

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)

- Carr, Nicholas (2010) *The Shallows*. New York: Norton
- Shirky, Clay (2009) *Here Comes Everybody*. New York: Penguin

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

Aaker, Jennifer, et al (2010). "Amplifying Perceptions: How JetBlue Uses Twitter to Drive Engagement and Satisfaction," *Stanford Business School Case Studies*.

<https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/case-studies/amplifying-perceptions-how-jetblue-uses-twitter-drive-engagement>

Anders, Malika (2018) "Man Behind UMBC Twitter Account Also Takes Victory Lap," *New York Times*, 3/17/2018.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/17/sports/ncaabasketball/umbc-twitter.html>

Blackshaw, Pete (2010) "Do We Still Need Websites?" *AdAge*, 8/11/2010.

<http://adage.com/article/cmo-strategy/socialmedia-marketing-websites/145351/>

Bromwich, Jonah Engel (2018) "How the Parkland Students Got So Good At Social Media," *The New York Times*. 3/7/2018.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/07/us/parkland-students-social-media.html>

Brooks, James (2016) "Do Brands Still Need Websites? Yes, They Do," *Huffington Post*, 3/28/2016.

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-g-brooks/do-brands-still-need-webs_b_9557426.html

DeMers, Jayson (2014) "Why Knowing Your Audience is the Key to Success," *Forbes*, September 3, 2014.

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

Friend, Tad, (2014) "Hollywood and Vine," *The New Yorker*, 12/15/2014.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/12/15/hollywood-vine>

Gavett, Gretchen (2015) "The Essential Guide to Crafting a Work Email," *Harvard Business Review*, 7/24/2015. <https://hbr.org/2015/07/the-essential-guide-to-crafting-a-work-email>

Isaacson, Walter (2014) *The Innovators*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Kosoff, Maya (2018) "Anger and Hope: Why the Parkland Students Are Winning the Social Media War," *Vanity Fair*, 2/20/2018.

<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2018/02/parkland-students-shooting-survivors-social-media>

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>

Krischer, Hayley (2017) "With Hair Bows and Chores, YouTube Youth Take on Mean Girls" *The New York Times*, 3/13/17.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/30/fashion/jojo-siwa-boomerang-nickelodeon-nice-girls.html>

Malhotra, Claudia Kubowicz and Arvind Malhotra (2016) "How CEOs Can Leverage Twitter," *MIT Sloan Management Review*. 12/15/2016.

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

Mangold, W. Glynn and David Faulds (2009) "Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of the Promotional Mix," *Business Horizons*, 52:357-365.

<https://silo.tips/download/integrated-marketing-communications-and-social-media>

McCoy, Julia (2016) *So You Think You Can Write*. Create Space Publishing Platform.

Murray, Janet (2015) "How to Write an Effective Press Release," *The Guardian*, 6/16/2015.

<https://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/2014/jul/14/how-to-write-press-release>

Pozin, Ilya (2011) "Build a Killer Website: 19 Do's and Don'ts," *Inc.com*, 11/21/2011.

<https://www.inc.com/ilya-pozin/build-a-killer-website-19-dos-and-donts.html>

Quesenbury, Keith (2016) "Fix Your Social Media Strategy by Taking it Back to Basics," *Harvard Business Review*, July 25, 2016.

<https://hbr.org/2016/07/fix-your-social-media-strategy-by-taking-it-back-to-basics>

Schmitt, Jeff (2013) "10 Keys to Writing a Speech," *Forbes*, 7/16/2013.

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

Sunstein, Cass (2018) #Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Tannen, Deborah (1995) "The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why," *Harvard Business Review*. September/November.

<https://hbr.org/1995/09/the-power-of-talk-who-gets-heard-and-why>

Wakabayashi, Daisuke (2017) "Inside the Hollywood Home of Social Media's Stars," *The New York Times*, 12/30/17.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/30/business/hollywood-apartment-social-media.html>

Weeks, Holly (2005) "The Best Memo You'll Ever Write," *Harvard Management and Communication Letter*, Harvard Business School Publishing, 2005.

<http://utepcommunities.pbworks.com/f/Harvard+Business+Memo.pdf>

West, Darrell (2011) "Ten Ways Social Media Can Improve Campaign Engagement," Brookings. June 28, 2011.

<https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/ten-ways-social-media-can-improve-campaign-engagement-and-reinvigorate-american-democracy/>

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	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.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Assessment Task	20%
Class participation	20%
Presentation	20%
Quizzes and take-home writing assignments	20%
Midterm writing assignments	20%
Final assignment	20%
Overall grade	100%

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](#).