

Course Syllabus for MMC6213 Strategic Communication: Ethics and Concepts

Course Information

Course: MMC6213 Strategic Communication: Ethics and Concepts

Semester: Spring 2020

Credits: 03

Meeting Time: Distance Asynchronous and Online Classroom—Select Tuesdays during the semester at 7PM EST. Please see course calendar for dates.

Office Hours: By appointment. Please email instructor to schedule a Zoom meeting. Zoom meetings are held in the instructor's Zoom room: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/9214656117>

Course site: <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/389171>

Instructor

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352-294-1558 (office)

Please see my Bio—and a place for yours—under the Discussions tab in Canvas.

Announcements

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 (but not all Announcements) will be sent via email when it is posted in this tab.

Course Description

Professions in communications and marketing communications integrate knowledge from many areas: aesthetics, branding, coding, marketing, and overall strategies. This course focuses on branding and marketing 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, communicators have special 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.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will:

1	Gain familiarity with the elements of an Integrated Marketing Communication Plan
2	Learn how to develop a Situation Analysis for a brand
3	Identify ethical dilemmas in strategic communication, including determining how to anticipate and consider different stakeholders' perspectives on those dilemmas
4	Identify and describe a variety of alternative responses to strategic communication ethics problems
5	Make and justify decisions about which responses are most ethically sound
6	Describe the value and purpose of strategic communication and ethical dilemmas therein.

Course Design/Expectations

This course will combine both live sessions and recorded lectures. Live class sessions will be held select Tuesday nights of the semester starting at 7pm EST.

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.

Assignments

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

During the first half of the class you will read the assigned materials, view online lectures, demonstrate your understanding via discussion questions and homework, and discuss a critical ethical issue related to the material you studied.

During our class you will watch a series of videos that help you begin to create a situation

analysis for a publicly traded firm or business. You will email your instructor for approval of the company you have chosen for your situation analysis by the end of Week 8 and submit your situation analysis during week 16.

The second half of the class 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 one ethics memo. You must submit this memo in Week 14. This memo should be at least two pages long, single-spaced and deal with a communications ethics topic you choose.

You are also expected to attach any relevant background information to the assignment. The case you choose for the Week 14 Ethics memo must be a real-life strategic communications situation, not a hypothetical situation. You will find more specific instructions in a separate document. This assignment will be submitted through Canvas.

There will also be several in-class team exercises. For these I will be assigning teams and results will be presented in class by a member of each team. These exercises will be discussed in class.

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

In addition to your readings you will have two kinds of homework:

First, under the Discussion tab, you will find a discussion question. You should post a thoughtful response to this key topic question and respond to at least 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 Canvas.

Weekly Discussion Posts

Discussion is an integral part of any ethics course. This class will be no exception. You will be 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.

Course Prerequisite Knowledge

Students will be expected to understand communication theory basics, be able to work on a virtual team and be able to make virtual presentations during class.

Ownership Education

As graduate students, you are not passive participants in this course. All students in this Program have a background in marketing, advertising, public relations, journalism, or similar fields. This class allows you to not only take ownership of your educational experience but to also provide your expertise and knowledge in helping your fellow classmates. The Canvas shell will have an open Q&A thread where you should pose questions to your classmates when you have a question as it relates to an assignment or an issue that has come up at work. Your classmates along with your instructor will be able to respond to these questions and provide feedback and help. This also allows everyone to gain the same knowledge in one location rather than the instructor responding back to just one student which limits the rest of the class from gaining this knowledge.

Textbook and Technology Requirements

Textbook

We will use the McGraw-Hill Create™ eBook:

ISBN: 9781307500226

Title: *Strategic Communications and Ethics*

Students can locate and purchase the book online by following these simple steps:

- 1) Go to <https://create.mheducation.com/shop/>
- 2) Search for and select book by Title, ISBN, Author, or State/School.
- 3) Add the book to your cart and pay using a credit card.

Readings for the second half of the semester are found in the syllabus.

Technical Requirements

You will need an Internet connection to access your text, view the lectures, attend online class sessions, and complete your assignments.

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.

Course Policies

Late Work and Make-up Policy

You are expected to prepare and submit your assignments on a timely basis. Due dates are clearly laid out in this syllabus and in the attendant class calendar.

Deadlines are critical to this class. All work is due on or before the due date. Extensions for deadlines will only be for preapproved emergencies. Minor inconveniences such as family vacation or minor illness are not valid reasons for extensions. With this in mind there will be penalties for late work:

0-24 hours late	10% deduction
24-48 hours late	20% deduction
More than 48 hours late arrangement.	Only accepted with prior

NOTE: DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED PAST THE SATURDAY DEADLINE AND THESE POSTS CANNOT BE MADE-UP SINCE THE CLASS DISCUSSION WILL HAVE ENDED.

Issues with uploading work for a grade is not an excuse. If you have technical difficulties with Canvas, there are other means to submit completed work. You may email .zip files or even links to Dropbox folders via email. Another suggestion to compensate for technical difficulties is not waiting until the last minute to submit work.

Work turned in past the posted late deadlines will not be accepted except for extenuating circumstances (i.e. family emergencies.) If you anticipate not making a project deadline, please contact the instructor.

Technical Issue Policy

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Help Desk documenting when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up. Contact UF helpdesk (352) 392-HELP.

Emergency and Extenuating Circumstances Policy

Students who face emergencies, such as a major personal medical issue, a death in the family, serious illness of a family member, or other situations beyond their control should notify their instructors immediately.

Students are also advised to contact the Dean of Students Office if they would like more information on the [medical withdrawal or drop process](#).

Students MUST inform their academic advisor before dropping a course, whether for medical or non-medical reasons. Your advisor will assist with notifying professors and go over options for how to proceed with their classes.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the [attendance policies section](#) of the online catalogue.

Coursework Submissions

In general, as noted throughout this syllabus, most coursework should be submitted through the Assignments tab in the Canvas classroom.

General Deadlines

This class, like others, involves many deadlines. Here is a summary reminder.

- View lectures on Monday
- Post homework on select Tuesday

- In-Class Presentations on select Tuesdays
- Initial Discussion post on select Thursdays
- Discussion post classmate reply on select Saturdays
- Situation Analysis Company/Brand Saturday Week 8
- Ethics Memo Saturday Week 14
- Final Situation Analysis Monday Week 16

Grading

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

Discussions	20%
Homework	20%
Assignments	45%
In-class Presentations	15%
TOTAL	100%

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	0-59%

Note on Rounding: I round-up from .5% when assigning final grades.

Course Assignments

Discussion Assignments

During select weeks of the semester you will need to provide a thoughtful analysis of an ethical issue. Each week you will also post a response to two student's posts. 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 discussion topic under each respective week in the syllabus.

You will be expected to reference ethical guidelines and perspectives in your responses (and 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: [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.
- 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.

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.

Rubric for Weekly Topic Posts and responses

	Exceeds Expectations 4	Meet Expectations 3	Needs Improvement 2	Not Evident 0 points	Maximum Points
Comprehension and Critical Thinking (Initial Post)	Develops an initial post with an organized, clear point of view or idea using rich and significant detail. Student incorporates and cites class materials and external sources as support and cites sources accordingly.	Post represents good thinking, logical reasoning and an appropriate level of detail. Some evidence is provided to support statements.	Post shows some weakness in thinking and logical reasoning. It lacks an informed perspective and/or ignores opposing sides. No evidence provided to support statements.	Missing significant sections, information or did not complete the initial post.	4
Timeliness (of initial post and replies)	2 Submits initial post early or on time, allowing sufficient time		1 Submits initial post on time but does not complete replies.	0 Submits initial post late.	1

	for discussion and completes replies prior to deadline.				
Engagement (Reply Posts)	4 Provides meaningful response posts to classmates that further conversations and explore the topic at hand. Writing is clear, compelling, organized, powerful and grammatically correct. Completes more than the minimum of two replies.	3 Provides relevant response posts and draws informed conclusions. Writing is straightforward, understandable and avoids major grammar or spelling errors. Must complete minimum number of reply posts to meet expectations.	2 Provides somewhat relevant post(s) with some explanations and detail. Reply posts make statements but fail to engage in a back-and-forth discussion. Writing improvements needed.	0 Does not complete response posts or provides response posts that are generic with little explanation or detail.	4
				Total Points	10

Team In-Class Presentations

Most weeks you will be assigned to a team with other class members and teams will be given an assignment. The results of this work will be presented by one team member each week in our live class. Please rotate the presenter. Weekly assignments will be made in the Announcements tab.

Students are expected to be active participants in all team assignments and participation in live classes. Please let your instructor know if you will not be attending a live class and watch recorded class as soon as possible.

Rubric for Team Presentations

	Exemplary 5 points	Meet Expectations 3 points	Needs Improvement 1 point	Not Evident 0 points	Points
Comprehension	Presentation represents outstanding	Presentation represents good thinking and	Presentation shows some weakness in	Missing significant sections or	5

	creative thinking and logical reasoning.	logical reasoning.	thinking and logical reasoning.	information.	
Team Effort	Acted as a leader on the team and made a meaningful contribution	Made a meaningful contribution and participated in team activities on a timely manner	Participation was not on a timely manner or did not make a meaningful contribution	No team engagement or effort	5
Presentation	PowerPoint is clear, compelling, organized, powerful and grammatically correct.	PowerPoint is straightforward, understandable and avoids most grammar or spelling errors.	Provides somewhat relevant slides with some explanations and detail.	Slides are generic with little explanation or detail.	5
				Total Points	15

Ethics Memo

You will write an ethics memo in the second part of the semester that must be submitted through the “Assignments” tab in Canvas. The memo, due in Week 14, 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 this 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. (An example of an ethics memo will be available on the Canvas site).

You should follow this basic format:

- Identify and explain the ethical dilemma. Please 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 the memo, 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 Ethics Memos

Rating	Characteristics
21-25	Exceeds Expectations. 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.
16-20	Meets Expectations. 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.
11-15	Needs Improvement. 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.
1-10	Does Not Meet Expectations The memo is unfocused, or simply rehashes previous comments, and displays no evidence of student engagement in the topic.
0	No credit. The memo is missing.

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 or communication challenges faced by the company. You should propose the company that you will work on to your instructor by Saturday, 11pm EST of Week 8 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 several weeks to do the Situation Analysis. You can give yourself extra time by viewing the lecture on a Situation Analysis early and reading chapter 7 ‘Marketing and IMC Planning’ in the Contemporary Advertising e-book. ***For your analysis, use the outline on page 202 of the e-text titled “My IMC Campaign 8-A: Developing the Situation Analysis.”***

Rubric for Grading the Situation Analysis (SA)

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement	Does Not Meet Expectations	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	SA has material related to most parts of the template selected. Sections are mostly	SA has some sections that are missing material related to all parts of the template	Missing significant sections or information.	

	complete.	complete.	selected or some sections are incomplete.		
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.	

Assignment 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 Tuesday at 11pm EST.

For week 8 you should submit your publicly traded company that will serve as the focus of the situation analysis by Saturday at 11pm EST. For the Ethics Memos, it is due Saturday at 11pm EST of Week 14; The Situation Analysis is due Saturday at 11pm EST of Week 16.

University Policies

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the UF Disability Resource Center (352.392.8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Netiquette: Communication Courtesy

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email

messages, threaded discussions and chats. [Please read this netiquette guide for online courses.](#)

Class Demeanor:

Mastery in this class requires preparation, passion, and professionalism. Students are expected, within the requirements allowed by university policy, to attend class, be on time, and meet all deadlines. Work assigned in advance of class should be completed as directed. Full participation in online and live discussions, group projects, and small group activities is expected.

My role as instructor is to identify critical issues related to the course, direct you to and teach relevant information, assign appropriate learning activities, create opportunities for assessing your performance, and communicate the outcomes of such assessments in a timely, informative, and professional way. Feedback is essential for you to have confidence that you have mastered the material and for me to determine that you are meeting all course requirements.

At all times it is expected that you will welcome and respond professionally to assessment feedback, that you will treat your fellow students and me with respect, and that you will contribute to the success of the class as best as you can.

Getting Help

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://elearning.ufl.edu/>

Note: Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Additional Resources

The following resources are available at UF Distance Learning's [Getting Help page](#) for:

- [Counseling and Wellness resources](#) (352-392-1575)
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please email your Academic Advisor. You may find your advisor at

<https://onlinemasters.jou.ufl.edu/program-administration/>.

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available

at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct:

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the [UF Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code](#).

The University of Florida Honor Code was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Spring 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.”

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 nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 352-392-1261.

Academic Honesty

All graduate students in the College of Journalism and Communications are expected to conduct themselves with the highest degree of integrity. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that they know and understand the requirements of every assignment. At a minimum, this includes avoiding the following:

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when an individual presents the ideas or expressions of another as his or her own. Students must always credit others' ideas with accurate citations and must use quotation marks and citations when presenting the words of others. A thorough understanding of plagiarism is a precondition for admittance to graduate studies in the college.

Cheating: Cheating occurs when a student circumvents or ignores the rules that govern an academic assignment such as an exam or class paper. It can include using notes, in physical or electronic form, in an exam, submitting the work of another as one's own, or reusing a paper a student has composed for one class in another class. If a student is not sure about the rules that govern an assignment, it is the student's responsibility to ask for clarification from his instructor.

Misrepresenting Research Data: The integrity of data in mass communication research is a paramount issue for advancing knowledge and the credibility of our professions. For this reason any intentional misrepresentation of data, or misrepresentation of the conditions or circumstances of data collection, is considered a violation of academic integrity. Misrepresenting data is a clear violation of the rules and requirements of academic integrity and honesty.

Any violation of the above stated conditions is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program and will result in revocation of the degree if the degree previously has been awarded.

Students are expected to adhere to the [University of Florida Code of Conduct](#).

If you have additional questions, please refer to the Online Graduate Program Student Handbook you received when you were admitted into the Program.