



Public Interest Communications
Fall 2022
MMC 6936 section 3E18 class 28375 (3 credits)
Tuesdays 12:50 p.m.-2:45 p.m. and Thursdays 1:55 p.m.-2:45 p.m.
WEIM 1078

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. At the beginning of the semester, you will select a social issue on which to focus and an organization that is working to effect change related to that issue. Through in-class activities and by analyzing your chosen organization's communications, you'll learn the basics of being a public interest communicator, including the science behind message framing, how to make people care about big issues, how to mobilize people to action and how to select the best messengers to deliver your message. For your final project, you'll develop the key components of a strategic communications plan for a public interest campaign of your choosing.

Note: Grad students who take this course will do a more robust final project that requires interviews with members of groups that are to be mobilized to act, as well as representatives of at least two organizations working on the issue. Grad students also will present their plans to the class at the end of 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 positive social change.
2. Explain the science behind key public interest communications concepts.
3. Apply the concepts to real-world public interest communications campaigns and case studies.

4. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of any public interest organization's communications.
5. Craft the broad outlines of a strategic public interest communications plan.
6. Explore the many career opportunities in public interest.

In addition, graduate students will be able to:

7. *Conduct interviews with people to discern their worldviews and with organizational representatives to gather details about their work.*
8. *Synthesize the information gathered in the interviews*
9. *Incorporate the information into 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:
- 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;
- 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.

About inclusion and diversity of voices

Some of the topics we will cover in this class may be difficult and uncomfortable. While I expect rigorous discussion and even disagreement during 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

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.

Attribution in writing assignments

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 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 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. Excessive absences will harm your grade.

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 what you missed. You are responsible for notifying the professor in advance of the cause of your absence and, if it is due to illness, providing a note from your medical provider.

That said, I recognize that things crop up and that students may have to a class during the semester. For that reason, at the end of the semester, I will drop everyone's lowest participation grade.

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.

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 public interest 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 and will be part of your grade. Likewise, the written analyses that you do outside of class will be critical because you will be applying concepts covered in class and in the reading assignments.

Here's how the grading will be weighted:

- Class participation (includes discussions, activities, in-class writing assignments and quizzes): 35%
- Writing assignments: 35%
- Final project – 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.

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.

Plagiarism

The Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code states that "A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.

Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.

Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.

Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author."

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.bluer.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. 25) – Welcome!

Welcome! What is public interest communications? What careers can you have as a public interest communicator? We'll introduce ourselves and talk about the social issues that we care about most.

Week 2 (Aug. 30 and Sept. 1) – Public interest communications

This week, we'll provide an overview of how communications has been used throughout history for positive social change. We'll also explore the question: What is in the public interest? Plus, we'll introduce a core framework that explains the six spheres of influence we use to effect change.

Week 3 (Sept. 6 and 8) – Four key questions

We'll continue digging into key frameworks, including the four-question, back-of-the-envelope guide to public interest communications.

Week 4 (Sept. 13 and 15) – 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. 20 and 22) – Who do you need to mobilize?

To be successful, public interest communicators must mobilize a variety of people to act. How do public interest communicators identify those actors? How do we learn about them? We'll answer these questions and more.

Week 6 (Sept. 27 and 29) – Who are the best messengers to advance your goals?

We'll dive into what makes a credible and effective messenger and apply lessons from cognitive science to analyze the effectiveness of messengers.

Week 7 (Oct. 4 and 6) – How do you craft messages that move people? The science behind message framing.

This week, we'll explore the science behind message framing and the importance of values-based messaging in reaching people with a variety of worldviews and identities.

Week 8 (Oct. 11 and 13) – It's your turn!

This week, you'll identify a campaign you want to pursue for your final project. We'll work together in class to get you started.

Week 9 (Oct. 18 and 20) – How do you make people care about big issues?

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. Plus, we'll delve into the science behind storytelling.

Week 10 (Oct. 25 and 27) – The science behind emotions. Plus, 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 and use rhetorical devices to craft powerful messages.

Week 11 (Nov. 1 and 3) – Using visuals to communicate your message

Photos, graphics, videos and illustrations are key to any public interest communications campaign. We'll learn the science behind what makes visuals effective as well as the elements of a compelling visual.

Week 12 (Nov. 8 and 10) – News media is key to any public interest communications campaign

This week, we'll explore what news reporters consider newsworthy, how to pitch reporters, the many opportunities provided by talk radio and podcasts, and how niche media can help you advance your campaign goals.

Week 13 (Nov. 15 and 17) – Digital media

The digital media landscape is vast. Which platforms should you use? 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 people to action.

Week 14 (Nov. 22 only because of Thanksgiving) – Final project work.

We'll work together on applying what we've learned.

Week 15 – (Nov. 29 and Dec. 1) – How do you know if you succeeded?

This week, we'll explore how to evaluate the effectiveness of a public interest communications campaign. Graduate students will present their communications plans to the class.

Week 16 (Dec. 6 only) – Final project work.

Last day! We'll talk about your projects and what you learned.

READING MATERIALS

REQUIRED BOOKS.

Available as an ebook through the University of Florida library: 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.

Links to additional articles and videos will 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.