Foundations of Strategic Communication  
Journalism & Mass Communication  
JMC: 5300:0EXW - Fall 2017

Instructor: Rachelle Biderman  
Email: Rachelle-Biderman@uiowa.edu

Office: Adler E320  
Office Hours: M-Th 10-12  
Phone: (319) 343-7856 (Google Voice)  
Office Phone: (319) 335-3389  
Course meeting times: Tuesday, 5:30 – 8:00 PM CST Via Adobe Connect

This course gives students an introduction to the field of strategic communication. We will cover five main areas:

1. The role of strategic communication  
2. The process of strategic communication from research and planning to implementation and evaluation  
3. The fundamental concepts of strategy  
4. The tactics used by strategic communication professionals  
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 inherent in that situation, 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.

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 communication professions, audiences and the purposes they serve  
- Critically evaluate potential effects of strategic communication practices

Course Requirements


Other Readings: Other readings and assigned materials will be made available on the class ICON website. All readings should be completed before class meetings or completing assignments. Weekly content and assignments will be posted by Saturday night at midnight. This content is subject to change, so please check class content on ICON weekly.

Media/System Requirements: Computer with high speed Internet access, a camera and microphone.

Need technical support? Contact the Division of Continuing Education technical support staff at dce-techsupport@uiowa.edu.

Synchronous Sessions: As an instructor, I am keep to keep sessions interactive, lively, and engaged. Our Face to Face (synchronous) time will focus on peer-to-peer interactions with peer and faculty support throughout the
semester. That means that you are responsible to work through class material on your own time. Because we have sporadic 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, you can easily fall behind on reading and assignments. I have found that the most successful students schedule “class time” during their weekly schedule and set aside a consistent time to work on class assignments. You may also find it beneficial to set up times online to meet with one another and discuss content and plans for your assignments.

You have discussions due weekly which should help you stay on track with the course materials. 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/sexist/bigoted language or personal attacks against another class member.

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

**Continuing Education Technical Support page**
http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/techsupport/index.html

- Student Guide to ICON - 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 correspondence 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.)

**Email Communication:** 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.

**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 Biderman and then the departmental DEO (Prof. David Ryfe, phone (319) 335-3486). Please Do not voice complaints in our online discussion boards. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).
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:

Throughout the course you will apply your knowledge of strategic communication with a “client” and complete four assignments that walk you through the main steps of creating a strategic communication campaign. You may choose which client you use for this assignment; choose someone with sufficient information that you can complete each of the assignments and that will keep your interest throughout the semester. You may use your employer or other organization with which you currently work or volunteer. You should create each part of the assignment as if you would present it to your client in a well-researched, argued, and professionally presented paper.

All assignments must be uploaded to the ICON website on or before the due date (see the course schedule). Each assignment is due no later than Saturday at 11:59 PM (CST) on the week listed (unless otherwise noted). More detail on each assignment appears in ICON as well. All papers must be professionally produced with minimal spelling or grammatical errors and in Microsoft Word.

Strategic Communication Plan: Throughout the semester, you will apply your knowledge of strategic communication with a “client” and complete four assignments that walk you through the main steps of creating a strategic communication campaign. You may choose which client you use for this assignment; choose someone with sufficient information that you can complete each of the four assignments and that will keep your interest throughout the semester. You may use your employer or other organization with which you currently work or volunteer. You should create each part of the assignment as if you would present it to your client in a well-researched, argued, and professionally written/presented paper.

1. **Strategic Campaign Pitch:** (50 points, 5% of grade): This assignment asks you to identify a potential client and campaign objectives for the three other assignments that follow. For this assignment, you propose a client and how you plan to design a campaign so keep your descriptions concise. You will have future opportunities to write more extensively about your client.

2. **Situational Analysis:** (100 points, 15% of final grade): A situational analysis helps clients communicate with their target audience and is the second step in a strategic communication plan. The situational analysis analyzes the internal and external environments of an organization and the client’s own capabilities, audiences, and business environments. In this assignment, you will conduct a 5Cs analysis with each section in a well-researched paper written in a concise easy-to-read manner that you would share with your client.

3. **Audience Analysis:** (100 points, 15% of final grade): The Strategic communicators ability to analyze its publics sits as the cornerstone of an effective strategic communication campaign. For this assignment, you will conduct a comprehensive audience analysis for your client and then pitch your best ideas for a
campaign with an overall goal to (1) identify the key audiences (2) match your campaign pitch ideas to the needs and characteristics of your audience. This assignment will connect to the final one in this group where you create messages for your campaign.

4. **Strategic Communication Messages** (100 points, 15% of final grade): Using your knowledge of the organization, audience, and messaging as well as theories learned in class, create one of the following messages or message plans for your organization.
   - Webpage
   - Social media plan that uses two or more platforms
   - Mass media through news releases, media alerts, interview, news conference, etc.
   - Meeting or special event

The final paper will include both the final media product as well as a description of the choices you made as they relate to the organization (e.g., how the messages coincide with the organization’s mission, vision, values, and purpose), audience (e.g., who the message targets and their values and needs), and context (e.g., purpose of the communication).

**Social Marketing Campaign Critique:** (100 points, 15% of final grade): To bring the entire semester together, your final paper will choose a social marketing campaign to evaluate as a case study. Your final case study should address the context and objectives of the campaign, target audience(s), media channels used, message(s), in their context, use of media and effectiveness of the campaign.

**Group Project:** (100 points, 15% of final grade): The last unit of the class deals with strategic communication in different contexts (e.g., corporations; entertainment, sports and tourism; politics and government; internationally, and nonprofits, health and education.) Working in groups of 4, you will design and implement a class discussion for one of these strategic communication contexts. We will sign up for groups by the second week of class; each group will present their plan for the class- no later than week 4. Each student will participate in the activities and discussions created by the group as if I had created them.

**Weekly discussion responses and replies:** (15 points per week; 25% of final grade): Because online learning requires active participation of all, you will have weekly prompts to which you must post. You must also engage in meaningful discussions with your classmates. On some of the synchronous weeks, the class discussion will replace the online discussion posts, others may ask you to come to class prepared with an example that fits the discussion that week. Still others may have a short discussion post to complement the online discussion. Check ICON for details.

On asynchronous weeks, I will post a brief response assignment. These may involve assessing news regarding a current campaign or company, completing a short case study, responding to a case at the end of one of the chapters, or responded to an open-ended question about the theory under discussion that week. You must post a 250-300 word response on the weekly discussion board. They should be critically thought out and well written. Each will receive a grade of up to 10 points:

**Discussion Grading Criteria:**
- **10 points:** Completed thoroughly and on time and shows thoughtful application of class material
- **8 points:** Completed thoroughly and on time but lacks application of class material
- **6 points:** Completed on time but lacked complete response and application of class material
- **0 points:** Not completed on time

DISCUSSION POSTS AND RESPONSES ARE DUE BY THE SATURDAY OF EACH WEEK AT 11:59 PM CST
*ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE, YOU WILL FIND OUR TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE. PLEASE CHECK ICON FOR UPDATES.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING/ASSIGNMENTS DUE by 11:59 CST on Saturday prior to class</th>
<th>DATE*</th>
<th>S/AS</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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</table>
| READ: Syllabus COMPLETE: Introductory discussion post on ICON before class.  
*Please complete anytime before August 22nd | August 22 | S | Introduction to class and each other |
| **8/26**  
Read: Byers, Chussil, Bowman, Carucci  
COMPLETE: Week 2 discussion questions. | August 29 | S | What is strategic communication?  
*Discuss Pitch Paper |
| **9/2**  
READ: Wilcox, Ch 1-4, 12; Newsom  
COMPLETE: Week 3 discussion questions  
DUE: Group sign ups | September 5 | AS | Overview of the strategic communication field |
| **9/9**  
READ: Smith, Ch 2-3; Wilcox, CH 11  
Due: Pitch Paper | September 12 | S | Understanding organizations and publics  
*Discuss Situational Analysis paper |
| **9/16**  
READ: Wilcox, Ch 5,9  
COMPLETE: Week 5 Discussion Questions  
DUE: Group Assignment Plans | September 19 | AS | Research for strategic communication  
*It is recommended for groups to use this as a meeting time. |
| **9/23**  
READ: Wilcox, Ch 5,9  
COMPLETE: Week 6 Discussion questions  
DUE: Situational Analysis Paper | September 26 | S | Communication Planning  
*Discuss Audience Analysis assignment |
| **9/30**  
READ: Wilcox, Ch 7; Patterson; Saul, Ch 3,7  
WATCH: Sinek Video (in discussion forum)  
COMPLETE: Week 7 discussion questions | October 3 | S | Creating compelling messages |
| **10/7**  
READ: Wilcox, Ch 13-16; Ryan, Ch 10  
COMPLETE: week 8 discussion questions | October 10 | AS | Tactics for delivering messages |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Complete</th>
<th>Discussion Questions</th>
<th>DUE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/14</td>
<td>Read: Wilcox, Ch 8</td>
<td>October 17</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Evaluating campaigns</td>
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<td></td>
<td>COMPLETE: Discussion Questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Discuss Social Media Marketing Critique</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DUE: Audience Analysis</td>
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<td>10/21</td>
<td>READ: Wilcox, Ch 10; Newson, Ch 15</td>
<td>October 24</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Crisis communication</td>
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<td>COMPLETE: Week 10 Discussion Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/28</td>
<td>READ: Wilcox, Ch 17</td>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Strategic communication in corporations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>COMPLETE: TBD assignments from group</td>
<td></td>
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<td>*Strategic Communication Messages due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>READ: Wilcox, CH 18</td>
<td>November 7</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Strategic communication in entertainment, sports, and tourism</td>
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<td>COMPLETE: TBD assignments from group</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>READ: Wilcox, CH 19</td>
<td>November 14</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Strategic communication in politics and government</td>
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<td>COMPLETE: TBD assignments from group</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/18</td>
<td>See discussion forum for posting (TBD)</td>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>No meeting</td>
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<td>No class meeting or this week</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/25</td>
<td>READ: Wilcox, Ch 20 and 21</td>
<td>November 28</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Strategic communication in the international environment</td>
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<td>COMPLETE: TBD assignments from this group</td>
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<td>And</td>
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<td>Strategic communication in nonprofit organizations, education and healthcare</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>Social Media Campaign</td>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Sharing of Social Media Marketing Critique</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marketing Critique Due</td>
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S= Meet using ADOBE CONNECT on Tuesday evening from 5:30-8:00 CST
A= You will work on your own with work due on the Saturday of the week listed