

# SYLLABUS

JOU 4930  
PUR 4932

## International Humanitarian Communication

**Class meetings:** Wednesdays, 4:05 - 7:05 p.m.

**Professor:** John Kaplan

**Email:** jkaplan@jou.ufl.edu

**Phone:** 352-672-0020. *(No texting. Please do not call after 10:00 p.m.)*

**Office:** Office hours are Wednesdays immediately after class. Due to a health issue I am not able to be on campus as often as I would prefer. However, I am very flexible in being able to meet over the phone while reviewing your work on our class E-Learning server. Please contact me via email for an appointment time that works for you. I promise to be flexible.

**Course concepts:** No matter one's chosen field, understanding international communication concepts and enhancing communication skills can create more effective dialogue with colleagues from different countries or cultures, increase communication and trust when engaging with community leaders abroad, and lead to a far greater chance of successful completion of a wide range of project objectives. Understanding key differences in communication through an international prism is paramount to working successfully abroad, or to synthesize information to effectively report upon international issues. This course is a component of UF's new International Scholars Program, an interdisciplinary campus-wide program offering all degree-seeking undergraduate students an avenue to internationalize their undergraduate experience. Concepts we will discuss in International Humanitarian Communication include:

- Researching international humanitarian topics including how to determine if information gathered is credible, less than credible, or even propagandistic.
- Understanding global media systems and how they vary worldwide from Western models.
- Understanding Non-Governmental Organizations, or NGOs – how they operate, how they interrelate with larger bodies such as U.N. agencies, how and why funding goals are crucial to organizational objectives.
- Communication for Social Change including an overview of communication strategies addressing the challenges of working in environments with less advanced infrastructures.
- Positive Deviance including case studies of counterintuitive approaches to solving complex social issues.
- Ethical issues of humanitarian communication including compassionate and dignified representations of local populaces.
- Intercultural communication including how to most effectively share information across various cultures and sub groups within them, including ethnic, religious, and socio-economic differences.
- The importance of how to access and partner with in-country community agenda-setters for effective fieldwork, including locating, communicating and gaining acceptance from local partner organizations and/or NGOs.
- Safety in the field, so crucially important at a time when well meaning Westerners doing humanitarian work have unfortunately become targets.

**Required materials:** **A USB mini flash drive of at least 16 GB to archive and save work.**

**Required reading:** *Books: (Available at amazon.com and other online services.)*  
**Chasing Chaos: My Decade In and Out of Humanitarian Aid** by Jessica Alexander  
**The Power of Positive Deviance** by Richard Pascale, Jerry Sternin and Monique Sternin

*Articles: (Supplied by Professor Kaplan or on reserve)*

**Communication for Development at Work** from the book, *Communicating for Development: Human Change for Survival* by Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada

**Social Entrepreneurship: Better Vision for the Poor** from the journal, *Stanford Social Innovation Review* by Karnani, Garrette, Kassalow and Lee

**Class structure:** **The first part of the semester** will highlight the foundations of international humanitarian communications emphasizing the concepts above, as well as other relevant topics including examples of highly effective and also ineffective outcomes. For an example, an effective case study might show how wide journalistic publication

documenting a particular social issue resulted in dramatically increased public awareness, resulting in solutions-oriented progress in helping address or even eradicate the problem at hand. An ineffective case study might show how an organization's project goals were not realized due to a lack of understanding of cultural beliefs, funding issues, or even safety problems encountered. One such example would be the unanticipated reasons for the failure of a Peruvian water boiling campaign. Case studies may include examples from diverse disciplines including journalism, business/strategic communications, and initiatives led by NGOs and charities. Experts in International Humanitarian Communication may be featured guest speakers during the semester as well.

**The second part of the semester** will concentrate on an exploration of one large and underreported humanitarian problem. Students will collectively research our international social issue topic and suggest an outline for solutions. Students will then use the prism of their own chosen study majors to further develop solutions-based action plans, in groups, and individually.

*This semester's topic will concentrate on the inability of millions worldwide to obtain needed glasses and how new technical developments have the potential to dramatically reduce this number over the next decade. Over 500 million worldwide do not have needed glasses—a \$200bn global economic loss. If a child cannot see well, he or she is unlikely to succeed in school and will face daunting lifelong challenges realizing true potential. This issue has traditionally been addressed by a variety of aid organizations that typically collect donated used eye glasses and distribute to impoverished communities. However, while such relief efforts have provided sporadic help to some, the overall issue of hundreds of millions being unable to obtain needed eyeglasses has seen no improvement. Today, new and innovative optical developments have created a potential solution. Engineers have developed sliding lens technology; a small wheel at the top of each eyeglass lens is turned, literally dialing in a correct prescription. Without need for optometrists, this "self-refracting" eyeglass technology can more effectively meet dire third world community needs at a far lower distribution cost, with potentially life changing results. The class will develop action plans and potential media coverage approaches relating to the need for distribution of self-adjusting eyeglasses in a designated global area of great need.*

**The final part of the semester** will allow each student to propose and complete an individual humanitarian communication project relevant to the individual's major area of study. For example, a journalism student might write an article on the lack of potable water in a Latin American region and would be expected to interview story sources and experts on the topic both here and in the country facing the issue. A public relations student might research case studies and prepare outline for a campaign highlighting how a corporation is helping to rebuild communities following an environmental disaster. A nursing student might research and create a blueprint for a plan to communicate with an NGO for the purpose of engagement or obtaining an internship involving fieldwork to help alleviate a shortage of yellow fever vaccine in West Africa. Each project will include three components: an oral proposal, a 10-12 minute oral presentation incorporating project research, and a multi-part written project component of 10-14 pages. Written component types could potentially include articles written for publication, case studies, or detailed personal action plan outlines. Each must also contain a full project abstract, overview incorporating detailed relevant research, budget, and timeline sections.

**Class projects:**

Assignment grading:

Group research presentation	200 points
Exam	300 points
Individual project	300 points <i>(Three project components)</i>
<i>(All will be graded on a 100 point scale.)</i>	

**Class participation:**

Participation / team 200 points

Class participation is an essential and fun way to build an atmosphere of creativity, trust and interdependence. You are responsible not only for your own success, but also for the collective success of the group. Your class participation, which includes work habits, being prepared for and leading weekly reading discussions, attentiveness, ability to meet deadlines, as well as being an active participant in the *constructive* criticism of assignments, represents a full 20% of your grade.

**Final grading:**

<b>A</b> 930-1000 points	<b>C</b> 730-770 points
<b>A-</b> 900-930 points	<b>C-</b> 700-730 points
<b>B+</b> 870-900 points	<b>D+</b> 670-700 points
<b>B</b> 830-870 points	<b>D</b> 630-670 points
<b>B-</b> 800-830 points	<b>D-</b> 600-630 points
<b>C+</b> 770-800 points	<b>E</b> less than 600 points

**Class policies:**

**Late work is not acceptable.** If you turn in late work, you will lose a minimum of one full letter grade (10%). For ongoing late work an additional 10% of the assignment grade will be cut for each subsequent class meeting that you have missed the deadline. Not having work ready or properly presented for deadlines, and overall work habits, will affect class participation grades. I reserve the right to modify, add, or eliminate class assignments listed in this syllabus during the course of the semester to benefit the collective progress of the class.

**Attendance** is mandatory with one excused or unexcused absence allowed during the semester. However, I would suggest that you not skip any classes because you will fall behind. That's an even more frustrating feeling than being trapped in Weimer Hall when you'd really rather be somewhere else. The attendance policy includes non-extended illnesses; for an extended illness for two or more consecutive classes a doctor's note is necessary. It is the student's responsibility to turn in such a note and also to obtain a written notification from another professor or coach for any class missed due to another class' field trip, etc. It is the student's responsibility to obtain all missed assignments from the professor and to still meet all assignment or test deadlines for any day of absence not due to extended illness. Missing class for the final class meeting or for exams is not permitted. Missing an exam will result in a grade of zero for that portion of the semester's grade. Missing any aspect of the Individual Project requirements or deadline will result in a grade of zero. Deadline extensions will not be possible. **For each unexcused absence beyond the allowed one, you will lose one-third of a letter grade for the course.** The attendance policy is followed from the first scheduled class of the semester, irrespective of the date a student first enrolls for the course.

**Coming to class late is not acceptable.** Attendance is taken at the beginning of class. Coming to class 0-5 minutes late will count as 1/3 of an absence. Coming to class 5-10 minutes late counts as 2/3 of an absence. Regrettably, coming to class 10 or more minutes late counts as a full absence. This attendance policy regarding missing a portion of the full class also applies to leaving class early.

**UF policies:**

**Honesty.** As you would expect, all of the usual University of Florida honesty policy guidelines will be followed in this class. Turnitin.com and other resources will be utilized to help ensure that students are accurately citing all sources and doing fully original work.

**Students with Disabilities.** Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Office for Student Services to determine the appropriate classroom accommodations. For students with print related disabilities, this publication is available in alternate format. For students with hearing disabilities trying to contact an office that does not list a TED, please contact the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955 8771 TED.

**Due dates:**

**(Schedule, assignments, deadlines and final meeting time may be modified. Some schedule changes are likely.)**

**Week One / August 24**

Class overview

Introductions

John Kaplan leads discussion of syllabi and required texts

Discuss plans for next week

**Week Two / August 31**

Lecture: course concepts

Guest speaker: Brenton Homewood

Reading assignment

**Week Three / September 7**

Lecture: course concepts

Lecture: *Surviving Torture*

Reading assignment

**Week Four / September 14**

Lecture: course concepts

Reading assignment and discussion. Students will be assigned to lead reading discussion components weekly.

Discuss plans for next week

**Week Five / September 21**

Reading

Work on research assignment

**Week Six / September 28**

Lecture: course concepts

Possible guest speaker

Reading assignment and discussion

**Due dates:**

**Week Seven / October 5**

Lecture: Self-adjusting eyeglasses  
Possible guest speaker  
Group project assigned  
Reading assignment and discussion

**Week Eight / October 12**

Holiday  
Groups meet outside of class during the period Oct. 5-19 and work on oral presentation due Oct. 19.

**Week Nine / October 19**

Group eyecare project presentations  
Lecture: *Not As I Pictured* cancer coping project  
Reading assignment and discussion

**Week Ten / October 26**

Exam  
Individual project assigned  
Reading assignment and discussion

**Week Eleven / November 2**

Possible guest speaker  
Lecture and discussion: Viable individual project ideas / Successful oral project proposal components  
Reading assignment and discussion

**Week Twelve / November 9**

Individual project proposals: 5-7 minutes. Also be ready with a "Plan B!"  
Lecture: Successful oral project presentation components

**Week Thirteen / November 16**

Detailed individual oral presentations: 10-12 minutes  
Lecture: Successful written project presentation components

**Week Fourteen / November 23 (holiday)**

*Prepare to Gobble!*

**Week Fifteen / November 30**

Individual project portfolios due. Must be submitted on class server no later than 4:05 p.m. Deadline extensions are not possible.

**Week Sixteen / December 7**

To be announced