

# Course Syllabus

## Public Interest Communications—PUR 4442/MMC6936

**Class Time:** W: 9:33-12:35

**Class Location:** WEIM 1078

**Instructor:** Nader Dagher      **Email:** ndagher@ufl.edu      **Phone:** 3527092776

**Office:** 2041B Weimer Hall. **Office Hours:** W 1:00-3:00 or by appointment

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### Course Objectives

1. You will be able to describe the role of communication in driving positive social change.
2. You will be able to critique or create strategic communications plans for social change efforts.
3. You will understand and be able to apply a set of frameworks that are built on social, behavioral, and cognitive science.
4. You will be able to determine how to use and combine the six spheres through which communicators work to achieve change: policy, media, social marketing, the market, activism, and communities of influence.
5. You will be able to critique campaign design and results.
6. You will be able to design campaigns for social change using a set of research-driven
7. You will develop skills to interpret and incorporate fundamental changes in how we communicate as a society and their implications for this field.

### Course Overview

Effective communication is the accelerant of the fire of social change. Public interest communications is a form of strategic communication through which organizations, causes, or movements take on specific communications objectives that will have a benefit to society. This benefit transcends the particular interest of any single organization undertaking a campaign or communications effort.

This is an evolving field, and its practitioners are continuously applying new insights and techniques to support positive social change. The field is not as well-established as its sister fields of public relations, advertising, journalism, and marketing; however, an increased recognition among change makers of the importance of communications to social change means that there are more resources available than there once were. This is also an entrepreneurial field, which results in significant innovation.

Public interest communications is a large and complex field, and it will not be possible to cover all its aspects during the 16 weeks we have together. To make the most of our time, the course will focus on the principles and fundamentals on which the field stands.

In this course, you will learn the six spheres through which we can drive social change, the strategic planning process for an effective social change communications campaign, and the tools, qualities, and tactics that make these campaigns real. You will gain insight into the richness of the field, the power that effective communications have to address a problem and profoundly affect people's lives, and begin to see the astonishing range of careers and opportunities that this field holds.

### **Course Format**

Our course will include brief lectures, discussions, reflections, guest lectures, and student case presentations.

### **Required Reading, Viewing, and Listening**

Writing, reading, viewing, and listening assignments are listed on the syllabus. There is no textbook for this course. I may add readings and assignments over the course of 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 United States
- 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 and ethical principles, and work ethically to pursue 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 understand the digital world.

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

The evaluation of coursework will be based on your performance in four major areas, each of which constitutes a proportion of the final grade. Your grade will be calculated by the following:

### **1. In-Class Attendance & Participation: 30%**

Attendance and active participation are mandatory. Absences count from the first class following drop/add. After due warning, the professor may prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a lower or failing grade for excessive absences; more than two unexcused absences during the semester will be considered “excessive absences.” You are responsible for notifying Professor Searight before your absence and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider.

Participation means you are fully engaged in the classroom discussion and not using cell phones or laptops except when directed to as part of classroom activities. It means you arrive to class early or on time, ready to learn and engage.

Requirements for assignments and other work in this course follow UF policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### **2. Weekly Assignments: 25%**

The class will include readings, videos, podcasts et al., and there will be written assignments for some of them. You'll need to complete these assignments at the direction of the instructor. These in-class assignments may not be made up if you miss class.

### **3. Case Study: 30%**

You will write and present a complete a case study of an organization working to make a specific change and offer recommendations for how that organization might have taken a different approach that would have been more effective. You will present your case in class on **April 24**.

### **4. Case Study Foundations: 15%**

Throughout the course, you will complete short assignments with your team that lay the groundwork for your final project.

***Note: Students enrolled in PUR 4212 will complete this assignment with partners or groups, students enrolled in MMC 6936 will complete this assignment alone.***

This written or recorded reflection will give you an opportunity to share what you have learned this semester. Details will be distributed soon. This is due **November 28, 2022**.

## **I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

**The grading scale for the course is:**

A 94%-100%

A- 90%- 94%

B+ 87%- 90%

B 84%-87%

B- 80%-84%

C+ 77%- 80%

C 74%- 77%

C- 70%-74%

D+ 67%-70%

D 64%- 67%

D- 61%- 64%

E 0%- 61%

Follows current UF policies

(<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

### **Availability**

Please don't hesitate to talk to me during the semester about any questions or concerns you have during my office hours or by appointment. (You can also reach me by email, and I'll do my best to get back to you within 24 hours.)

### **Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

I'm committed to creating an environment of inclusion that respects and affirms the fundamental dignity, value, and distinctiveness of all individuals and their perspectives. My teaching will reflect the understanding of the complexity of identity and the mutuality of our global community. My responsibility is to help promote and maintain a community of compassion, embracing the rich depths of diversity while facilitating opportunities for equity and inclusion.

### **Students Requiring Accommodations**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://dso.ufl.edu/drc)) 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 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. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/](http://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 [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/).

Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/)

### **University Honesty Policy**

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 ([sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/](http://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/)) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me.

## **CAMPUS RESOURCES**

### **U Matter, We Care**

If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [umatter.ufl.edu/](http://umatter.ufl.edu/) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

### **Counseling and Wellness Center**

Visit [counseling.ufl.edu/](http://counseling.ufl.edu/) 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 [shcc.ufl.edu/](http://shcc.ufl.edu/).

### **University Police Department**

Visit [police.ufl.edu/](http://police.ufl.edu/) 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; [ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center](http://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center).

### **E-learning Technical Support**

Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

### **Career Connections Center**

Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services [career.ufl.edu/](http://career.ufl.edu/). Library Support: [cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask](http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask) 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 352392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. [teachingcenter.ufl.edu/](http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/) Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. [writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/](http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/) Student Complaints On-Campus: [sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code](http://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code) student-conduct

### **A Note on Recording**

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.

**Assignments:** Please refer to Canvas for full details and rubrics.

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## ***COURSE SCHEDULE***

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

**Week 1 (Aug. 23) – Welcome!**

**Week 2 (Aug. 30) – Public interest communications**

**Week 3 (Sept. 6) – The Six Spheres of Influence**

**Week 4 (Sept. 13) - Four key questions**

**Week 5 (Sept. 20) – Whom do you need to mobilize?**

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

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

**Week 8 (Oct. 11) – Campaign Projects**

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

**Week 10 (Oct. 25) – The science behind emotions. Plus, painting a picture with words.**

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

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

**Week 13 (Nov. 15) – Digital media**

**Week 14 (Nov.22)- Holiday**

**Week 15 – (Nov. 29) – Measuring success**

**Week 16 (Dec. 6) – Final project**

### **Acknowledgment**

I acknowledge that for thousands of years the area now comprising the state of Florida has been, and continues to be, home to many Native Nations. I also recognize that the main campus of the University of Florida is located on the ancestral territory of the Potano and the Seminole peoples. The Potano, of Timucua affiliation, lived here in the Alachua region from before European arrival until the destruction of their towns in the early 1700s. The Seminole, also known as the Alachua Seminole, established towns here shortly after but were forced from the land due to a series of wars with the United States known as the Seminole Wars. I acknowledge our shared obligation to honor the past, present, and future Native residents and cultures of Florida.

### **Guidelines for Assignment Grades:**

Assignments that receive As:

- Are interesting
- Compare favorably with the best examples of work I share in class
- Are clearly organized
- Rely heavily on stories and visual language



- Are free of grammatical, spelling, fact or typographical errors
- Show an understanding of both the lecture and the assignment
- Include strong transitions
- Are concise but complete—not overwritten or puffy, but include relevant messages and information
- Are consistent with your message
- Are free of fact errors
- Meticulously cite source materials
- Where appropriate, include 5 or more credible sources of information
- Encourage me to keep reading with use of flow and narrative
- Are truthful and accurate
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of the client and their needs, as well as an understanding of issues and opposition the client faces
- Clearly support arguments with research