marketers as Demographics, HBR](#)  
Patterson, Ch. 5 | Research and audience segmentation (will discuss ethics)  
Presenter 4: |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7 2.27.19</th>
<th>Post to Discussion: Pres 4 Post to Discussion: Measuring Outcomes (Due April 7) Audience Analysis DUE Patterson, Ch 4 (messaging) &amp; 7 (earning media coverage)</th>
<th>Storytelling: framing and developing messages (will discuss ethics)</th>
<th>Presenter 5:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 8 3.6.19</td>
<td>Post to Discussion: Pres 5 Post to Discussion: Measuring Outcomes (Due April 7)</td>
<td>Storytelling: Framing and developing messages cont' Discuss measuring outcomes</td>
<td>Presenter 6:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9 3.13.19</td>
<td>Post to Discussion: Pres 6 Patterson, Ch 7 (earning media coverage)</td>
<td>Internal messaging: getting on the same page and building consensus (will explore types and reasons for pushback)</td>
<td>Presenter 7:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10 3.27.19</td>
<td>Post to Discussion: Pres 7 Patterson, Ch 7 (earning media coverage)</td>
<td>Engaging the media</td>
<td>Presenter 8:</td>
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<td>Week 11 4.3.19</td>
<td>Post to Discussion: Pres 8</td>
<td>Engaging the media cont'</td>
<td>Presenter 9:</td>
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<td>Week 12 4.10.19</td>
<td>Post to Discussion: Pres 9</td>
<td>Mobilizing and preparing ambassadors; prepping for storytelling</td>
<td>Presenter 10:</td>
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<td>Week 13 4.17.19</td>
<td>Post to Discussion: Pres 10</td>
<td>The role of social media</td>
<td>Presenter 11:</td>
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<td>Week 14 4.24.19</td>
<td>Post to Discussion: Pres 11</td>
<td>Paid advertising and PSAs</td>
<td>Presenter 12:</td>
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<td>Week 15 5.1.19</td>
<td>Post to Discussion: Pres 12</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<td>Final Information</td>
<td>5.8.19</td>
<td>Final presentations</td>
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**University of Iowa Teaching Policies and Resources**

**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](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](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook)).

**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/](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](https): "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](#)).

**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.