

Public Interest Communications Campaigns / Spring 2026

PUR 4802 / MMC 6936 – 3 credits

Tuesday 11:45 a.m.-1:40 p.m. and Thursday 12:50-1:40 p.m.

WEIMER 3028

Instructor: Angela Bradbery

Office hours: 2-4 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, but prior strategic communications and/or public interest communications coursework is recommended.

Course Description: In this course, you will work in teams to apply public interest communications concepts and frameworks to a campaign for a real public interest organization. You will meet with organization representatives at the beginning of the semester, check in with them in the middle of the semester and present your strategic communications plan at the end. We will begin with a refresher on the public interest communications approach, then cover key concepts throughout the semester as you work in teams to apply them to the campaign. This course goes further than the introductory public interest communications course; you'll conduct primary research, develop a budget and timeline, and identify evaluation metrics. The final product will be an actionable strategic communications plan that will provide an implementable roadmap to the organization we help. By the end of the semester, you'll not only have an impressive work sample for your portfolio, but you also will have honed your skills in teamwork, research, client work and the use of strategic communications for positive social change.

Note: Grad students taking this course will be given more advanced work in the form of additional assignments or additional components in assignments.

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

1. Explain the science behind key public interest communications concepts.
2. Apply public interest communications concepts to a challenge faced by a real-world public interest organization.
3. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of a public interest organization's communications activities.
4. Conduct primary and secondary research on a public interest issue.
5. Analyze research and incorporate it into a strategic communications plan.

6. Craft an actionable strategic communications plan for a real-world public interest organization.
7. Manage a complex project and meet project deadlines.
8. Work effectively in a team.
9. Present your work with professionalism and confidence.

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.

Tips for success

To be successful in this course, you just need an open mind and a desire to learn, question and explore. You'll do well as long as you come to class, keep up with the assignments and ask questions when you have them.

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 assignments, being prepared for class, participating in class discussions and putting time and thought into your work.

About classroom discussions

Please engage in class discussions with care, respect and empathy for others, recognizing that people come from an array of backgrounds and have different perspectives. My aim is for students from all backgrounds to find this course valuable and to view others' ideas as a resource and benefit. I aim to present materials that are respectful 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 different 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.

Note: Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

CLASS LOGISTICS

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.

In the professional world, people who are running late or are going to be absent notify their employer and/or colleagues. It's a good habit to get into, so please notify me and your teammates if you are going to be late or absent. 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.

I recognize that things crop up and you may have to miss a class during the semester. For that reason, at the end of the semester, I will drop each student's lowest participation grade.

Class professionalism

Did you know that multitasking during class hinders your ability to absorb information and virtually ensures that you will miss a critical point being made by another student or the instructor? For that reason, please do not text, check email or social media unrelated to the class, browse unrelated websites or do other work during class.

Please be on time to class. Being late means missing updates and announcements, as well as the introduction to the material we are covering, which is key to putting it in context. (See note above about class attendance.)

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.

Deadlines

Communications work is deadline oriented, so it's important to meet assignment deadlines. If you do miss a deadline and submit your assignment late, I'll still assess it, but I will reduce the total number of points you can receive. The number of possible points will drop over three days to 0. I will make exceptions for students with documented medical emergencies (e.g. 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.

This policy doesn't pertain to the final campaign plan and presentation slides; those are due the day of the presentation to the organization. If they aren't complete, the team will get a 0.

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

You may choose either Associated Press (AP) or APA style for writing assignments. Whichever you choose, make sure you are consistent. If you don't have the AP Stylebook, you can subscribe to it online ([https://www.apstylebook.com/ on-line/](https://www.apstylebook.com/)) or you can purchase a hard copy.

Format for references

Please use APA style for references.

Attribution in writing assignments

I'm sure you have read news stories about careers being derailed because someone copied material from a book, article or other source and represented it as their own. This is known as plagiarism. That's why, in every assignment for this course, you must clearly attribute the source of your information, including information obtained from organizations' web sites and documents. Do not 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.**

Artificial intelligence (AI)

In this course, you may be asked to use generative AI for some assignments. Increasingly, AI is used in the profession, so familiarity with generative AI tools is important. However, do not let your creative thinking and editing skills lapse! When AI is allowed or encouraged in assignments, you will need to document how AI was used. This could include providing your original prompts, showing the editing that you did to the created content, or using appropriate citation of information obtained via generative AI.

Using AI when not explicitly allowed is considered a violation of the honor code, as you are presenting content as your own that was not fully created by you.

Various AI detection tools are available (built within Canvas and externally such as ZeroGPT), and many AI platforms follow very formulaic response patterns. If I am concerned that your work is not your own, I will try to verify the originality of your work. If unable to do so, I may ask you to resubmit the assignment detailing how you arrived at your submission.

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 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 and in-class writing assignments): 25%
- Written assignments (done outside of class): 25%
- Final project (strategic communications plan) – 40%

- Final project presentation (everyone receives a separate grade) – 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.

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. Doing so constitutes plagiarism, which will result in a 0 on the assignment and could lead to disciplinary action.

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.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.

Find all of UF’s academic policies and resources [here](#).

COURSE SCHEDULE

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

Week 1 (Jan. 13 and 15) – Welcome!

Welcome! We'll introduce ourselves and go over what you'll learn and do in the course. We'll go over core public interest communications concepts and prepare to meet our client organization by preparing questions.

Week 2 (Jan. 20 and 22) – Meet our client!

This week, we'll meet the organization for which we will prepare strategic communications plans this semester. We'll also form teams and begin diving into research.

Week 3 (Jan. 27 and 29) – Systems thinking and research prep

In public interest communications, we use systems thinking. We'll review what that is and continue our research, identifying people who we want to interview. We'll discuss research challenges and how to overcome those. How do we identify the information we need to gather? Where can we get the information we need quickly?

Week 4 (Feb. 3 and 5) – Developing your strategy

This week, we explore what it means to take a strategic approach to a communications challenge. How do you develop a theory of change? We'll dive into a key framework – the six spheres of influence – and explore how these spheres can inform the approach we take to our campaigns.

Week 5 (Feb. 10 and 12) – Six spheres of influence continued

We'll finish going over the six spheres of influence and determining how they apply to our campaigns.

Week 6 (Feb. 17 and 19) – Four-question framework—goals and actors

By now you will have done a good deal of research and explored potential approaches to your campaign. Now we turn to the four-question framework, which helps us map out a strategic communications plan. The first two questions will help us set an effective goal and determine who we must reach to make it happen.

Week 7 (Feb. 24 and 26) – Worldviews and values

In public interest communications, it's critical to understand the worldviews, values and beliefs of those you are trying to reach. This week, we'll explore this concept, dive into the science behind message framing and apply values-based messaging to our campaigns.

Week 8 (March 3 and 5) – The science of stories, plus how to shift narratives

Storytelling is a key way to get people to care about big issues. We'll go over what makes stories effective as well as how stories relate to narratives, and what it takes to shift the narrative around an issue.

Week 9 (March 10 and 12) – The role of emotion and facts in public interest communications

Evoking emotion is key in motivating people to act, but facts are important as well. We'll explore how to balance the two.

SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (March 24 and 26) – Connecting to your actors: effective appeals

We'll put together all we have learned about evoking emotion as well as using facts and values-based messaging to craft effective appeals for our campaigns.

Week 11 (March 31 and April 2) – Teamwork, budgets and timelines

This week, we'll create a budget and timeline for our campaigns.

Week 12 (April 7 and 9) – Connecting to your actors: news and digital media

As we consider how we'll connect to the actors in our campaigns, we'll delve into opportunities provided by news and digital media. What is the news media landscape in the geographic areas on which we are focused? How do our actors engage with digital media, and how might we reach them there?

Week 13 (April 14 and 16) – Putting it all together

This week, we'll finalize our strategic communications plans. We'll also go over tips to ensure you are prepared to present your plans to our client professionally and with confidence.

Week 14 (April 21 LAST DAY OF CLASSES) – Showtime!

This is the day you have been preparing for all semester! Teams will present their plans to the organization. We'll discuss the feedback and reflect on our strategic communications campaign experience.

READING MATERIALS

REQUIRED BOOKS.

Throughout the course, we will use the following textbook: Christiano A., & Bradbery, A. (2025). *Public Interest Communications: Strategy for Changemakers*. Routledge. ***The digital version of the book is available for free via the UF Library.*** Just make sure to be logged in using your UF credentials. The book also is available for purchase in hard copy or soft cover.

Links to additional articles, book chapters 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.