Strategic Communication & Social Media: Theory & Practice

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: LNDN 3251  
Number of Credits: 3  
Language of Instruction: English  
Contact Hours: 45

Course Description

This class combines theoretical analysis, case studies, and hands-on practice to understand and execute traditional and online communications strategies. The course will begin with a literature review of theories and principles relevant to the practice of strategic communication and social media practices including media effects, Internet effects, and uses and gratification theory. Second, case studies will be utilized to investigate the effectiveness of messaging strategies employed by not-for-profit and commercial organizations as well as individual actors such as businesses, politicians, and influencers. Finally, students will work for a real-world client and their own portfolios to formulate an overarching communication strategy inclusive of recommendations for messaging strategies across all platforms (traditional messaging, website, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, press releases, e-blasts, and speeches)

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand and iterate supporting theory and cases as a foundation for implementing strategic communication strategies
- Engage in critical analysis of literature and cases to recognize trends, shortcomings, and best practices of the field
- Understand the impact of related technologies and messaging on issues such as globalization, politics, and culture
- Understand Internet use in a global perspective and discuss the differences in its development and use outside of the US
- Apply best practices for managing communication channels across multiple mediums
- Produce strategic recommendations for an organization, movement, campaign, or individual based on theory, discussions, and critical analysis
- Acquire necessary writing, production, and presentation skills across a variety of communication mediums

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

a. Engage in critical thinking and evaluation
b. Master a body of knowledge
c. Express fluency in theoretical foundation as well as develop hands-on skills
d. Communicate effectively both in writing and through oral presentations
e. Work effectively as an individual and in a collaborative setting
f. Work in a cultural environment different from their home school with foreign clients and engage in cross-cultural communication

**Developmental Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students should demonstrate: responsibility and accountability, independence and collaborative work, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, and appreciation of differences.

**Methodology**

Lectures, discussions, weekly assignments, exam, student presentations, and out-of-class field visits.
Required Reading / Materials

Books that must be purchased: (all are available as paperback or Kindle)


Additional readings (all readings are hyperlinks or can be found in “files” in Canvas)


[https://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2014/09/03/why-knowing-your-audience-is-the-key-to-success/#2d52a443fb70](https://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2014/09/03/why-knowing-your-audience-is-the-key-to-success/#2d52a443fb70)

[https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/12/15/hollywood-vine](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/12/15/hollywood-vine)


Kounavina, Polina (2017) “Kylie’s Social Media is the Reason Why She is So Successful,” Medium. 4/7/2017.
https://medium.com/rta902/kylies-social-media-is-the-reason-shes-so-successful-f53489d5636d


https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/how-ceos-can-leverage-twitter/


https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeffschmitt/2013/07/16/10-keys-to-writing-a-speech/#415b1a2e4fb7


## Grading

### Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Score or Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93–100</td>
<td>Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90–92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87–89</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83–86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80–82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77–79</td>
<td>Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73–76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70–72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67–69</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60–66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0–59</td>
<td>Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Task</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes and take-home writing assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm writing assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall grade</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Content

Unit 1

A brief history of radio, newspapers, TV, and the Internet
  ● Readings:
    ○ Isaacson
  ● In class:
    ○ Documentary

Unit 2

Networking
  ● Readings:
    ○ Shirky
  ● In class:
    ○ Quiz AND documentary
  ● For class:
    ○ Readings

Unit 3

Taking out the middleman
  ● Readings:
    ○ Mangold and Faulds
  ● In class:
    ○ Quiz AND documentary
  ● For class:
    ○ Reading only
Unit 4

The rise of social media: The good and the bad

- Readings:
  - Readings from Sunstein, Kosoff, Bromwich
- In class:
  - Quiz AND documentary
- For class:
  - Readings

Unit 5

Pause for reflection: What does this mean?

- Readings:
  - Carr
- In class:
  - Quiz AND Introduction of client
- For class:
  - Readings

Unit 6

CLIENT

- In class:
  - Discussion of our client’s platforms and needs
- For class:
  - MIDTERM ASSIGNMENT

Unit 7

Moving on to practice: Starting with the traditional

- Readings:
• Weeks, McCoy, Muray, Schmitt

● In class:
  ○ Memos, speeches, press releases AND client (ongoing)

● For class:
  ○ Readings AND writing assignment; there will be a group review of the assignment

**Unit 8**

**Understanding audiences**

● Readings:
  ○ Tannen, DeMers

● In class:
  ○ Viewing of TED talk, discussion of audiences AND client (ongoing)

● For class:
  ○ Individual client and audience for final project and class discussion

**Unit 9**

**Understanding audiences**

● Readings:
  ○ Tannen, DeMers

● In class:
  ○ Viewing of TED Talk, discussion of audiences AND client (ongoing)

● For class:
  ○ Readings AND identify individual client and audience for final project and class discussion

**Unit 10**

**Websites, emails, e-blasts**

● Readings:
○ West, Brooks, Blackshaw, Pozin

● In class:
  ○ Case TBD AND client (ongoing)

● For class:
  ○ Readings

Unit 11

Facebook and Twitter
● Readings:
  ○ Quesbury, Malhotra, Aaker et al, Anders

● In class:
  ○ Trump, UMBC, Marjory Stoneman AND client (ongoing)

● For class:
  ○ Readings AND write one Tweet and Facebook post for your portfolio to be presented in class

Unit 12

Instagram and YouTube
● Readings:
  ○ Kounavina, Friend, Wakabayashi, Krischer

● In class:
  ○ Kardashians and other YouTube stars AND client (ongoing)

● For class:
  ○ Readings AND create one IG post and develop one YouTube idea for your portfolio to be presented in class

Unit 13

Presentation for client
● In class:
Create class presentation for client

For class: (YOU MUST ATTEND THIS CLASS)

Unit 14

Final portfolios

In class:

- PRESENT TO CLIENT

For class:

- Final portfolio due
Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.