

MMC6936: Master of Arts in Mass Communication Capstone, Fall 2020

Fall 2020

MMC6936: Public Interest Communications Capstone Experience

Class meetings via Zoom, synchronous

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Office hours: Thursdays 1-3 pm EST

About the course:

The moment of profound social change we are now experiencing may seem like an eruption--a visceral reaction to anger, pain and frustration about what should not be. However, much of this change is the result of careful organization and planning by leaders and movements with an eye toward lasting change. In this course, you'll apply what you've learned throughout this program to a cause or organization that is important to you.

Outcomes:

By the end of the course, you will be able to :

- Apply the public interest communications approach and frameworks you've learned in foundational courses to projects and issues that are important to you.
- Apply primary and secondary research to developing a communications strategy. Develop an actionable communications strategy that directly supports lasting change.
- Support your client by demonstrating how deliberate strategic choices can help them use their resources where they will be most effective.
- Advocate for a strategy and gain necessary resources for implementing it.

- Implement an effective communications strategy.
- Develop tangible evaluative measures.
- Accept and apply feedback.

Please note this syllabus is a working document. It will change as events emerge and contexts shift. For most-current assignments and class discussion topics, always refer to the course's Canvas site. You will submit all of your assignments there.

Readings:

All reading will be assigned through Canvas links.

Assignments:

All assignments are due by 5 pm EST Friday, except where otherwise noted.

Grading:

Getting on the same page memo 5

Annotated bibliography 5

Survey, interview or focus group instrument 5

Insights memo 10

Strategy memo 10

Calls to action 5

Evaluative measures 5

Client presentation 5

Sample tactics 5

Final project 40

Total points possible: 100

Grading Scale:

93-100 A

90-92 A-

88-89 B+

83-87 B

80-82 B-

78-79 C+

73-77 C

70-72 C-

68-69 D+

63-67 D

60-62 D-

59 or below: E

Module 1: Planning

Week 1: Connecting with your client

Welcome, course introduction, choosing your client, understanding their needs and resources.

Assignment: Meet with your client, complete the **four questions** and a **memo that articulates their needs and resources**.

Week 2: Secondary research

Meet with CJC Librarian April Hines to develop an **annotated bibliography** of insights from peer-reviewed academic research that will be relevant to developing your strategy.

Week 3: Primary research

Define whose insight you need to make your project a success, and write your survey, interview or focus group instrument

Week 4: Primary research implementation

Conduct survey, interviews or focus groups with people who represent your target audiences.

Week 5: Draw insights from research

Review your research, draw insights, write **insights memo**

Weeks 6 and 7: Strategy development

Write a memo that applies your research insights to developing your strategy. Use the four questions as a framework.

Week 8: Calls to action

Use the building better calls to action framework to identify specific, actionable and inspiring **calls to action**.

Week 9: Evaluation

Identify evaluative measures and write a brief memo describing how you'll measure success.

Week 10: Getting client buy-in

Read "Building support for your ideas" and use the framework to present your insights and strategy to client, capture and apply client feedback to your plan.

Week 11: Identify tactics

Use your research to identify a set of tactics that are likely to be effective with your client's target audience.

Week 12: Implement sample tactic

Create one of your tactics.

Week 13: Implement sample tactics

Create a second tactic.

Week 14: Review and collect

Assemble your completed memos, apply my feedback and that of your client, put into final campaign book

Week 15: Submit final project

Submit your final campaign book to your client and me.

Class Policies:

Student Health and Wellness: Your well-being is important to me, and to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging everyone in our community to look out for one another and reach out for help if anyone is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime/weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 911.

Students with disabilities: All reasonable accommodations will be made. Should you need them, please register first with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) ([Links to an external site.](#)) and provide appropriate documentation. Once registered, you'll receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to me when requesting accommodation. Please follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Honesty is expected at all times. As a UF student, you've agreed to comply with the University Honor Code. Please make sure you understand the code and consequences, which are here: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/> ([Links to an external site.](#)). Any violations of this code in Environmental Journalism class will be reported to the Dean of Students. You must also pay special attention to journalistic ethics and issues of plagiarism and copyright; please read and understand UF's College of Journalism and Communications statement on these

matters: www.jou.ufl.edu/academics/bachelors/journalism/academic-honesty/ (Links to an external site.)

Class or meeting attendance: Requirements for class attendance and other work fall under UF policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx> (Links to an external site.). Any reason for absence class that does not appear on this list of excused absences will result in an automatic 25-point deduction per missed class.

Late assignments: Meeting deadlines is crucial to your future success and relationship with bosses, whatever your field. On all assignments, your grade will drop one full letter grade for each day overdue.

Diversity & Inclusion: The College of Journalism and Communications embraces a commitment toward an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class and religion. We expect each of our courses to help foster an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

We consider our classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect. We welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability--and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

Zoom policy & professionalism: Please maintain a professional appearance and conduct during our our meetings. Consider your wardrobe and hygiene just as you would were we all in the same room, as well as your audio and visual backgrounds.

For our very interactive class, I expect you to keep your camera on during Zoom sessions. If you go to black screen for a significant amount of time, points will be deducted from your attendance/participation score at our discretion. Note that lectures will be recorded for educational purposes. If you have extenuating circumstances or concerns about Zoom attendance, please talk to me. Your full, synchronous participation in class is crucial.

Course and instructor evaluations: Finally, please provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last weeks of the semester; you'll be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available for students at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>