

Global Strategic Communications and Ethics

COURSE INFORMATION

MMC6213: Spring 2016: Strategic Communications and Ethics

Credits 03

Meeting Time: Distance Asynchronous

Office Hours By Appointment

INSTRUCTOR

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What you will learn

Communications specialists integrate knowledge from many areas: aesthetics, branding, marketing, human psychology, and, of course, communicating. This course focuses on communications concepts, while integrating ethical reasoning throughout. The value of ethical reasoning can be justified in many ways. For example, as creators of content accessible through the globe, communications specialists have a unique obligation to be thoughtful, sensitive, and responsible about the impact of their messages. Additionally, consideration of what actions are proper and ethical is central to being a decent and responsible person. At a broader level, the ability to reason ethically can help you to avoid shortcuts and anticipate situations that can harm your brand, your company, your employees, your customers and yourself.

By the end of this course, you will be able to describe the value and purpose of strategic communication. Based on this foundation, you will also learn to:

- Identify ethical dilemmas in strategic communication, including determining how to anticipate and consider different stakeholder's perspectives of those dilemmas.
- Identify and describe a variety of alternative responses to strategic communication ethics problems.
- Use an ethical decision-making model to reason through these ethics dilemmas.
- Make and justify decisions about which responses are most ethically sound.

Summary of Course Design

Lectures

The recorded materials will help you to understand key concepts and assignments. These are reinforced in an online homework system and in written submissions.

Please note: You may safely ignore any reference to class assignments, projects or homework referred to in the recorded lectures. Many elements of the course have been revised since the recordings were done. Follow only the syllabus for assignments, due dates and other relevant information.

Assignments

You will have regular assignments and these will be the basis for your final grade.

During the first half of the class (weeks 1-5) you will read the assigned materials, view online lectures, demonstrate your understanding in McGraw-Hill's online CONNECT center, and discuss a critical ethical issue related to the material you studied.

Week 6 you will watch a lecture that helps you begin to create a situation analysis for a publically traded firm or business. You submit the company you have chosen for your situation analysis in Week 6 and submit your situation analysis to him during week 12.

The second half of the class (weeks 7-12) gives you a chance to apply ethical reasoning to situations you may encounter or hear/read about, and help you prepare for real-world ethical decision-making. You will read the assigned materials, view online lectures, complete online homework through Canvas and write a discussion post on an assigned case study.

You will be required to turn in two pairs of ethics memos. You must submit two memos for each assignment, one assigned case, and one case of your choosing. Each memo should be at least **two** pages long (4 pages per assignment). To be clear: there are two memos due for Set 1 and Set 2 a total of four memos.

You are also expected to attach any relevant background information to the assignment. The case you choose must be a **real-life strategic communications** situation, not a hypothetical situation. You will find more specific instructions in a separate document. The ethics memos are due in Week 10 and Week 12. These assignments will be submitted through Canvas.

Your semester-long project is to develop a situation analysis for a publicly traded firm or organization. Your focus should be on the marketing or communication challenges faced by the company.

Homework for weeks 1 – 5

In addition to your readings during weeks 1 – 5, you will have two kinds of homework:

First, in the weekly module page in Canvas, you will find a discussion question. You should post a thoughtful response to this key topic question and respond to two

posts from your fellow students. All responses should be placed in the “Discussion” section of your Canvas shell.

Second, you will complete homework dealing with your assigned readings in McGraw Hill’s CONNECT system and website. Submit your homework through McGraw Hill’s CONNECT. You will find a link to CONNECT below in the syllabus near information about your textbook. **In purchasing “CONNECT PLUS” for the course you will receive both a digital version of the text and the homework system.**

There is no homework in Week 6.

Homework for weeks 7 - 11

For weeks 7 – 12 you will continue to answer the Discussion questions posted under the Discussion tab, and post two replies in response to posts from your fellow students.

For the second half of the course you will submit your homework to the “Assignments” section of Canvas. The details and topic of the weekly homework can be found in the weekly module pages in Canvas.

There is no homework due in week 12.

Weekly Discussion Posts

Discussion is an integral part of any ethics course. This class will be no exception. You are expected to read the assigned chapter and accompanying readings and actively participate in weekly discussions through the “Discussions” tab in the Canvas e-learning site. You will be expected to demonstrate that you are thinking about the issues by asking questions, offering your own opinions and share justifications for those opinions, participating in class debate, posting comments and questions to the e-learning site and keeping your eyes and ears open for current events that may relate to class discussions. Please be respectful of the contributions of others and help create a class environment that is welcoming and inclusive.

Requirements

1. You will need an Internet connection to access your text, view the lectures, attend online class sessions, and complete your assignments.
2. You must be able to communicate with the instructor. Most communications can be done via email and the discussion board, but you may be asked to join Dropbox.com (a free online service) to share large files.

Required Textbooks

Your textbook for Weeks 1 – 5 is titled “Contemporary Advertising (14e). Be sure to follow this link and purchase “CONNECT PLUS” when asked:

<http://connect.mheducation.com/connect/shortUrl.do?accessUrl=d-shapiro-mm6213-spring-2016>.

CONNECT PLUS will give you both the homework system and the e-book.

Your textbook for the second half of the semester is Business Ethics: Ethical Decision Making and Cases, **10th edition** (2014) by O.C. Ferrell, John Fraedrich, and L. Ferrell. The textbook is available at http://www.amazon.com/Business-Ethics-Ethical-Decision-Making/dp/1285423712/ref=dp_ob_title_bk.

Please note you can now rent the Business Ethics text from Amazon!
Be sure you get the 10th edition.

Announcements tab in Canvas shell

Be sure to check the Announcements tab in the Canvas shell regularly for information on class assignments, changes and other class information. In addition, important Information will be sent via email when it is posted in this tab.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565 <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

UF Honor Pledge

UF students are bound by the Honor Pledge which states: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given or received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the class instructor.

Counseling and Wellness Center Information

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx> 392-1575; UF Police Department 392-111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Grading

Grading parameters for the class projects are provided in the form of rubrics. Your work will be evaluated according to this distribution:

Weeks 1 – 6

Online homework	50 points
Weekly discussion assignments	50 points
Situation Analysis	80 points

Weeks 7 – 12

Online homework	50 points
Weekly discussion assignments	60 points
Ethics Memos (2)	35 points each

TOTAL 360 points

And grades will be determined as follows

A	332-360 points	93-100%
A-	324-331 points	90-92%
B+	313-323 points	87-89%
B	299-312 points	83-86%
B-	288-298 points	80-82%
C+	277-287 points	77-79%
C	263-276 points	73-76%
C-	252-262 points	70-72%
D+	241-251 points	67-69%
D	216-240 points	60-66%
E	0-215 points	0-54%

Grading policy

General University policies regarding grades can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Plagiarism

In all assignments, be sure to use only your own ideas and writing. If you are unsure about what plagiarism is, read this:

<http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/msl/07b/studentplagiarism.html>

Ignorance of plagiarism will not excuse a grade of zero on any assignment where it is found.

Policy on Late Work

Work in the class turned in late will not be accepted except for extreme circumstances (family emergencies.) If you anticipate not making a project deadline, please contact the instructor.

There will be penalties for late work:

- Less than an hour late: 10% off.
- More than an hour late but less than 12 hours late: 30% off.
- More than 12 hours late but less than 24 hours late: 70% off.
- More than 24 hours late: 100% off, not accepted at all.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies and can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Assignment Information in depth

Weekly Discussion Assignments

Each week of the semester (except for Week 6) you will need to provide a thoughtful analysis of an ethical issue. Each week you will also post a response to two student's post that you either agree or disagree with. You will write these posts as someone relatively untrained in ethical reasoning, which is the focus of part 2 of the course. It is felt that wrestling with ethical issues before you have had such training will help you to see the value of ethical reasoning skills. You will find each weekly discussion topic under each respective week in the syllabus. You will be expected to reference ethical guidelines and perspectives in your responses and create a meaningful discussion with your classmates. Please keep these guidelines in mind as you create your weekly posts:

1) Your writing should be thoughtful, reflective, and focused. You should also attempt to be persuasive, by which I mean you should try to convince others, especially others who disagree with you, that you have a valid and credible perspective. You may find the following piece helpful as a guide:

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/25/the-shadow-lobbyist/>

2) At a minimum, your discussion posts should average 400 words. You are strongly encouraged to document any facts you bring to bear in making your arguments. In general, when you provide factual information, it should be referenced.

3) At a minimum, your comments on the postings of others should run between 200 and 300 words.

Personal attacks or disrespect towards others is inappropriate and will cost you points on the assignment. I will watch and determine if I feel a discussion is inappropriate if needed. Your goal should be to help the author of the post you are commenting on see another perspective.

Here is an example of a response to the essay in the link above that does a good job of accomplishing this:

The average American, thanks to a substantial educational and social deficit, simply doesn't understand politics or public policy.

The interesting question, then, is how does the political class govern in the name of The People when The People are missing in action? For many decades, the political class maintained the self-delusion of running a democracy by creating their own echo chamber-- issues and ideas would echo among elites in D.C. or other capitals of the country until enough steam would build up behind a policy that it seemed like there was a consensus on the issue. As a member of the political elite, if you heard the same story from multiple quarters, you could perhaps convince yourself that what you were hearing reflected the true interests of the public, even if that public was rarely involved in such surges of elite opinion. It was perhaps inevitable that as the technology and capacity to micro-target small portions of the real public have advanced that political lobbyists would eventually realize that they could insert themselves into the political elite echo chamber by manufacturing a ground-swell of 'public opinion' by whipping up opinions on particular policies by enlisting some ideological or ignorant fraction of the public. The real question is whether the political class will eventually tire of the absurdity of this situation and actually enlist the public in meaningful deliberation of issues, though this would mean a loss of control.

Here is another:

Back on July 12, 2002, during a Bill Moyers "Now" interview (transcript here: http://www.pbs.org/now/transcript/transcript_lewis.html) with Chuck Lewis of the Center for Public Integrity, I heard that in 1968 there were a mere 62 registered lobbyists in D.C. - but that this figure had risen to 20,000 by the date of that program.

Three years later, there was a June 22, 2005 Washington Post article, "The Road To Riches Is Called K Street" (still posted online and easily found with a search of that headline), which told how :

"The number of registered lobbyists in Washington has more than doubled since 2000 to more than 34,750," that hiring was booming, and that fees and retainers had risen substantially.

Yet a Ross Douthat column from September 22, 2012, "Washington Versus America" - an intriguing commentary which noted that in 2011, seven of the ten most affluent counties in the U.S. were in the D.C. area, stated that:

"For Mitt Romney and the Republican Party, what's happened in Washington these last 10 years should be a natural part of the case against Obamanomics" -

seemingly implying that a surge in influence- buying in D.C. was the fault of the president, and not the Washington Post-noted boom of the Bush years.

Mr. Edsall's column explains how the number of registered lobbyists could drop, while a corruption-generating industry still thrives at the heart of the federal government.

And one more:

It is the 4th branch of government and it showed its power during the gun debate. This branch is in the shadows and it is controlled by money coming from special interest groups such as the National Rifle Association, Organize For Action, the Koch brothers, Sheldon Adelson, Citizens United, all labor union PACS and approximately 4,600 other political action committees.

In the case of PAC's, they in theory represent a group of voters who are supporting the PAC. This creates a problem that: 1). Not every voter belongs to a PAC and 2) Not all PAC's are created equal. The more money the PAC has, the more influence they have. Further, the more one contributes to a PAC, the more influence that person has over the PAC.

Making things worse, these organizations have control over the other three branches of our, tongue in cheek, government. Most of these PAC'S are controlled by a small group of individuals making the decisions. In addition to these Political Action Committees, our elected officials spend much of their time soliciting money from very wealthy individuals in the following industries: Wall Street, Banking, Entertainment, Energy, Home Building, Technology and others.

Politics is the only industry I am aware of that allows its employees to take a paid leave of absence from performing their duties to look for another job; their reelection. I am very pessimistic. If we do not end this corruption the country will continue in its slow decline..<http://lstrn.us/12kXsML>

4) Your initial Discussion posts are due by Thursday at 11pm ET of each week of the class. Comments on the posts of two classmates are due by Saturday at 11pm ET. Late submissions will be penalized.

Rubric for grading Weekly Topic Posts and responses.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Thoughtfulness (25%)	Post represents outstanding thinking and logical reasoning. The presentation is opinionated but balanced and fair to opposing ideas	Post represents good thinking and logical reasoning. The presentation is opinionated with mention of opposing sides.	Post shows some weakness in thinking and logical reasoning. It lacks an informed perspective and/or ignores opposing sides	Missing significant sections or information.
Documentation (25%)	All facts in the posts are documented with links to relevant sources. Many sources were consulted and easy sources (like Wikipedia) are used sparingly.	All facts in the posts are documented with links to relevant sources. Adequate sources were consulted and easy sources (Wikipedia) are used sparingly.	Most facts in the post are documented but few sources are used.	Unclear where facts have come from or facts or few sources consulted.
Coherent, clear, persuasive (25%)	Writing is clear, compelling, organized, powerful and grammatically correct.	Writing is straightforward, understandable and avoids most grammar or spelling errors.	Writing has significant problems	Writing quality is poor, difficult to read.
Responses to the posts of other (25%)	Responses are engaging, challenge the peer post without demeaning it. Responses show key areas in which the original is flawed, limited or short-sighted.	Responses are respectful in challenging the peer's post. Key areas of disagreement are identified.	Response is opinionated but somewhat lacking in respect. Response fails to clarify the point of difference or the limits of the original post.	Response is opinionated but ignores the strengths or weaknesses of the original post.

Ethics Memos

You will write two sets of ethics memos in the second part of the semester that must be submitted through the “Assignments” tab in Canvas. In each set, there will be one memo discussing a case assigned to everyone; in other words, everyone will write about one case in common. You won’t need to describe the circumstances of this case.

The second memo can be about **any real-world strategic communications ethics case you choose**. This memo should be about a concrete, specific decision you or another media professional has to make. In other words, don’t write about the general issue of the ethical standards of PR or HR professionals; rather, write about a specific case (you may NOT use cases discussed as part of this class or those found in the text).

Write the second case study memo as if you’re the key player (i.e. you are the person encountering the ethical dilemma), and write as if you haven’t yet taken action on the key ethical dilemma – you are still in the process of making your decision and the purpose of the memo is to inform your boss and offer an ethical course of action.

For each entry, you should follow the same basic format:

- Identify and explain the ethical dilemma. For the assigned case, you need don’t need to describe the circumstances of the case. For the second case, keep your description brief – provide only the most critical information. Identify what decision the organization has to make and briefly explain WHY the decision represents a dilemma. What right-vs.-right choice does the decision-maker have to make? (If a media professional is choosing between right and wrong, there’s really no dilemma, only a question of courage.)
- Weigh the alternatives available. Few ethical situations present ONLY either/or options, so don’t limit yourself to two alternatives. Can/should any alternatives be dismissed immediately as unethical? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the remaining alternatives? How would each choice advance your journalistic goal of serving the public? Conversely, what problems would be created by adopting that alternative?
- Cite the ethical rationale for the decision you make. In each entry, come to a decision about what the decision-maker (i.e. you) should do. Explain what you believe the BEST choice would be, even if that choice still isn’t perfect. But remember – you’re writing to your boss, who may not remember who Kant was. So translate, demonstrating that you understand duty-based and consequence- based ethical principles, but making your arguments in the language of the real world. Make reference to any ethical principle or decision-making model we’ve discussed, but use language any reasonably educated adult could understand.

Rubric for your Ethics Memos

Rating	Characteristics
35-30	<i>Exceptional.</i> The memo is focused and integrates examples with explanations or analysis. The memo demonstrates awareness of its own limitations or implications, and it considers multiple perspectives when appropriate. The memo reflects in-depth engagement with the topic.
29-20	<i>Satisfactory.</i> The memo is reasonably focused, and explanations or analysis are mostly based on examples or other evidence. Fewer connections are made between ideas, and though new insights are offered, they are not fully developed. The memo reflects moderate engagement with the topic.
19-10	<i>Underdeveloped.</i> The memo is most description or summary, without consideration of alternate perspectives, and few connections are made between ideas. The memo reflects passing engagement with the topic. The memo may indicate student “feelings” about the issue without sufficient development of a moral framework.
10-5	<i>Limited.</i> The memo is unfocused, or simply rehashes previous comments, and displays no evidence of student engagement in the topic.
0	<i>No credit.</i> The memo is missing or consists of one or two disconnected sentences.

Semester Long Project

Your semester-long project is to develop a situation analysis for a publicly traded firm or organization. **Your focus should be on the marketing, reputational or general communication challenges faced by the company.** You should propose the company that you will work on to Prof. Shapiro by Saturday, 11pm EST of Week 6 of the class. In proposing a company, be sure to indicate why you have chosen that company. You should also be sure there is sufficient public information available on the company to do the situation analysis.

You have six weeks to do the Situation Analysis. You can give yourself extra time by viewing the lecture on a Situation Analysis early and reading Chapter 8 in the Contemporary Advertising e-book. **For your analysis, use the outline on page 242 titled “My IMC Campaign 8-A: Developing the Situation Analysis.”**

RUBRIC FOR GRADING THE SITUATION ANALYSIS (SA)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Credit
	72-80 (total)	64-71	56-63	<56	0
Completeness (25%)	SA has material related to all parts of the template selected. Sections are complete.	SA has material related to most parts of the template selected. Sections are mostly complete.	SA has some sections that are missing material related to all parts of the template selected or some sections are incomplete.	Missing significant sections or information.	
Quality (25%)	Information is of outstanding quality (recent, useful, relevant).	Information is of good quality (recent, useful, relevant).	Information is of adequate quality (somewhat dated, occasionally not useful or relevant).	Information is of poor quality (dated, not useful or relevant).	
Coherent, clear, persuasive (25%)	Writing is clear, compelling and with no spelling or grammar errors.	Writing is straightforward, understandable and avoids most grammar or spelling errors	Writing has significant problems.	Writing quality is poor, difficult to read.	
Analysis (25%)	SWOT analysis is exceptional, and clearly details the company or brand's paramount issues	SWOT analysis is good, identified company or brand's important issues.	SWOT analysis is fair, identifies straightforward issues.	SWOT analysis is poor, issues identified seem unrelated to the rest of the SA.	

Schedule/Due Dates

Your initial discussion posts are due on Thursday, by 11pm EST, and your comments/discussion responses on Saturday, by 11pm EST.

Your weekly homework is due by Thursday at 11pm EST.

For week 6 you should submit your publicly traded company that will serve as the focus of the situation analysis by Saturday at 11pm EST.

For the sets of Ethics Memos, set 1 is due Saturday at 11pm EST of Week 10; set 2 is due Saturday at 11pm EST of Week 12.

The Situation Analysis is due Saturday at 11pm EST of Week 12.

WEEK ONE— January 5 – January 10, 2016

Course introduction and understanding the business of strategic communication

Readings

Ch. 1 Advertising and IMC Today

Ch. 2 The Big Picture: The Evolution of IMC

Discussion Topic

Read “Web Ethics” which you can find here:

<http://www.nnigma.com/WebEthics.html>

The article raises a number of issues about marketing on the Web. Choose two of these issues and explain why you believe they are ethically troubling (or, if you wish, why you do not find them ethically troubling.) Then, please comment on the responses of at least two classmates. In expressing your own opinion, do so critically (i.e., finding both commonalities and differences) but also respectfully and thoughtfully.

Read, watch lecture, complete Connect homework: Thursday by 11 PM ET.

Discussion assignment posted: Thursday by 11PM ET.

Respond to 2 classmates: Saturday by 11PM ET

WEEK TWO: January 11 - 17, 2016

Strategic Identification of Audiences and Tools for Strategic Communication and Understanding the Value of Planning

Focus on

- Why do companies segment markets and what tools are available for strategic communication?
- What is planning for strategic communication?

Readings

Ch. 6: Segmentation, Targeting and the Marketing

Mix Ch. 7: Research: Gathering Information for IMC

Planning

Discussion Topic

Read this posting: <http://business-ethics.com/2011/05/31/1441-marketing-to-children-accepting-responsibility/>

One of the experts quoted in the piece argues “There is no ethical, moral, social or spiritual justification for targeting children in advertising and marketing.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Read, watch lecture, complete Connect homework: Thursday by 11 PM ET.

Discussion assignment posted: Thursday by 11PM ET.

Respond to 2 classmates: Saturday by 11PM ET

WEEK THREE: January 18 - 24, 2016

Focus on

- Understanding audiences of strategic communication (the target audience)
- Understanding influences on consumer responses to strategic communication

Readings

Ch. 5: Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Ch. 8: Marketing and IMC Planning

Discussion topic:

An ongoing controversy in audience effects is behavioral targeting on the Web. If you are not certain what that is, please read this article:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavioral_targeting

Then read this post:

<http://www.adexchanger.com/the-debate/3rd-party-behavioral-tracking/>

Choose one of the author’s 3 points in favor of tracking and challenge it in your discussion this week.

Read, watch lecture, complete Connect homework: Thursday by 11 PM ET.

Discussion assignment posted: Thursday by 11PM ET.

Respond to 2 classmates: Saturday by 11PM ET

WEEK FOUR: January 25 - 31, 2016

The big picture: Economics, social issues, and regulation in strategic communication.

Focus on:

- The relationship of brand messages to economics
- Criticism of strategic communication
- Regulatory issues in the U.S.

Readings

Ch. 3: The Big Picture: Economics and Regulatory Aspects

Discussion topic

Read Tobacco Marketing on the Internet

<http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0081.pdf>

After reading the article, support or refute the following proposition:

Given the broad access that minors have to pornography on the Web, it is hypocritical to have laws that are more restrictive for access to tobacco-promoting sites.

As always, please respectfully weigh in on someone else's discussion as well.

Read, watch lecture, complete Connect homework: Thursday by 11 PM ET.

Discussion assignment posted: Thursday by 11PM ET.

Respond to 2 classmates: Saturday by 11PM ET

WEEK FIVE: February 1 - 7, 2016

Planning for where the message should appear

Focus on

- Media Planning
- Criteria for Selecting Media

Readings

Ch. 9: Media Planning and Buying

Ch. 15: Using Digital Interactive Media

Discussion Topic

Consumer privacy is an enduring concern on the Web. Read these privacy statements:

- Principal Financial Group <http://www.principal.com/explorer2/privacy2.htm>
- BarakObama.com <http://www.barackobama.com/privacy-policy/>
- Disney.go.com <https://disneyworld.disney.go.com/faq/my-disney-experience/privacy-policy/>

As you compare and contrast them, please indicate:

1. Which is clearest (informs the consumer in simple, easy to understand language)
2. Which offer consumers the greatest protection
3. Which is the most ethical and which is the least ethical. Be sure to indicate what you mean by "ethical" in making these judgments

Read, watch lecture, complete Connect homework: Thursday by 11 PM ET.

Discussion assignment posted: Thursday by 11PM ET.

Respond to 2 classmates: Saturday by 11PM ET

WEEK SIX: February 8 – 14, 2016

Analyzing the Strategic Communication Environment

Focus on

- External factors that affect a firm
- Internal factors that affect a firm

Readings

Reread Ch. 8: Marketing and IMC Planning and Appendix A: Marketing Plan

Discussion topic

No discussion this week. Students must identify the publicly traded company used for their Situation Analysis. Please provide a rationale for choosing that company as well.

Recommended Viewing

There is an 8 part (most are short) video series on YouTube from the Small Business Administration about creating a SWOT analysis. Your viewing this will be helpful in creating the SWOT for your Situation Analysis. Find it at:

[SBA SWOT instructional videos](#)

Your selected Situation Analysis company is to be submitted in Canvas assignments by Saturday at 11pm EST.

WEEK SEVEN — February 15 - 21, 2016

Introduction to Ethics-Why it is important to behave ethically in business

Readings

Ch. 1: The importance of business ethics

Ch. 3: Emerging business ethics issues

Ch. 7: Organizational factors: The role of ethical culture and relationships

Online homework:

Online homework questions are located in the Assignments tab in Canvas.

Submit your responses to Canvas.

Question 1: Why does it make sense for a business to behave responsibly and ethically?

Question 2: The book discusses an ethical corporate culture. How would you describe an ethical corporate culture? If you are currently working you may use examples from your own workplace, if appropriate.

Question 3: In CH. 3, (page 64), the author writes “if business is a game like basketball or boxing, ordinary ethical rules do not apply.” Why do you think this attitude would not constitute ethical business behavior? Refer to core ethical values mentioned in the chapter in your answer.

Discussion topic

Resolving ethical business challenges: Lael and Best East Motels (CH. 1; page 24)

Answer the following questions in your discussion post:

1. Why should Lael get involved in reporting if she has not experienced any of the allegations the other employees are making?
2. What are some of the characteristics of Best East's ethical culture that would create the current dilemma for Lael?
3. What should Lael do to resolve her concerns?

Read, watch lecture, complete homework on Canvas: Thursday by 11 PM ET.

Discussion assignment posted: Thursday by 11PM ET.

Respond to 2 classmates: Saturday by 11PM ET

WEEK EIGHT — February 22 – 28, 2016

Decision making models—how to systematically make ethical decisions

Readings

- Ch. 5: Ethical decision making and ethical leadership
- Ch. 8: Developing an effective ethics program
- Ch. 10: Globalization of ethical decision making

Online homework

Write a four-point code of conduct for online strategic communications professionals. Include a description of each point. Search online for codes of conduct for more information before beginning.

Recommended reading--

- PRSA Code of Ethics: <http://www.prsa.org/AboutPRSA/Ethics/CodeEnglish-.UmGcy5TF00s>
- International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) International Code of Advertising Practice: [http://www.iccwbo.org/Advocacy-Codes-and-Rules/Document-centre/2011/Advertising-and-Marketing-Communication-Practice-\(Consolidated-ICC-Code\)/](http://www.iccwbo.org/Advocacy-Codes-and-Rules/Document-centre/2011/Advertising-and-Marketing-Communication-Practice-(Consolidated-ICC-Code)/)
(Download the pdf of the code to read.)

Discussion Topic:

Read Case 11: The fraud of the century: the case of Bernard Madoff. Answer the three questions on page 514 of the text. Pay particular attention to Q#3, "What should be done".

These are the questions you will find in the text:

1. How do Ponzi schemes and pyramid schemes differ? How are they

- similar?
2. Why are white collar criminals such as Madoff able to carry out their schemes for so long when similar types of fraud often collapse at an early stage?
 3. What should be done to help ensure large scale fraud such as Ponzi schemes and pyramid schemes do not happen in the future?

Read, watch lecture, complete homework on Canvas: Thursday by 11 PM ET.
Discussion assignment posted: Thursday by 11PM ET.
Respond to 2 classmates: Saturday by 11PM ET

WEEK NINE — February 29 – March 6, 2016
Philosophical Basis of Ethics—Different Ethical Styles

Readings

- Ch. 6: Individual factors: Moral philosophies and values
- Take this Ethical Style Quiz:
- <http://www.lmu.edu/Page23849.aspx>
- After you take the quiz, click through and read “What the styles mean”

Online homework

Question 1: What kind of ethical duties does a strategic communications professional or a web designer have? Where do these duties come from?

Question 2: Are there some ethical values that you believe are relative to one’s own culture, religion or personal opinion? Are there some that are universal? What makes them different?

Question 3: Having watched the lecture and completed the ethical style quiz, which philosophical ethical style seems the most practical? Or would a hybrid of styles best describe an ethical style?

Discussion topic

An Ethical Dilemma: Jayla and Acme Inc. (Ch. 3, page 60.)

Answer the following questions:

1. Discuss how this conflict of interest situation affects other salespeople, the organizational culture, and other stakeholders.
2. Describe the decision that Jayla must make. What are the potential ramifications of her choices?
3. Are there legal ramifications to this kind of behavior? If so, what are the potential consequences?

Read, watch lecture, complete homework on Canvas: Thursday by 11 PM ET.
Discussion assignment posted: Thursday by 11PM ET.
Respond to 2 classmates: Saturday by 11PM ET

WEEK TEN: March 7 – 13, 2016

Ethics and Marketing

Reading

Marketing with Integrity.

[http://www.ethicsbasedmarketing.net/articles/artices19_8_2008/Marketing with Integrity.pdf](http://www.ethicsbasedmarketing.net/articles/artices19_8_2008/Marketing_with_Integrity.pdf)

Is Marketing Evil?

<http://www.ethicsbasedmarketing.net/2.html>

Why Business Ethics?

<http://web.tepper.cmu.edu/ethics/whybizethics.pdf>

Marketing to Kids

<http://www.ethicsbasedmarketing.net/6.html>

Online Homework

Question 1: The Federal Trade Commission regulates advertising on the basis of 2 criteria: deception and unfairness. How can an ad be unfair? Who gets hurt by deceptive advertising?

Question 2: Imagine your child/younger sibling was offered a free laptop in school with the understanding that they would see an advertisement for 2 minutes every fifteen minutes of use. What would your initial reaction to this offer be? Is it always unfair to advertise to children?

Question 3: Studies have shown that samples, as well as small gifts and lunches, can lead some doctors to prescribe more. Do you agree that marketing of products such as prescription drugs be regulated? (they currently are.)

Discussion topic

You work for MarketUS, an online marketing company that devises campaigns for clients in the technology industry. One of the strategies used by the company is comparison marketing with competitors and similar products. MarketUS wins a new client, a big video game manufacturer. You have been put in charge of the account. Your manager tells you that this account is very important to the company and to devise a strong marketing campaign, remind you that you are up for promotion at the end of the quarter. The client has requested that the online campaign focus on comparing their product to the leading competitor, XYZ Gaming. Your spouse works for XYZ Gaming and has told you in confidence that their latest product is flawed. Impressing your new client would be very useful when you apply for promotion later this year.

Answer these questions in your discussion post:

1. Do you tell your manager about the potential conflict of interest?

2. What do you tell your spouse?
3. Do you share the information about the flawed product, and do you use it in your campaign?

Read, watch lecture, complete homework on Canvas: Thursday by 11 PM ET.
Discussion assignment posted: Thursday by 11PM ET.
Respond to 2 classmates: Saturday by 11PM ET

Ethics Memo Set 1 due this week. Submit to the Assignments tab of the Canvas shell by Saturday, 11pm EST.

WEEK ELEVEN — March 14 - 20, 2016

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Readings

Ch. 2: Stakeholder relationships social responsibility and corporate governance.

Ch. 4: The Institutionalization of business ethics.

Role of CSR communication (see weekly module page for link to PDF file)

Online homework:

Question 1: What model of CSR is most persuasive to you, and why?

Question 2: Some say that business has one goal: to make money. Therefore, CSR initiatives are irrelevant to business. Discuss the argument for and against this viewpoint.

Discussion Topic:

Corporate Social Responsibility: BP Oil Spill

Read:

- Case 4: Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill (page 427-429). Answer the following questions:
 1. What aspects of BP's ethical culture could have contributed to the Gulf Coast oil spill disaster?
 2. Do you think BP put profits ahead of safety? Why would a company do that?
 3. What should BP do in the future to rebuild its reputation and manage the risks associated with offshore drilling?
- What is BP's social responsibility?
<http://blogs.reuters.com/chrystia-freeland/2010/07/19/whats-bps-social-responsibility/>

Read, watch lecture, complete homework on Canvas: Thursday by 11 PM ET.
Discussion assignment posted: Thursday by 11PM ET.
Respond to 2 classmates: Saturday by 11PM ET

WEEK 12 – March 21 – 27, 2016

Ethics Online-Future Issues for Strategic Communications

Reading

<http://www.palgrave-journals.com/dddmp/journal/v9/n1/full/4350076a.html>

http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/Kent_Blogging_2008.pdf

<http://www.dbmarketing.com/articles/Art190.htm>

There is no homework this week.

Discussion topic

Crisis communications—The Volkswagen emissions scandal

You work in the communications office of Volkswagen. You are responsible for developing an external communications plan for VW.

Please review and cite at least 3 news articles and/or scholarly papers in answering the following questions in your discussion post:

1. What strategy do you suggest to the VW CEO and Board to deal with criticism from owners of the effected vehicles? In your answer include references to:
 - a. News releases
 - b. Social media-posting comments/interacting with comments
 - c. Blogs
 - d. Any advertising online
 - e. Any other online elements you feel are important.

2. What strategy do you suggest to rebuild VW's reputation in the USA?

Submit Ethics Memo Set 2 this week through the Assignments tab of the Canvas shell by Saturday at 11pm EST.

Submit Situation Analysis this week through the Assignments tab of the Canvas shell by Saturday at 11pm EST

Read, watch lecture: Thursday by 11 PM ET.

Discussion assignment posted: Thursday by 11PM ET.

Respond to 2 classmates: Saturday by 11PM ET

Sunday: give big sigh of relief.