

Public Interest Communications
PUR4442 section 0982 class 19082 (3 credits)
12:50-1:40 p.m. Tuesdays; 11:45 a.m.-1:40 p.m. Thursdays

Instructor: Angela Bradbery

Office hours/reaching me: Given COVID-19, we can't meet in my office. I'm happy to meet outside or in a classroom where we can socially distance. I'm also available by phone, zoom and email. Contact me any time at abradery@jou.ufl.edu or call my cell, 202-669-6517. Please allow at least 24 hours for a response during the week and 48 hours on weekends and holidays.

Course description and goals: In this course, you will be introduced to the core concepts of public interest communications through four timely societal problems and the advocacy movements waged to address them: 1) police brutality and the #BlackLivesMatter movement; 2) health care disparities and the Medicare for All movement; 3) the curtailment of voting rights and the democracy reform movement; and 4) the climate crisis and the climate movement. By doing hands-on work, you'll learn the basics of being a public interest communicator, including how to identify and reach key audiences; how to develop effective, values-based messaging; how to choose the right messengers; the importance of storytelling; how to use powerful visuals for maximum impact; how to use digital media to achieve communications goals; and how to develop a strategic communications plan. At the beginning of the semester, you will select one of the four areas on which to focus. You will be expected to follow the news in all four areas throughout the semester, but your weekly assignments will enable you to dig deeper into the communications around one area in particular. For the final project, you will work in teams to craft strategic communications plans for a real-world cause. We'll also have several professional public interest communicators as guest speakers throughout the semester.

College of Journalism and Communications objectives

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the US
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;

- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

A NOTE ABOUT COVID-19

We will have face-to-face instructional sessions to accomplish the student learning objectives of this course. In response to COVID-19, the following policies and requirements are in place to maintain your learning environment and to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions.

- You are required to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings. Following and enforcing these policies and requirements are all of our responsibility. Failure to do so will lead to a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
- This course has been assigned a physical classroom with enough capacity to maintain physical distancing (6 feet between individuals) requirements. Please use designated seats and maintain appropriate spacing between students. Please do not move desks or stations.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- Follow your instructor's guidance on how to enter and exit the classroom. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible when entering and exiting the classroom.
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms ([read this guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. [Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms.](#)
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. [Find more information in the university attendance policies.](#)

MUTUAL PLEDGE AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Mutual pledge

As your instructor, I pledge to open a window for you into the world of public interest communications and guide you in your journey of learning not only communications tools but also the critical thinking necessary to be a successful public interest communicator. I will show you how you can effect positive social change with public interest communications and the career opportunities available.

In turn, you must do the work necessary to help me teach you. That means keeping up with the area of focus you choose for the semester, completing the weekly writing assignments on time, being prepared each week to discuss your findings with the class, participating each week in class discussions, keeping up with assigned reading, and putting time and thought into your work.

Diversity statement

Some of the topics we will cover in this class may be difficult and uncomfortable. While I expect rigorous discussion and even disagreement in the course of our class discussions, I ask that you engage in discussion with care and empathy for the other members in the classroom, recognizing that people come from diverse backgrounds and have an array of perspectives. My aim is for students from all backgrounds to find this course valuable and to view the diversity that students bring to the class as a resource and benefit. I aim to present materials that are respectful of diversity of ethnicity, race, culture, gender, sexuality, disability, age and socioeconomic status. However, I recognize the limitations of the materials and encourage suggestions for additional materials that offer diverse perspectives. Please let me know if you have any ideas as to how to make the course more effective for you and/or other students. If something was said in class (by anyone) that makes you uncomfortable, please talk to me about it. (Anonymous feedback always is an option). If any class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

CLASS LOGISTICS

Deadlines

Public interest communications work is deadline-oriented. Deadlines must be met. If they are not, you will not receive credit for the assignment. The only exceptions will be for students with medical emergencies (you must have a doctor's note) or other genuine, documented emergencies. Please notify me as soon as possible if you have an emergency that will prevent you from completing an assignment.

If submission of your assignment is delayed because of technical issues with Canvas, please report the problem immediately, receive a ticket number from the UF Computing Help Desk and email it to me immediately. The ticket will document the time and date of your issue.

For technical issues related to Canvas, contact the UF Help Desk at <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu> or (352) 392-HELP (4357).

Format for writing assignments

Please use AP style for all writing assignments. If you don't have the AP Stylebook, you can subscribe to it online (<https://www.apstylebook.com/> on-line/) or you can purchase a hard copy.

Course technology

You will need reliable Internet access and a reliable computer with Microsoft Word (or other word processing software that can generate a .doc or .docx file), Adobe flash (for viewing video content) and Adobe PDF reader. **Please bring your computer to class.**

Class attendance

Attendance is important, as class participation is a key part 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 make up lost work, get notes from another student or otherwise ensure that you have learned anything you missed.

Class-related notifications

Please log in to Canvas daily to check for class-related announcements. You may set up alerts to forward messages directly to your UF email address. To adjust your notification settings in Canvas, [follow these guidelines](#).

Grading

Because communications at any nonprofit organization involves brainstorming and collaborating with colleagues, and because it's more fun to learn by seeking answers to questions rather than listening to a straight lecture, participating in class will be key to your learning. For that reason, class participation will constitute a good chunk of the grade.

Likewise, the written analyses will be critical to your learning about the way organizations communicate their messages, so they will be heavily weighted as well. The final project – a team campaign plan for a real cause – will provide a chance for you to put together all that you have learned in class, as well as tap into your creativity. Because teamwork is critical in the real world, your peers will evaluate your contributions to the team project, and that peer review will constitute a percentage of your final grade.

There will be three in-class quizzes. Here's how the grading will be weighted:

- Class participation: 20%
- Writing assignments: 30%
- Quizzes: 20%
- Final project – 20%
- Peer review – 10%

For more information, please see the university's policy on [grades and grading](#).

Students with special needs

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their

accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Course professionalism

Please be on time to class. Please do not text, check email or social media unrelated to the class, browse unrelated websites or do other work during class. Please be collegial and respectful in your interactions with your fellow students, and welcome and treat with respect the diverse perspectives of others. Violators will be asked to leave the class.

Academic honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. 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.” The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Read the Honor Code [here](#). You are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask me.

When referencing materials obtained from other sources, such as organizations’ websites, you must attribute them.

In every assignment for this course, you must 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.

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. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). 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 ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here](#).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule may change as the semester progresses to reflect the progress and needs of the class.

Week 1 (Jan. 12 and 14): Welcome! What is public interest communications?

An introduction to the class. We’ll talk about what public interest communications is and why we need it, as well as what you’ll learn this semester. We’ll go over the four issue areas we will study. Students will select one area on which to focus and a public interest organization to follow and analyze for the rest of the semester.

Week 2 (Jan. 19 and 21): Why framing and narratives are key to effective communications

Facts are important, but facts alone won't move your audiences to act. So what will? This week, we'll explore the science behind message framing and values-based messaging, how to make people care about big issues and the power of narratives in effecting change.

Week 3 (Jan. 26 and 28): Why you need a specific, achievable goal to effect change

We'll explore the importance of having specific, achievable and actionable goals in public interest campaigns, and how they boost the effectiveness of your communications efforts. Students will identify and analyze the effectiveness of the goals sought by organizations working on the four issue areas.

Week 4 (Feb 2 and 4): Check it out! Do your research.

You can't steer the conversation or effect change if you don't know what's being said or what has been done and by whom. This week, we cover how to research your audiences, decisionmakers and existing messaging and messengers.

Quiz this week.

Week 5 (Feb. 9 and 11): Audiences – who are you trying to reach, and how does that affect what you say?

Public interest campaigns have multiple audiences, which means that communicators must tailor their messages to those audiences. We'll delve into the audiences being targeted by the public interest organizations we are following in the four issue areas and analyze the messaging directed to them.

Week 6 (Feb. 16 and 18): Who are the best messengers to advance your goals?

We'll dive into what makes a credible and effective messenger, and we'll learn about and apply cognitive science to analyze the effectiveness of messengers in the four issue areas.

Week 7 (Feb. 23 and 25): Pitching the news media

Earned media is key to any public interest organization's communications efforts. This week, we'll explore what reporters consider newsworthy, how to pitch reporters, the many opportunities provided by talk radio and podcasts, when and how to engage in rapid response, and how niche media can help advance your goals.

Week 8 (March 2 and 4): Storytelling as a key to moving people to action

We'll learn about the science that makes storytelling so critical to public interest communications efforts.

Quiz this week.

Week 9 (March 9 and 11): Messaging: painting a picture with words

You have a laudable goal – now you just need to convey it in the most compelling way possible. We'll learn how to do that by being clear, painting pictures with words, keeping it simple and using inclusive language as well as repetition..

Week 10 (March 16 and 18): Digital media

The digital media landscape is vast. Which platforms should you choose for your public interest communications campaign? This week, we'll learn about the differences between the major digital media platforms and how to tailor content to maximize your effectiveness and move your audiences to action.

Week 11 (March 23 and 25): Using visuals to communicate your message

Visuals – photos, graphics, videos – are key to any public interest communications campaign. We'll learn what makes a compelling visual and delve into the power of photos as symbols in movements.

Week 12 (March 30 and April 1): Putting it all together: how to craft a strategic communications plan

You have learned the basic components of an effective communications strategy; now we'll put it all together. We'll focus on the difference between strategies and tactics and how to measure success, and you will learn what goes into a strategic communications plan.

Quiz this week.**Week 13 (April 6 and 8): Campaign project work**

Teams work in class on the final project.

Week 14 (April 13 and 15): Campaign project work.

Teams work in class on the final project.

Week 15 (April 20 LAST DAY OF CLASS):

Final project due April 20.

READING MATERIALS

REQUIRED BOOKS. Please purchase these two books in paper or electronic format.

Lakoff, G. (2014). *The all new don't think of an elephant; know your values and fame the debate*. Chelsea Green Publishing.

The March for Our Lives Founders. (2018). *Glimmer of hope: How tragedy sparked a movement* Penguin Random House.

BOOK EXCERPTS. To be provided.

Heath, C. & Heath, D. (2007). *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*. Penguin Random House, 132-138.

Potter, W. (2010). *Deadly spin: an insurance company insider speaks out on how corporate PR is killing health care and deceiving Americans*. Bloomsbury Press.

Luntz, F. (2007). *Words that work: it's not what you say, it's what people hear*. Hachette Books. Excerpts to be provided.

ARTICLES

Christiano, A. and Neimand, A. (2018). The science of what makes people care. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_science_of_what_makes_people_care

Christiano, A. and Neimand, A. (2017). Stop raising awareness already. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/stop_raising_awareness_already

Christiano, A. and Neimand, A. (2017). The back-of-the-envelope guide to communications Strategy. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_back_of_the_envelope_guide_to_communications_strategy

Shorters, T. (2019). “You can’t lift people up by putting them down”: How to talk about tough issues of race, poverty, and more. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*. <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/You-Can-t-Lift-People-Up/246559>

Potter, W. (2020, Aug. 6). The health care scare: I sold Americans a lie about Canadian medicine. Now we’re paying the price.” *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/08/06/health-insurance-canada-lie/?arc404=true>

Frame Works. (2020). Tapping into the power of metaphors. <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/article/tapping-into-the-power-of-metaphors/>

Winsten, J. (2017). Developing media messages that save lives. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/developing_media_messages_that_save_lives

Cottle, M. (2018). How Parkland students changed the gun debate.” *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/02/parkland-students-power/554399/>

Kristof, Nicholas. “Nicholas Kristof’s Advice for Saving the World.” *Outside*. Nov. 30, 2009. <https://www.outsideonline.com/1909636/nicholas-kristofs-advice-saving-world>

Neimand, Annie. “How to Tell Stories About Complex Issues.” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. May 7, 2018. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/how_to_tell_stories_about_complex_issues

Center for Community Change. *Messaging this moment: A handbook for progressive communicators*. <https://communitychange.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/C3-Messaging-This-Moment-Handbook-1.pdf>

Wen, W. And Shammas, B. (2020, Dec. 21). Why Americans are numb to the staggering coronavirus death toll. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/12/21/covid-why-we-ignore-deaths/>

NEWSLETTERS

The Goodman Center. (2020) Fake news is not a game (but learning to spot it is). *Freerange Thinking*.
https://www.thegoodmancenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/freerange_2020_02.pdf

The Goodman Center. (2020). Fear or hope: which motivates more? (This group tried both).
Freerange Thinking.
https://www.thegoodmancenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/freerange_2020_01.pdf

The Goodman Center. (2019). When telling your story, think small.” *Freerange Thinking*.
https://www.thegoodmancenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/freerange_2019_08.pdf

RECOMMENDED NEWS SOURCES

The Root.

Democracy Now!

grist

The New York Times. To subscribe to *The New York Times*, follow the instructions below:

1. Go to <https://my.ufl.edu/ps/signon.html>
2. After signing in, select the Navigation Bar in the upper right corner (three stacked horizontal lines)
3. Select “Main Menu”
4. Select “Quick Links”
5. Select “NY Times”
6. Select “Subscribe Now” and follow subscription instructions.
7. Verify email address
8. Access NY Times

ADDITIONAL UF RESOURCES

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.