

## **Public Interest Communications PUR 4442**

**Instructor:** Professor Ann Christiano, Frank Karel Chair in Public Interest Communications  
**Class Meetings:** Mondays, 9:35 am-12:30 pm, AHA! Innovation Co-Lab  
**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 2-5 pm and by appointment  
**My Office:** 3200 Weimer Hall, The Center for Public Interest Communications  
**Contact:** c: 609-647-3877 e: [achristiano@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:achristiano@jou.ufl.edu)  
**S/U:** No

### **Course Objectives**

1. You will be able to describe the role of communications in driving positive social change.
2. You will be able to critique or create strategic communications plans for social change efforts.
3. You will understand and be able to apply a set of frameworks that are built on social, behavioral and cognitive science.
4. You will be able to determine how to use and combine the six spheres through which communicators work to achieve change: policy, media, social marketing, the market, activism and communities of influence.
5. You will be able to critique campaign design and results.
6. You will be able to design campaigns for social change using a set of research driven frameworks.
7. You will develop skills to interpret and incorporate fundamental changes in how we communicate as a society and their implications for this field.

### **About this Course**

Effective communication is the accelerant on the fire of social change. Public interest communications is a form of strategic communication through which organizations, causes or movements 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.

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 six 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.

### **Schedule of Class Discussions, Readings and Assignments**

#### **Monday, January 6**

Class discussion:

Defining public interest communications

The skills and qualities of public interest communicators

Course overview: expectations, grades, materials

Assignment for January 13: Read “Stop Raising Awareness Already,” watch *Merchants of Doubt*, read syllabus

#### **Monday, January 13**

Quiz 1: *Syllabus, Stop Raising Awareness Already, The Merchants of Doubt*

Class discussion:

The Science of What Makes People Care

**Assignment for January 22: Reaction Paper (please read assignment description at the end of the syllabus or on Canvas)**

#### **Monday, January 20**

**No Class – MLK Birthday**

#### **Monday, January 27**

Quiz 2: *The Science of What Makes People Care*

Class discussion:

Telling Complete Stories About Change

Our Stories  
Final assignment

Assignment for February 3:  
Read “Building the Field of Public Interest Communications.”  
Read “Investment Need in Non-Profit Policy Work,” SSIR  
Read description of your final assignment

**Monday, February 3**

PLEASE BRING LAPTOPS TODAY

*Quiz 3: “Building the Field of Public Interest Communications,” “Investment Needed in Non-Profit Policy Work” and final assignment description*

Class discussion:  
The Six Spheres of Change  
Working with Policymakers  
Working with Media

Class Activity:  
Meet your partner and work together to identify your topic for your final project

Assignment for February 10:  
Read articles TBD, be prepared to describe what you’ll be doing for your final project

**Monday, February 10**

Quiz 4: Assigned articles

Be prepared to describe the topic you and your partner have chosen for your final assignment

Class discussion:  
Working with Market Forces  
Understanding and Leveraging Communities of Influence

Assignment for February 17:  
Read articles TBD, Complete Policymaker and Media Worksheet

**Monday, February 17**

Quiz 5: Assigned articles  
Upload completed Policymaker and Media Worksheet by 9 am

Class discussion:

Behavior Change Marketing  
Activism

Assignment for February 24:  
Read *New Power* Chapters 1-4

**Monday, February 24**

Quiz 6: New Power, Chapters 1-4

Class discussion:  
Understanding and Applying New Power

Assignment for March 9:  
Read “The Back of the Envelope Guide to Strategy”

**Monday, March 2**

No Class — Spring Break

**Monday, March 9**

Quiz 7: The Back-of-the-Envelope Guide to Strategy

Class discussion:  
The Back-of-the-Envelope Guide to Strategy

Assignment for March 16:  
Readings TBD

**Monday, March 16**

Quiz 8: Using research in your strategy

Class discussion:  
Identifying and Applying Research to Your Strategy

Assignment for March 23:  
Read “The Science of Story Building” <https://medium.com/science-of-story-building>

**Monday, March 23**

Quiz 9: The Science of Story

Class discussion:  
The Science of Stories

Assignment for March 30:  
Complete Worksheet: Choosing the Right Stories  
Readings TBD

**Monday, March 30**

Quiz 10: Readings  
Upload completed Choosing Our Stories Worksheet by 9 am

Class discussion:  
Using Metaphor and Imagery

**Monday, April 6**

Class discussion:  
The Role of Public Presentations  
How to Make Unforgettable Presentations  
Review for Cumulative Exam

**Monday, April 13**

Cumulative Exam

**Monday, April 20**

Final Presentations

**Grading**

Your grade will be based on the following:

Class participation:	15%
Cumulative Exam:	20%
Reaction Paper	10%
Worksheets	10%
Final Project:	20%
Quizzes:	25%

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

E      Less than 60 points

### **Late Work**

Late work will not be accepted. Quizzes may not be made up.

### **Appointments**

Please use my 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.

### **Technology**

**You may not use laptops, phones or tablets to take notes in this class. There will be days when you'll need your laptops to complete specific worksheets in class, and I will make an announcement on those days through Canvas. If you are texting, using Facebook, or engaging in other distracting communication unrelated to class, I will ask you to leave.**

### **Course Professionalism**

This College is a professional school, and professional decorum is expected always. 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 or have a letter from the Disabilities Resource Center.

### **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 and on time for class and participate in our discussions. Being present doesn't simply mean you're in the room — it also means you're attentive, and not texting, checking email, doing other work or using social media during class.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to take initiative to make up lost work, get notes from another student and otherwise ensure that you have learned anything you missed.

### **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 written material, images, or ideas 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. As a student in this class, you are bound by the UF honor code.

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. Please use APA format for your citations. If you plagiarize, you will fail this class.

### **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. Use APA style for your citations. Please use page numbers.

### **Texts, Readings and Materials**

"Merchants of Doubt" the movie: rent on Amazon

"Stop Raising Awareness Already," Stanford Social Innovation Review February 2017, available at SSIR.org

"The Back-of-the-Envelope Guide to Communications Strategy," available at SSIR.org

"Stop Raising Awareness Already," available at SSIR.org

New Power, by Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms

Additional readings as posted in Canvas

### **Mid Term and End of Course Evaluations**

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 via email 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/>.

### **Other Notes**

I have provided my contact information at the top of the syllabus. I welcome your emails and calls, however, please allow at least 48 hours for a response.

Please make sure you are familiar with assignments well ahead of their due date. It is usually not possible for me to respond to questions on assignments within 24 hours of their due dates.

### **Reaction Paper Assignment: DUE Tuesday, January 22, 11:55 pm**

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. Who funded this effort? Why? 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. You must consult sources other than the organization's web site, including news sites, social science research and other blogs. Use the APA method to cite your sources. If you are unfamiliar with this method, a quick Google search will turn up several great sites. Your paper must include at least three citations not including the organization's web site or social media.

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?



- Your discussion of who funded the campaign and why, and your thoughtful discussion of what that means.
- 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.
- Your use of external sources. “A” papers will make use of at least three sources other than the organization’s web site.

Excluded topics: Dove “Real Beauty”, Always “Like a Girl”, the truth campaign

Please use page numbers and headings, and include footnotes or endnotes. Use the following convention name for your file:

YourLastNameYourFirstNameReactionPaper.docx

