

Public Interest Communications
PUR 4442 section 3E18 class 18369 (3 credits)
12:50 p.m.-2:45 p.m. Tuesdays; 1:55 p.m.-2:45 p.m. Thursdays

Instructor: Angela Bradbery

Office hours: 3-5 p.m. Thursdays or by appointment, 3200B Weimer Hall (in the Center for Public Interest Communications). I'm also available by email or phone: abradbery@jou.ufl.edu or (352) 294-2013, c. (202) 669-6517. Please allow at least 24 hours for a response during the week and 48 hours on weekends and holidays.

Course Prerequisites: None.

Course Description: 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 violence and the #BlackLivesMatter movement; 2) health care inequities 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. At the beginning of the semester, you will select one of the four areas on which to focus. 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 messaging and choose the right messengers, the importance of storytelling, how to use powerful visuals for maximum impact and how to use digital media to achieve communications goals. For the final project, you will work in teams to craft strategic communications plans for a real-world cause, incorporating the concepts introduced throughout the semester.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Define public interest communications and explain its role in bringing about social change.
2. Explain the science behind key public interest communications concepts.
3. Apply the concepts to a public interest communications campaign.
4. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of any nonprofit organization's communications.
5. Craft a strategic communications plan for a real-world nonprofit organization's campaign.
6. Explore the many career opportunities in the nonprofit world.

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:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;

- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness; and
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

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 strategic communications tools but also the critical thinking skills necessary to being 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, being prepared for class, participating 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 students 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 materials may have limitations 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 is an option as well). 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 learning and will factor into your grade. To get the most out of the class, you must be present and on time for class and participate in discussions and class activities. 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.

I recognize that things crop up and that students may have to miss part, or all, of a class during the semester. For that reason, at the end of the semester, I will drop everyone's lowest participation grade. To be fair to those who do attend class, I will assess participation whether you attend class or not. The only exception is for a documented medical issue that leads you to miss class.

If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to make up lost work, get notes from another student or otherwise ensure that you have caught up on 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 through discussion rather than listening to a straight lecture, participating in class will be key to your learning.

Likewise, the written analyses you do outside of class will be critical because you will be applying concepts covered in class and in the reading assignments. 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.

Here's how the grading will be weighted:

- Class participation (includes (discussions, activities, in-class writing assignments and quizzes): 20%
- Writing assignments (outside of class): 20%
- Midterm exam – 10%
- Final project (presentation) – 10%
- Final project (strategic communications plan) – 30%
- 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.

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 crediting 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. 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.

Recording of class

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use; (2) in connection with a complaint to the university; or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

COURSE SCHEDULE

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

Week 1 (Aug. 24 and 26): Welcome! What is public interest communications?

An introduction to the class and each other. We'll define public interest communications and talk about why we need it, as well as what you'll learn and do this semester. We'll also dive into the four issues that students will select from as an area of focus for the semester.

Week 2 (Aug. 31 and Sept. 1): How did we get here? And an introduction to framing.

There are more than a million nonprofits in the U.S., but that hasn't always been the case. This week, we'll explore the events that gave rise to public interest organizations and the attendant rise of corporate power. Plus, we'll dive into the concept of message framing. What is framing and how does it work?

Week 3 (Sept. 7 and 9): Why framing and narratives are key to effective communications

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. We'll also hear from the nonprofit organization we will help this semester.

Week 4 (Sept. 14 and 16): What makes an effective goal?

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 specific organizations.

Week 5 (Sept. 21 and 23): Who are you trying to reach?

Public interest campaigns have multiple audiences, which means that communicators must tailor their messages to those audiences. How do public interest communicators identify their audiences? How do they learn about those audiences? How does that affect the messaging? We'll answer these questions and more.

Week 6 (Sept. 28 and 30): 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 (Oct. 5 and 7): How do you make people care about big issues? Plus, the science behind storytelling.

Research shows that the larger a problem is and the more people it affects, the more likely people are to tune out. This week, we'll explore the science that explains this phenomenon and what communicators can do to make people care about big problems that affect a lot of people.

Week 8 (Oct. 12 and 14): Midterm exam and guest speaker

This week, we'll take a midterm exam and hear from a guest speaker.

Week 9 (Oct. 19 and 21): Messaging: the science behind emotions. Painting a picture with words.

This week, we'll talk about the science behind emotions, and why evoking emotions is more effective than citing facts when trying to engage people and motivate them to act. We'll also talk about how to paint pictures with words, using rhetorical devices to craft powerful messages.

Week 10 (Oct. 26 and 28): Pitching the 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, and how niche media can help advance your goals.

Week 11 (Nov. 2 and 4): 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 social media platforms and how to use digital media to maximize your effectiveness and move your audiences to action.

Week 12 (Nov. 9 only (Nov. 11 is Veterans Day)): Using visuals to communicate your message

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

Week 13 (Nov. 16 and 18): 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 with some final components. We'll learn the difference between strategies and tactics, explore how to measure success and learn how to build a timeline.

Week 14 (Nov. 23 only): Campaign project work

This week, we'll discuss how to present your strategic communications plan in an organized and compelling way.

Week 15 (Nov. 30 and Dec. 2): Presentations!

Teams present their strategic communications plans to the nonprofit organization.

Week 16 (Dec. 7 only (Dec. 8 is the last day of class))

We discuss the presentations – how did they go? What did we learn?

READING MATERIALS

REQUIRED BOOKS.

Lakoff, G. (2014). *The all new don't think of an elephant; know your values and fame the debate*. Chelsea Green Publishing. **(NOTE: This is available as an ebook through the University of Florida library.)**

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

BOOK AND ARTICLE EXCERPTS. To be provided in Canvas.

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](#).

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

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.](#)