

Syllabus updated January 2016

PUR 4442: Public Interest Communications

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Class meets Tuesday 9:35-11:30, Thursday 9:35-10:25

Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 2-4 pm

S/U: NO

About this Course

Effective communication is the accelerant on the fire of social change. The greatest ideas will languish without a specific effort to engage the right people in those efforts at the right time. Public Interest Communications is a form of strategic communication through which organizations take on specific communications objectives that will have a benefit to society. This benefit transcends the particular interest of any single organization undertaking a campaign or communications effort.

The skills and qualities of those who work in Public Interest Communications are not unlike those of people who work in public relations. In fact, the fields differ more in purpose than in form: while public relations tends to take on the interests of a single corporation or entity, public interest communications tends to take on causes that affect the health, safety and well-being of a community or population.

This is an evolving field, and its practitioners are continuously applying new insights and techniques to support positive social change. The field is not as well-established as its sister fields of public relations, advertising, journalism and marketing, however, an increased recognition among change makers of the importance of communications to social change means that there are more resources available than there once were. This is also an entrepreneurial field, which results in significant innovation.

Public interest communications is a large and complex field, and it will not be possible to cover all its aspects during the 16 weeks we have together. To make the most of our time, the course will focus on the principles and fundamentals on which the field stands.

In this course, you will learn the five spheres through which we can drive social change, the strategic planning process for an effective social change communications campaign, and the tools, qualities and tactics that make these campaigns real. You will gain insight to the richness of the field, the power that effective communications has to address a problem and profoundly affect the lives of people, and begin to see the astonishing range of careers and opportunity that this field holds.

This course will give you the opportunity to hear directly from the leading thinkers in public interest communicators.

Course Objectives

1. You will understand the role of communications in driving positive social change.
2. You will understand the strategic communications planning process.
3. You will understand the five spheres through which communicators work to achieve change: policy, media, social marketing, activism and communities of influence.
4. You will meet and interact with the experts who are leading and defining this field.
5. You will gain new insight to how fundamental changes in how we communicate as a society are changing this field.
6. You will understand the skills and qualities associated with effective communication for social change.

Grading

Your grade will be based on the following:

Class participation:	15%
Mid-term Exam:	20%
Final Exam:	20%
Writing Assignment	5%
Final Assignment and Presentation:	25%
Quizzes:	15%

A	90-100 points
B	80-89 points
C	70-79 points
D	60-69 points
E	Less than 60 points

Appointments

Please stop by during office hours to discuss assignments, materials or other concerns related to the course. You may also schedule a meeting with me via email. My office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus. I'm often in my office, and am always happy to talk with students. Please feel free to pop in, but know that there's no guarantee you'll catch me except during office hours.

Course Professionalism

This College is a professional school, and professional decorum is expected at all times. I expect you to adhere to workplace norms of collegial and respectful interaction and behavior. That specifically means that you will arrive on time, not speak when another student or the instructor are speaking or use cell phones, lap tops or other electronic devices. I expect that you will welcome and treat with respect the diverse perspectives of your fellow students, as will I. Violations of these expectations may result in students being asked to leave class and a lowering of your grade.

Students with Special Needs

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must submit a documentation letter to the professor when requesting accommodation. Please notify me at the beginning of the semester if you would like to discuss requests for special provisions.

Class Attendance Policy

Attendance is not required. However, note that your attendance will affect your class participation grade. Participation accounts for 15 percent of your grade. To achieve full credit, you must be present for class and participate in our discussions. Additionally, I will give surprise quizzes. While quizzes that appear on the syllabus may be made up, surprise quizzes may not be.

Academic Honesty

The work you submit for this course must be your own. It must be original for this course. You must never use direct or paraphrased material from any source, including Web sites, without attribution. You may not submit anything that you wrote for another class, or that you wrote as a volunteer or intern. You may not submit anything that was written for any purpose other than the given assignment. I will handle any incident of academic dishonesty in accordance with the University of Florida policies that address cheating and unethical academic behavior, specifically the UF Honor Code and the Academic Honesty Guidelines.

Any case of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for this course. I will follow University Guidelines for any offense.

In every assignment you complete for this course you will clearly attribute the source of your information, including information obtained from organizations' web sites or internal documents. You cannot copy anything word for word, regardless of the source, without putting quotes around it and attributing the source.

Format

Everything you write for this course must be coherent, logical and carefully edited. Misspellings, syntax and grammatical errors are unacceptable in upper-level college writing.

Texts

Dan and Chip Heath "Switch"

Marty Neumeier "The Brand Gap"

Wes Moore "The Other Wes Moore"

"Short and Sweet" and "See, Say, Feel, Do" both available for free download at www.fenton.com

Reaction Paper Assignment: DUE Tuesday, January 19

In 600-1000 words, please tell me about your own interaction with public interest communications.

You have been the target of countless change communications efforts over the course of your life. From when you first watched Sesame Street to your daily walks around campus now, you have been buffeted by messages to help you make "better" decisions or to take action on behalf of a cause.

Tell me about the extent to which your behavior and lifestyle have been affected by a particular campaign, and whether it stands out as being particularly good or bad. If you have a story about how a specific campaign or message has affected the path of your life, please do include it. While I recognize that you may not have been aware of who organized or funded the campaign at the time, please find that out now and include that in your paper. How does that knowledge affect your perception of the credibility of the campaign?

This is a reaction paper, not a research paper, but please do include citations where appropriate, and share links to things that have been particularly moving--I'm always looking for new things to share. Use the MLA in-text citation method to cite your sources. If you are unfamiliar with this method, a quick Google search will turn up several great sites.

I will grade these on:

- the cohesiveness of your points. Are your comments supported by facts? Have you used examples, is there an overarching structure that makes sense?
- the quality of your writing. Your writing should be free of grammatical errors, typographical errors and other mistakes. Your paper should be well-organized, lively, and interesting.
- the extent to which you reach beyond the mundane in your response.

Please use page numbers and headings, and include footnotes or endnotes.

Schedule of Class Discussions

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
1	About Public Interest Communications: Defining a New Field Course Overview	The Strategic Planning Process for Public Interest Communications
2	The Five Spheres of Influence	A Brief and Incomplete History of the Field
3	Final project discussion and team formation DISCUSSION PAPER DUE, VIA EMAIL, 1 HOUR BEFORE CLASS Assignment description is in the syllabus	Quiz: Switch
4	Class discussion: Switch The Role of Research and Evaluation in Effective and Ethical Campaigns	Who funds Public Interest Communications, and Why?
5	How to Work With Policymakers	How to Work with the News Media
6	Social Marketing	Quiz: The Brand Gap
7	Class Discussion: The Brand Gap Identifying Communities of Influence Activism	Midterm Review
8	Midterm	In-class work session for Final Project
9	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK

10	The Theory that Informs our Field	Building Social Movements
11	Storytelling for Change Agents	Working in a market-driven world: Soul Branding, CSR, and CSV
12	Message Strategy, Development, and Testing	In-class work session for Final Project
13	The Role of Empathy	Quiz: The Other Wes Moore
14	Class discussion: The Other Wes Moore Making great presentations	Careers in Public Interest Communications
15	Final Presentations	Final Exam Review
16	Final Exam	