

Public Sector Marketing and Strategic Communications

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EMPA U6020

Saturdays 2:00 – 4:00
Room 405 IAB

Overview

Understanding both organizational strategies and the media are the first steps in shaping and influencing public opinion. Effective communication strategies depend on understanding two things: what you are trying to communicate, and how the media function. With this in mind, this course explores the practical applications of communications strategies and the theoretical foundations of those operations. You will analyze how the relevant players to news coverage (e.g., organization leaders, press officers, reporters, producers and columnists) interact in the creation of content. The course will include lectures, discussions and guest speakers, with an emphasis on classroom interaction based on the reading material.

Individual Assignments

Throughout the semester, you will be required to submit the following items. These items do not have to be about the same organization; however, you may find it useful to focus on one organization for all three individual assignments. Please note, however, that the organizations chosen for the individual assignments may not be the same as those in use for the group projects.

The three individual assignments are:

- Strategy Memo – a one page (single spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins) memo outlining a one-year communications plan for a public sector organization of their choosing.
- Press release – A standard format press release (details to be discussed).
- Op-ed piece – A 500 word opinion/editorial.

You must hand in individual assignments during the classes indicated below. Failure to do so may result in an “incomplete” grade or a make-up assignment. If you are unable to attend a class when an assignment is due, please e-mail a copy prior to the class time and then submit a hard copy as soon as possible after your absence.

Project and Project Groups

One of the most important components of this course is the **group communications plan**. Groups will choose a real-life public sector organization (non-profit, campaign, government agency or official); this organization, and its issues and challenges, will provide groups with the content of their project for the semester. In effect, for the semester, groups will serve as the Communications office of their chosen organization. In this group project, you will prepare a comprehensive communications strategy plan.

At the end of the semester, groups will present the communications plan for their organization. In short, the specific written deliverables for the group project are the same as the individual assignments, as well as a five to seven page paper detailing the group’s approach and strategy, including a detailed analysis of the opportunity, objectives, strategies and tactics pursued, plus a measurement program. A separate handout will be provided regarding the expectations for the format of the final group paper.

An interesting and challenging part of the course is the live presentation of your plan to the rest of the class. The group presentations, not to exceed 15 minutes in length, will occur on either November 22 or December 6. All group final papers and supporting documents are due in class the day that the group presents.

Groups of three to five people must be determined by Week 2. Preferably, groups will come to class on Week 2 having determined their members; however, we will spend a few minutes at the beginning of that class session determining groups for those who have not determined them. Groups shall determine their organization by Week 3, and during that class session must submit a memo not to exceed two pages (single spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins) detailing their choice and a brief outline of the organization, its communications challenges, and the reason for the study.

For the group project, the grading emphasis will be on content and presentation, as well as the degree to which the paper incorporates complex concepts and develops a convincing set of arguments supporting the proposed plan.

Grading

Group Project:	40%
Class Participation:	30%
Individual Assignments:	10% <i>each</i>

Courseworks

This course will make use of the Courseworks website for the class. If you are unfamiliar with the site, please review the information found at https://courseworks.columbia.edu/cms/cu_about/essentials.cfm, or email courseworks@columbia.edu. You are expected to review the website for any syllabus changes when directed to do so by email. Questions that cannot be fully addressed in class, or points that can be elucidated further after class, will be addressed in the Class Discussion Board through Courseworks. Participation on the class discussion board will count toward the class participation portion of the grade.

Readings

The following books are available through Amazon.com, and should be ordered immediately:

- 1) Making the News: A Guide for Nonprofits and Activists (2003)
by Jason Salzman
- 2) The Jossey-Bass Guide to Strategic Communications for Nonprofits (1999)
by Kathy Bonk, Henry Griggs, Emily Tynes

Additionally, a course packet with chapters of additional books and other materials is available for purchase at Village Copier. Readings identified with an asterisk can be found in the course packet.

Other materials will be distributed throughout the semester. All readings are required, and you are expected to complete the readings by the day indicated.

Course Outline

- Week 1: September 6**
- Introduction and Course Overview
 - What are Strategic Communications for the Public Sector?

- Week 2: September 13**
- Split class into Project Groups
 - Analyzing and Organizing Goals and Ideas

Reading
Chapter 1 – Jossey-Bass Guide
Chapters 1 & 37 – Salzman

- Week 3: September 20**
- Building A Marketing and Communications Plan
 - Targeting Audiences
 - Media Relations and Spokespeople
 - Press Releases and Basic Tools

Reading
Chapter 4, 5, 9 - Jossey-Bass Guide
Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 – Salzman
Chapters 1 & 2 – Radtke*

Assignment: Group memos

- Week 4: September 27**
- Navigating the News Media
 - Websites as means of communications

Reading
Chapters 3 & 8 - Jossey-Bass Guide
Chapter 34 & 45 – Salzman
Chapter 2 – Radtke*

Assignment: Individual Strategy Memo

- Week 5: October 4**
- Political Communications
 - Campaign Communications

Reading
Chapters 1 & 6 – Fallows*
Chapters 1 & 4 – Kernell*
Prologue – Patterson*

- Week 6: October 11**
- Crisis Management

Reading
Chapter 12 – Jossey-Bass Guide
Chapter 32 - Salzman
Case Study – Anthrax Attacks*

Assignment: Individual Press Release

- Week 7: October 18**
- Evaluation
- Reading**
Chapter 13 – Jossey-Bass Guide
Chapter 16 – Salzman
Chapter 7 – Radtke*
- Week 8: October 25**
- Non-Profit Marketing and Communications
 - Guest Lecture, Nancy Lublin, founder, Dress for Success
- Reading**
Chapters 3 & 4, Radtke*
- Assignment: Individual Op-Ed piece*
- Week 9: November 1**
NO CLASS – ELECTION DAY WEEKEND
- Week 10: November 8**
- Government Communications
 - Guest Lecture, Oliver Phillips, former Communications Director, Governor Gray Davis
 - Campaign Strategy and Communications
 - Guest Lecture, Jef Pollock, Partner, Global Strategy Group
- Week 11: November 15**
- Brand Identity
 - Guest Lecture, Ray George, Director, Prophet
- Reading**
Introduction, Phase 1-Chapter 1 & Phase 2-Chapter 2, Davis*
- Week 12: November 22**
- Group Presentations
- Week 13: November 29**
NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING WEEKEND
- Week 14: December 6**
- Group Presentations