

# SYLLABUS

## MMC 4302      **World Communication Systems: International Humanitarianism**

**Class meetings:**      Mondays, 4:05 p.m.

**Professor:**      John Kaplan

**Email:**      jkaplan@jou.ufl.edu

**Phone:**      352-672-0020. *(No texting. Please do not call after 9:00 p.m.)*

**Office:**      Office hours are Mondays immediately after class. 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 site. Please contact me via email for an appointment time that works for you. I promise to be flexible.

**Course concepts:**      Would you like to be a change maker? No matter one's chosen field, understanding international communication systems 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 also an optional component of UF's 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 World Communication Systems: International Humanitarianism include:

- Understanding global media systems and how they vary worldwide from Western models.
- 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.
- Researching international humanitarian topics including how to determine if information gathered is credible, less than credible, or even propagandistic.
- 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.
- 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 journalistic and 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.)*  
**The Power of Positive Deviance** by Richard Pascale, Jerry Sternin and Monique Sternin

***Additional article reading to be assigned***

**Class structure:**      **The first course component** will highlight foundations of international humanitarian communications emphasizing concepts above, as well as examples of highly effective and also ineffective outcomes. As 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 a problem at hand. An ineffective case study might show how an organization's goals were not realized due to a lack of understanding of cultural beliefs, funding issues, or even safety problems encountered. One example would be unanticipated reasons for the failure of a Peruvian water boiling program.

Case studies may include examples from diverse disciplines including journalism, initiatives led by NGOs and charities, and business/strategic communications. Experts in International Humanitarianism may be featured guest speakers as well.

**The second part of the course** will highlight issues of global food insecurity. Students will choose a part of the world and research a region facing a serious food insecurity problem. A solutions based plan will be developed to share findings about affordable and nutritious food options. Students will further learn more about global culture by discussing and sharing indigineous foods of the region.

**The third part of the course** 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. 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. A public relations student might research and prepare an outline for a campaign highlighting how a corporation is helping to rebuild communities following an environmental disaster. Each project will include three components: a 4-6 minute oral proposal, a 8-10 minute oral presentation incorporating project research, and a multi-part written project component of 10-15 pages. Written component types could potentially include articles written for publication, case studies, or detailed personal action plan outlines. Each must also contain a mission statement, and project abstract overview incorporating detailed relevant research, budget, and timeline sections.

**Class projects:**

Assignment grading:

Food insecurity project	200 points
Exam	300 points
Individual project	300 points ( <i>Three 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. Do not use any electronic device during class for any reason other than for the topic being discussed at the time. As noted above, attentiveness is a crucial part of class participation grades.

**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 / January 7**

Class overview  
Introductions  
Read syllabus  
Order course textbook immediately  
Reading assignment

**Week Two / January 14**

Guest speaker: Brenton Homewood, UF Peacecorps Coordinator  
Lecture: Introduction to Positive Deviance  
Lecture: *Surviving Torture*  
Reading assignment / Students will be assigned to lead reading discussion components weekly.

**Week Three / January 21**

Holiday

**Week Four / January 28**

Lecture: Student Project Ideas  
Reading assignment  
Student led reading discussion  
Discuss plans for next week

**Week Five / February 4**

Individual project assigned: First component due in two weeks  
Reading assignment  
Student led reading discussion

**Week Six / February 11**

Work on first component of individual project: Idea to be presented next week

**Week Seven / February 18**

Special guest speaker  
First component of food insecurity project assigned: Due in four weeks  
Student project first component brief and well-researched oral proposals of 4-6 minutes. Be ready with "Plan B"  
Reading assignment  
Student led reading discussion

**Week Eight / February 25**

*Not As I Pictured* case study  
Reading assignment  
Student led reading discussion  
Discuss test just after spring break

**Due dates:**

***Week Nine / March 11***

Test

Prepare for food insecurity individual presentations next week

***Week Ten / March 18***

Food insecurity presentations of no more than five minutes

Lecture and discussion: Viable individual projects / Successful oral project proposal components

Prepare for individual project 12-15 minute oral presentations next week

***Week Eleven / March 25***

Individual project 12-15 minute oral presentations

Discuss second component of food insecurity project to be shared next week

***Week Twelve / April 1***

Food insecurity projects shared with class

Begin work on individual project portfolio component due April 22

***Week Thirteen / April 8***

Work on individual project portfolio

Ongoing research

***Week Fourteen / April 15***

Work on individual project portfolio due next week!

Ongoing research

***Week Fifteen / April 22***

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