

Syllabus: Internal Communications and Employee Engagement

(Summer C 2022)

ABOUT THE COURSE

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Professor: Renee Mitson (PhD Student, M.A.)

I'm a third year PhD student in the Public Relations Department. My research areas are organizational leadership (internal public relations) and emerging technology. I am also interested in female executive communication and leadership research of underrepresented groups.

I have two M.A.'s (media and mass communication) and a BA in public relations and film. I have also worked for over a decade in corporate communication and public relations representing high-end consumer products. Some highlights include working for TED Talks, Yelp, Electrolux, Burger King, Cornell University, and Hasbro Toys (I worked on My Little Pony).

This course was originally designed by Dr. Rita Men who is on sabbatical and will be having a beautiful baby in the Spring. I am her advisee and work and conduct research with her closely so I was selected to teach her course as I am the closest to the material. I am so excited to be teaching this course and sharing it with you all!

Course Designed By: Rita Linjuan Men, Ph.D., APR, Associate Professor, Department of Public Relations

Office: N/A - can meet by appointment

Phone: N/A

E-mail: reneemitson@ufl.edu

Office Hours:

By appointment - email me anytime. I find that when I set office hours some students have class during that time so I would rather set up a time individually that works for you as-needed. I'm very flexible as to how we meet - it can be in person, on Zoom, over the phone, on gchat - however is easiest for you.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Employees have long been recognized as the No. 1 stakeholder of the organizations. Especially in this increasingly connected, globalized, and transparent digital age, the line between internal and external is blurred. Effective internal communication is critical for the success of an organization. This course focuses on the influential roles that communication managers play to address the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing internal stakeholders. It integrates theories, research insights, practices, as well as current issues and cases into a comprehensive

guide for future internal communication managers and organizational leaders on how to communicate effectively with internal stakeholders, build beneficial relationships, and engage employees in the fast-changing business and media environment. Through lectures, discussions, and work sessions, students will be equipped with effective strategies, tactics, and tools to be able to act as an internal communication strategist.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will teach you to:

1. Discuss the basic principles of internal communication management, as related to topics of internal public segmentation, ethics, culture, communication strategies, channels, and measurement
2. Counsel organizational leaders such as the C-Suite and supervisors on how to communicate effectively
3. Apply the strategies, techniques, and tools required to engage employees, with specific emphasis on digital and social capabilities
4. Develop a standard of excellence in internal communications by analyzing “real life,” award-winning cases
5. Create an internal communication plan applying strategic and creative thinking

REQUIRED TEXT

Men, L. R., & Bowen, S. (2017). Excellence in Internal Communication Management. Business Expert Press, New York.

CONTINUING READING

- [The Institute for Public Relations' Organizational Communication Research Center](#)
- [The International Association of Business Communication](#)
- [PRSA](#)

COMMUNICATION METHODS FOR ONLINE STUDENTS

The instructor works normal weekday hours (i.e., Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.). If you email during this time, you may expect a reply in 24 hours. (*Note: Normally, I reply as soon as I see your email. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions!*)

Please do not ask questions in the “comments” section of an assignment. The instructor does not get an individual ping when a comment is left, so I will not know that they are there and so will not be able to respond in a timely manner.

For technical issues with Canvas, please contact E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2), e-mail Learningsupport@ufl.edu, or visit <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Students need to have access to a computer with a microphone and a camera and an internet. Students need to know how to use computers and create and work with Microsoft Word documents. You will need to introduce yourself via video post.

CLASS POLICIES

Students with Special Needs

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (352-392-8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

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 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/>.

Academic Honesty

The University of Florida Honor Code applies to all activities associated with this class.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. You can also review information on [Academic Honesty](#) in detail.

Religious Observance

Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

Attendance and Make-Ups

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with [university policies](#).

Respect for Diversity Statement

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

GRADING

Distribution of Points

Grades are *earned* via five modes: (1) Assignments; (2) Activities or exercises; (3) Discussions; (4) Exam (5) A final internal communication plan [group].

Area	Percent of Grade
Assignments	15%
Activities/exercises	10%
Discussions	20%
Exam	25%
Communication Plan	30%
Total Possible Points	100%

Grading Scale

100-93 A; 92-90 A-; 89-87 B+; 86-84 B; 83-80 B-; 79-77 C+; 76-74 C; 73-70 C-; 69-67 D+; 66-64 D; 63-60 D-; 59 and below E

Final Grades

Final grades will be rounded up if above .5. (For example, an 89.6 is an A-; an 89.2 is a B+)

UF Grading Policies

For more information on current UF grading policies, refer to [UF Grades and Grading Policies](#).

ASSESSMENTS

General Information

All assignments are due on the specified dates. Feedback on the assignments will be provided within one week after the due dates. Any assignments turned in late will be assessed penalty points per calendar day. Late assignments will receive an automatic grade reduction of 10 points every 24 hours (or portion thereof) beyond the time they are due.

Keep in mind that technology can fail from time to time, so try to complete your assignments ahead of time.

Assignments

Assignments include individual writing assignments that will require you to apply the principles, techniques, and skills you've learned to solve various problems.

Activities/Exercises

Activities/exercises are designed to engage the students with the course topics outside of the online environment. **This may entail individual or group activities/exercises (e.g., role play).**

Discussions

Participation in discussions is an important element of this course. The discussion board will give you an opportunity to consider aspects of topics that may be subject to interpretation. Each student is required to answer all discussion posts. **Each discussion post will be graded separately, but students will receive one overall commenting grade toward the end of the semester based upon your overall participation in the class discussions**, i.e., quantity and quality of your comments on others' posts.

As for your discussion post, typically, there will be no "right" or "wrong" answer. A high-quality post is one in which the author makes a good case to support an opinion. It involves analyzing relevant issues, building on others' ideas, synthesizing across readings and discussions, and expanding the class' perspective. Posts should also be clear, concise, original, and thoughtful, with proper English grammar, syntax, and spelling.

The expected length for a high-quality post is about 500 words, or a page.

A high-quality discussion post:

- is reflective of the readings
- uses critical thinking
- may consider relevant current events
- may incorporate personal experience
- often has an opinion
- uses proper grammar and professional level writing

Exam

There will be one closed-book exam on **Friday, July 29**. A study guide will be provided to you. Content of class discussions and required readings are subject to inclusion. An extra-credit Q&A zoom session will be hosted prior to the exam date. Participation in the Q&A zoom session will gain 1 bonus point added to the exam score.

Note: the exam will be open book, and notes will be allowed.

Internal Communication Plan Project

The internal communication plan project requires students to work in teams to research and propose an internal communication plan for an organization of your interest. A written plan will be turned in and students will record a virtual team presentation. Detailed instructions on the team communication plan project can be found under the project description. (Note: click on assignments on the menu, then find internal communication plan project.) **This will be due August 1st.**

The Team Project grade is comprised of a Team Grade (75%) and an Individual Grade (25%). Individual grade will be based on peer evaluations. Utilizing confidential forms, team members will evaluate each others' contributions. Team Grade will be based on the quality of the communication plan (75%) as well as the final oral presentation (25%).