Foundations of Strategic Communication  
Journalism & Mass Communication JMC:5300:0EXW – Fall 2016

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Course Website: http://icon.uiowa.edu/

Course description

This course is designed to give students an introduction to the field of strategic communication. We will cover five main areas: 1) The role of strategic communication; 2) the process (from research and planning to implementation and evaluation); 3) the fundamental concepts of strategy; 4) the tactics used by strategic communication professionals; and 5) the application of the process, strategies and tactics in major areas of practice. This course will help you look at situations, note the opportunities and/or problems, and deal with them in a logical, analytical manner taking into consideration diversity and new technologies. It presents exercises in critical thinking and will help you improve your individual writing style. This course also provides the foundation of knowledge needed to progress to the more advanced courses in the Masters of Strategic Communication program.

A note regarding asynchronous learning

Asynchronous learning is a student-centered teaching method that focuses on peer-to-peer interactions and support throughout the semester. That means that the class is entirely online and you are responsible to work through class material on your own time. Because we do not have a weekly in-person meeting time, this course requires high levels of attention, motivation and the initiative to learn independently.

We will all work to create a comfortable environment where we can speak honestly and support one another. Because of the asynchronous nature of this class, you have a lot of freedom as to when you complete coursework. As a result, it can be easy to fall behind on reading and assignments. I have found that the most successful students are those who schedule “class time” during their weekly schedule and set aside a consistent time to work on class assignments. It is also be beneficial to some students to set up times online to meet with one another and discuss content and plans for your assignments.

Course objectives

By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the role and functions of strategic communication in a contemporary society.
- Understand the historical evolution of strategic communication, career opportunities in the field, and professional, ethical and legal responsibilities.
- Learn basic processes of strategic communication – research, planning, communication, evaluation – and the use of communications strategies and tactics to achieve organizational goals and objectives.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and the purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate potential effects of strategic communication practices.
Course Requirements

Text:

*Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics (11th edition)*
By Dennis L. Wilcox, Glen T. Cameron, & Bryan H. Reber (2015)

Other readings and assigned materials will be made available on the Internet at the ICON website. **All readings should be completed before reading lecture materials and completing assignments.** Weekly content and assignments will be posted by Sunday night at midnight. This content is subject to change, so please check class content on ICON weekly.

**Media/System Requirements:**
Listed below are the media/system requirements applicable to this course:

- System requirements. Computer with high speed Internet access.
- Need technical support? Contact the Division of Continuing Education technical support staff at dce-techsupport@uiowa.edu.

Course Policies

**Online classroom conduct:**
No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated during this course. Critical thought and discussion is encouraged, however, classroom civility is required at all times. The instructor reserves the right to delete any message board post that includes racist/sextist/bigoted language or personal attacks against another class member.

**Student Support**
This course assumes students have basic computer skills and are knowledgeable of the various programs and hardware they will need to use during this session (e.g. Microsoft Word). For information and computer support geared toward distance education students, access:

- the Continuing Education Technical Support page - [http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/tech-support/index.html](http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/tech-support/index.html)
- the Student Guide to ICON - [https://icon.uiowa.edu/help/students/](https://icon.uiowa.edu/help/students/)

**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.

**Electronic Communication**
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa email address (@uiowa.edu). Check this account regularly. Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (*Operations Manual*, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

**Tips for Harmonious Email Communication:** You should feel free to email me with class questions or to set up meeting times. I try to respond to student emails in a timely manner (usually within 24 hours) but please try to avoid sending last-minute messages. If you have a question regarding any assignment, please try and contact me at least 48 hours prior to their due date.

**Netiquette**
Students need to effectively communicate with each other and their instructors when working online. Although it may not be intended, tone in communication is often read differently than when it is presented in the form of speech. For tips on "Netiquette" technique, go to: [http://www.albion.com/netiquette/](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/)
Academic Honesty
All CLAS students 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 Professor Dalrymple, and then the departmental DEO. Do not voice complaints in our online discussion boards. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook). The DEO for the School of Journalism & Mass Communication is Prof. David Ryfe, phone 319.335.3486.

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.

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.

*These CLAS policy and procedural statements have been summarized from the web pages of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the University of Iowa Operations Manual.

Grading:

Total of 700 points possible. Grades will be based on the following:

- 100pts – Pitch
- 100pts – Situational Analysis
- 100pts – Audience Analysis
- 100pts – Press Release
- 100pts – Campaign Critique
- 200 pts – 14 Weekly reading posts

Do not assume grades will be rounded up or curved. Your scores on each assignment will be posted on ICON in the gradebook section. You can keep track of the points you earn toward the desired grade on the following scale:

- A 94 and above
- A- 90–93
- B+ 87–89
- B 83–86
- B- 80–82
- C+ 77–79
- C 73–76
- C- 70–72
- D+ 67–69
- D 63–66
- D- 60–62
- F 59 and below
Assignments:
All assignments must be uploaded to the ICON website on or before the due date (see the course schedule below). All papers must be single-spaced and include your name, the date, and your class number.

Writing assignments – There are five writing assignments this semester to provide you with a basic understanding of the types of products that will be expected of you in any public relations job. The first two assignments (situational and audience analyses) will focus on gathering background information for a client looking to rebrand. You will then write a press release for that client. Finally, you will complete a critique of a campaign of your choice. Information assignment sheets with further detail will be posted on ICON for each of the writing assignments. Rubrics will be also provided to explain how each assignment will be graded.

Weekly Reading Posts (WRP) – Due each Sunday by midnight – Each week, you will be responsible for posting a brief summary of the week’s reading. After you have read the assigned readings, you will summarize each chapter as if you were creating a condensed version tailored for your client. Your summary will directly address your client (you, your company, company name, etc. are all acceptable for use in your summary). The summary should explain the basic concepts to your client and how they relate to the client’s strategic messaging efforts. In addition to the summary, you will list an action item or two for your client. Think about this as a weekly email update that you would send to your client.

You are responsible for posting a 1 to 2 paragraph response to the weekly discussion board. These responses should be critically thought out and well written. WDPs will be graded using the check plus/check/check minus system.

- Check plus – 100% – WDP was completed thoroughly, on time and shows thoughtful application of class material.
- Check – 80% – WDP was completed thoroughly and on time, but lacks application of class material.
- Check minus – 60% – WDP was completed on time, but lacked complete response and application of class material.
- Zero – 0% - WDP was not completed on time.
**Tentative schedule:**

Check our site on ICON for updates the schedule below. Read the assignments **before** reading lectures each week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due Dates and Exams</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 (8/22)</td>
<td>What is Strategic Communications?</td>
<td>Public Relations, Chapters 1&amp;2</td>
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<td>Week 2 (8/29)</td>
<td>Jobs in Strategic Communication</td>
<td>PR, Chapter 4</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP</td>
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<td>Week 3 (9/5)</td>
<td>Ethics and Professionalism</td>
<td>PR, Chapter 3</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP; Pitch</td>
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<td>Week 4 (9/12)</td>
<td>Research and Audience Analysis</td>
<td>PR, Chapters 5&amp;11</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP</td>
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<td>Week 5 (9/19)</td>
<td>Planning and Communication Goals</td>
<td>PR, Chapters 6&amp;7</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP</td>
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<td>Week 6 (9/26)</td>
<td>Public Opinion and Strategic Communication</td>
<td>Additional Reading</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP; Situational Analysis</td>
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<td>Week 7 (10/3)</td>
<td>Public Opinion and Strategic Communication</td>
<td>PR, Chapter 9</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP</td>
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<td>Week 8 (10/10)</td>
<td>Developing a Media Plan</td>
<td>PR, Chapters 13&amp;15</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP</td>
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<td>Week 9 (10/17)</td>
<td>Working with the Public and Preparing Materials</td>
<td>PR, Chapters 16&amp;14</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP; Audience Analysis</td>
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<td>Week 10 (10/24)</td>
<td>Evaluation Plan</td>
<td>PR, Chapter 8 &amp; Additional Reading</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11 (10/31)</td>
<td>Preparing and Responding to Crises and Risk</td>
<td>PR, Chapter 10 &amp; Additional Reading</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP</td>
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<td>Week 12 (11/7)</td>
<td>Entertainment, Sports and Tourism</td>
<td>PR, Chapter 18</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP; Press Release</td>
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<td>Week 13 (11/14)</td>
<td>Politics and Government</td>
<td>PR, Chapter 19</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP</td>
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<td><strong>Thanksgiving Break</strong></td>
<td><strong>No Class</strong></td>
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<td>Week 14 (11/28)</td>
<td>Global Public Relations</td>
<td>PR, Chapter 20</td>
<td>Sunday: WRP</td>
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<td>Week 15 (12/5)</td>
<td>Nonprofit, Health and Education</td>
<td>PR, Chapter 21</td>
<td>Friday: WRP; Campaign Critique</td>
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