Course Name: Digital Strategic Communication
Course Term/ Number: JMC:5240:0EXW

Instructor: Elizabeth K. Du Chene (she/her)
Email: educhene@iowa.uiowa.edu
Additional contact information:
DEO Contact Information: David-Ryfe@uiowa.edu

Course Meeting time: 5:30P - 8:00P Th (Zoom: https://uiowa.zoom.us/s/4770000945)

Required Course Materials:

Course Description:
Exploration of information industry growth; creative processes involved in developing a consistent voice and utilizing multimedia tools to enhance strategic messages through robust content; focus on characteristics and spread of new communication technologies and their effects as students conduct a critical analysis of and recommendation for a business' social media and online communication strategy.

Learning Objectives:
• Strategically consider and utilize best social media and online platforms in business and personal communication.
• Strategically, clearly and effectively communicate in business and personal life via social media and online platforms.
• Utilize skills learned in this class to complete your master's capstone project.

Grading Criteria:
10%: In-class attendance: Attendance is mandatory. Please let instructor know if you must miss a class. To catch up, a video of each class will be posted online for later viewing if an absence is to occur. Each student is permitted one absence and can make up those points by watching the class online and sending bullet points to the instructor within one week of the absence. Two points per session, 15 sessions. Total points: 30

10%: In-class participation: Please participate in class through reading reflections, questions and answers, and general class discussion. Participation points cannot be made up. The instructor keeps a roster of who has spoken or contributed to the class chat. Two points per session, 15 sessions. Total points: 30

20%: Discussion Forum participation: Most weeks, you will have an assignment that correlates with the readings and in-class discussions. These are due by 10 p.m. the night before class on the forums. Your personal notes should be included at the end. Please also include 1-2 questions to foster discussion among your peers. (You may be asked to lead the discussion on your post.) You will be expected to respond to your fellow students' posts--not everyone's, but some--with thoughtfulness to further the discussion. We will go over some of these in class each week. Six points per week for 10 weeks. Total points: 60
20%: Case study evaluation: Throughout the course, we will evaluate digital strategic communication case studies, taking into consideration social media, web design, email and more. Now that you've evaluated your company and you've developed an eye for design and a knack for details like publishing time, hashtags, engagement, voice, branding, etc, show the class that you are the expert in this field and can do the same thing for any company. For a case study, pick ANY company you'd like. Take an outsider's perspective and give us a report on how you think the company's social media health is and give recommendations for things you think should be done better.

Use these links as a guide:
- [https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-marketing-examples/](https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-marketing-examples/) (Links to an external site.)
- [https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/7-creative-social-media-marketing-mini-case-studies/](https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/7-creative-social-media-marketing-mini-case-studies/) (Links to an external site.)

This case study should be to the point and image heavy (use images to support your claims).

A perfect paper will do the following:
- Include a quick description of the company as a general overview, including links to the company's platforms, website, etc.
- Taking an educated guess at the company's customer persona (no need to show this visually, just write a few words on who you believe the intended audience is).
- Describe (and show) examples of posts across the platforms with a critique based on EVERYTHING we have learned so far. Hashtags. Links. Voice. Images. Etc. Go deep here and show me what you know.
- Recommendations for what they can do to improve.

Note* you won't have real data from the company, because we are looking in from the outside, and that is fine.

Please submit these as a pdf, with images within the body. Depending on the size of your images, this should be about a 5-7 page document.

Peer reviews will be worth 1/3 of the grade. Make sure you comment on others' work.

Two case studies, 30 points each. Total points: 60

10%: Midterm project: You will be required to write a 2-to 3-page paper regarding the business you'll cover in your final project (see below). In your paper, you will name and describe the business, and draft 2-3 different types of copy applicable for that business (options include but are not limited to: Facebook posts, Tweets, blog posts, Instagram captions -inducting photos). Your paper will also include a reflection element (100-200 words) regarding what you've learned in class and 1-2 questions you may have. Due: 3/27 (Updated March 7). Total points: 30.

30%: Final project: Projects will be graded on merit and achievement at the end of the course. Point breakdown is outlined in "Final Project" section. Total points: 90

Other notes: No "incomplete" grades will be given for assignments nor final grades. This course is a plus/minus (+/-) graded course.

Final Project
Your assignments throughout the course will build your final project, plus a critical analysis of and recommendations for a business of your choosing's social media and integrated online communication strategy. You may choose your own business, as long as it is currently utilizing a majority of social media platforms.
Structure

Executive summary: Please summarize your findings and recommendation in the first paragraph. For tips on writing an executive summary, see this article from Inc.com: http://www.inc.com/guides/2010/09/how-to-write-an-executive-summary.html/2 (less than 1 page; 5 points)

Description of the business: Please describe the business to the best of your abilities in terms of brand, industry, headquarters, reach, employment numbers, ownership structure, etc. Include any other information you have found valuable to your evaluation. Cite sources and include links where applicable. (1 page, 10 points)

Description of the business' social media and online communication strategy: Please describe the business' digital communication strategy by providing an audit of all known platforms the business utilizes, the frequency with which they post, the types of content they create and curate, the message (campaigns, contests, branding, calls to action) they work to promote, and other pertinent information. Cite sources and include links where applicable. (3-4 pages, 20 points)

Evaluation of the business' social media and online communication strategy: Please evaluate the business' digital communication strategy based on your learnings in this class and your professional background. Cite sources and include links where applicable. (1-2 pages, 20 points)

Recommendation for the business' social media and online communication strategy: Please make a thorough and thoughtful recommendation for the business' digital communication strategy, which may include building out calendars, utilizing or de-emphasizing various platforms, targeting more appropriate audiences, being more engaging, etc. Cite sources to strengthen your recommendation. (4-6 pages, 25 points)

Bibliography: Please cite sources used throughout your paper in your chosen format (MLA, APA, etc.). https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/ (5 points)

Include other assignments from class at the end as an appendix. Hint: This should be very heavy with visuals you have already created from assignments in the course. Make sure they are organized and labeled correctly.

Presentation: Be prepared to present your findings in our last class as the class final. Use PowerPoint, Keynote, other presentation software, the presentation itself is a small portion of the overall grade for this project, whereas the paper itself is more heavily weighted. Every student will be given 6 minutes to present, which will be followed by a short Q&A that may lead you to make revisions to your project. Please take recommendations into consideration when revising your paper. Final drafts are due via Google Drive by 10 p.m. on 5/3. (5 points)

Participation and attendance policy:

Attendance
Attendance for this course is required and expected. A portion of your final grade will be determined by your attendance and active participation both during class and in the virtual space. No attendance credit will be given for missed classes. Please see point breakdown below to understand grading procedure on a weekly basis.

Guest Speakers
This course will, at times, welcome guest speakers into the virtual classroom to discuss their professional and personal experiences with social media and online communication. The readings for that day have been supplied by the speaker and/or curated to match their message. Appearances are subject to the speakers' availability, but students will be given advance notice of guest speaker attendance. Content will include a structured but relaxed question-and-answer with the instructor, as well as Q&A with students. Cameras must remain on during this time and each student must come prepared with one question to ask each time.

Assignment deadlines and late work policy:
Case studies and weekly assignments are due by 10 p.m. the day before class.

Email Policy:
Email is the best way to reach me. Questions will be answered as quickly as possible. Email is not checked on weekends.

Pedagogical approach or format of the course:
Students can expect to acquire real-life strategies and tactics for modern communications, which means real-life assignments will also be assigned. Students can expect to not only know what the best practices are in effective communications, but also be able to produce the content to ensure effective communications.

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

ICON Student Guide and Technical Resources

Student Zoom Accounts
University of Iowa Writing Center

Grading Scale:
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</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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<td>B+</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Work /reading due prior to class</th>
<th>Class discussion Topic</th>
<th>Preparing for our next session</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction. Scott, pp. 1-12.</td>
<td>What do we KNOW right NOW about digital communication?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“The Old Rules of Marketing and PR Are Ineffective in an Online World.” Scott, pp. 15-26.</td>
<td>What blogs, email subscriptions do we follow?</td>
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<td>Week 2 1/30</td>
<td>Simon Sinek “Start With Why” TED Talk: here.</td>
<td>Three-minute presentations of assignments</td>
<td>300-400 words: What is the Why, How and What of your company? How can they revisit their why to make an impact? Name your company’s archetype, describe their relationship with their segments of the</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Reaching Your Buyers Directly.” Scott, pp. 39-58.</td>
<td>In-class SWOT Analysis of your company</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“How Digital Marketing Works: Here’s Everything You Need to</td>
<td>Lecture: Customer archetypes, relationships, and segments</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
  • “Strategies for Creating Awesome Content.” Scott, pp. 215-230  
  • “Want to Stand Out? Think Like an Editor.” Entrepreneur, 2017. Link.  
  • “There’s an Art to Telling Your Brand's Story: 4 Ways to Get It Right.” Entrepreneur, 2014. Link. | • Discussion on content and storytelling.  
  • Branding, messaging and writing | • Take over as content editor for your company. Write one blog post and select appropriate images for your company. Write a sample email to the editor of the publication of your choosing with the aim to have them pick up your story. |
| Week 4 2/13 | • “Storytelling on Facebook.” Vaynerchuk, pp. 29-82.  
  • “Glam it Up on Pinterest.” Vaynerchuk, pp. 117-134.  
  • “Create Art on Instagram.” Vaynerchuk, pp. 135-149. | • Case studies from the readings. | • Conduct a content analysis of five posts your company posted in the last 30 days. |
| Week 5 2/20 | • “Social Media and Your Targeted Audience.” Scott, pp. 61-76.  
• "A 2-Step Editorial Calendar Template that Can Boost Your Content Marketing Productivity." Parker, Roger C. Content Marketing Institute. Link.  
• "How to Craft a Successful Social Media Content Marketing Plan." Salesforce Marketing Cloud. Link. (You may need to fill out a short form to download.)  
• "Control the Chaos with a Social Media Calendar." Campbell, Julia. Yahoo! Small Business Advisor. Link. | • Editorial scheduling: One way to hold yourself accountable - The answer to "When should I post?" doubles as a great answer to "What should I post?" Reporting, metrics and Analysis | • Register for a free account on Hootsuite or any other social planning site.  
• Mock up a social media calendar for your company for one week using “How Often You Should Post on Social Media, According to 10 Studies.” Inc.com, 2018. Link. You have two weeks to complete this. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week 6 2/27 | • "Blogs: Tapping into Millions of Evangelists." Scott, pp. 77-99.  
• "Going Viral..." Scott, pp.108-122.  
• "Blogging in to Reach Your Buyers." Scott, 274-286. | • Discussion on blogs and email subscriptions.  
• Creating a community online (that’s more than just your friends and family).  
• Podcasts | None. Continue to work on your social media calendar. |
| Week 7 3/5 | • "How to Use News Releases to Reach Buyers Directly." Scott, pp. 315-327.  
• "The 3 key ingredients in a successful influencer pitch." | None. Continue to work on your social media calendar. | Case study I |
• "What is a Landing Page and How Does it Work?" Hubspot, 2017. [Link](link).  
• "19 of the Best Landing Page Design Examples You Need to See in 2018." Hubspot. [Link](link). | • Best practices for creating a sitemap and website design.  
• Google Analytics overview.  
• Email marketing |  
| Week 9 3/19 | • The Definitive Guide to SEO In 2018." BackLinko, 2018. [Link](link).  
• SEO strategy plan.  
• Content Pillars Pay-Per-Click Advertising | Midterm (Due 3/18)  
| Week 10 3/21 | Break |  
| Week 11 4/2 NO CLASS | • None | • None | • None  
• "The Step-By-Step Guide to Getting Started with Instagram" | • The Kardashians.  
• Model agencies and influencer posts.  
• Discussion: Self-assess your platforms and what you communicate as being you. | • Case Study II |
| Week 13 4/16 | • "Audio and Video Drive Action." Scott, pp. 95-107.  
• "An Image is Worth a Thousand Words." Scott, pp. 287-301.  
• "Video and Podcasting Made Easy." Scott, pp. 302-314. | • New research on images and videos  
• An overview of podcasting  
• Current apps and sites for easily made (and mostly free) visual content generators. Plus demonstrations.  
• Overview of basic equipment and rules to live by | • Conduct a content analysis of the images and video the company has used in the last 30 days and make recommendations. |
| Week 14 4/18 | • “Five strategies for delivering effective presentation." Flying Solo. [Link](#).  
• “8 Presentation Industry Trends To Watch In 2018.” Duarte, 2018. [Link](#). | • Preparation for final paper and presentation  
• Tips and tricks for professional presentations (Talking style, appearance, non-verbals). | • Final paper |
| Week 15 4/25 | • TBD | • TBD | • Final paper |
| Final Information 5/4 | • 6-minute presentation of paper with discussion | | |

**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](#)).
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.

Students who have documentation from Student Disability Services (SDS) for accommodations must present the documents and meet with the professor before the third week of classes. Simply emailing the forms to your TA and professor is not sufficient. For more information, please see the section titled Accommodations for Disabilities under The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Policies and Resources page at the end of the syllabus. If you have other health or personal circumstances (not covered by SDS) that might affect your ability to be successful in this course, please speak with the professor as soon as possible.

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).

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.