

Public Interest Communications
PUR4442 section 0012 class 19115 (3 credits)
11 a.m.-3:15 p.m. Mondays; 11 a.m.-1:45 p.m. Wednesdays

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 learn how to use strategic, science-based communications to effect positive social change. 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.

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.

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.

Class attendance

Attendance is important, as class participation is a key part of your learning. To get the most out of this class, you need to be present and participate in the class. Being present doesn't mean that you simply have logged into the class—it also means you're attentive and not texting, checking email or doing other work.

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

We will cover a lot of material during each class. To help keep it fresh and to ensure continuity from one section to another, I will give quizzes regularly. I also will assign written analyses designed to help you learn about the way organizations communicate their messages.

There will be four in-class quizzes, four writing assignments and a final exam. Here's how the grading will be weighted:

- Attendance: and participation: 10%
- Writing assignments: 20%
- Quizzes: 40%
- Final exam – 30%

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 (May 10 and 12): Welcome! What is public interest communications? What is framing?

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 on which we will focus. Students will select one area on which to focus and a public interest organization to follow and analyze for the rest of the semester.

We'll also dive into the concept of message framing. How messages are framed is critical to whether the audiences will be moved by it. We'll explore the science behind message framing and values-based messaging.

Week 2 (May 17 and 19): How to craft effective goals and target your audiences

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. We'll also talk about how strategic communications campaigns have multiple audiences, and how communicators must tailor their messages to those audiences. We'll delve into how to identify your audiences and research them.

Week 3 (May 24 and 26): How to make people care about big issues.

We'll explain why it's hard to make people care about big problems that affect a lot of people, what we can do about it and the science behind making people care. We'll also dive into what makes a credible and effective messenger and the elements of effective storytelling.

Week 4 (June 2 only): 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 5 (June 7 and 9): Digital media, visuals and strategic communications planning

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. We'll also learn what makes a compelling visual and go over the remaining elements of a strategic communications plan, including the difference between strategies and tactics.

Week 6 (June 14 and 16): Wrap-up

We'll wrap up loose ends and take a final exam, which will give you an opportunity to put together all the pieces you have learned.

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.

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>

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

Wen, W. And Shamma, 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). 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

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.