

PUR4932: Industry Perspectives - Strategic Public Affairs

January 12 – April 22, 2026

Class Meetings: Mondays, Period 9 (4:05 - 4:55 PM)

No Class:

- January 19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Holiday)
- Feb 16: President's Day (Holiday)
- March 14-21: Spring Break (No class)

Section 20580 & 20581; 1 Session Per Week:

1 Online Meeting (Zoom) on **Mondays 5:15-6:00pm**

Join Zoom Meeting **TBD**

Meeting ID: **TBD**

Passcode: **TBD**

One tap mobile: **TBD**

Instructor: Marc Vielledent

Email: m.vielledent@ufl.edu or marc.vielledent@gmail.com

Office hours: Virtual by appointment

Prerequisite: PUR3000 with a C or better

Required Texts/Readings

Any readings will be posted on Canvas or distributed in class, no textbook purchase required.

Course Description

This course explores the evolving field of strategic public affairs with a focus on AI, digital media, and institutional leadership. Students will study real-world cases, ethical dilemmas, and adaptive strategies in a communication environment increasingly shaped by machines, metrics, and misinformation. Primarily through discussion and the examination of case studies, the class will explore the world of strategic public affairs, key considerations, and strategies. This will include discussion of the operating environment, role of leadership, impact of social media, press conferences, entertainment, and crisis management. This will help advanced students learn and hone methods in practice today for effective communication and future strategy deployment.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will gain a working knowledge of:

- Understanding the structure and organization of strategic public affairs
- Developing and planning communication strategies
- Understanding stakeholder considerations through the lens of multiple audiences
- Learn about associated risks, threats, and mitigation strategies
- Developing an awareness of the various functions of public affairs professionals

This class is designed to introduce you to the field of strategic communication and public affairs. Of particular emphasis, none of the content or discussion throughout the semester represents the official views of the instructor's professional affiliation.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Analyze how AI and automation are transforming public affairs strategy
- Identify key audiences and stakeholder needs across digital platforms
- Evaluate risks and crisis scenarios in a hyperconnected world
- Apply storytelling, speechwriting, and influence principles in public leadership
- Develop communication strategies aligned with ethical and institutional values

Spring 2026 Course / Meeting Schedule

Lesson # Dates	TOPICS (Readings will be posted prior to class meetings) <i>All classes will meet Live via Zoom; In rare instance of asynchronous, it will be specified a week prior</i>
Lesson 1 1/12	Welcome: The Digital Shift in Public Affairs
Lesson 2 1/19	NO CLASS – MLK Day
Lesson 3 1/26	AI and Audience Segmentation: Who is really listening?
Lesson 4 2/02	Formulating Strategy <i>GUEST SPEAKER</i>
Lesson 5 2/09	Campaigns and Influence Operations
Lesson 6 2/16	NO CLASS – President’s Day
Lesson 7 2/23	Speechwriting, Messaging, and Narrative in the AI Era <i>GUEST SPEAKER</i>
Lesson 8 3/02	Crisis Communications in the AI Era
Lesson 9 3/09	Ethics, Deepfakes, and Boundaries of Trust
Lesson 10 3/16	NO CLASS – Spring Break
Lesson 11 3/23	AI and Data in Public Affairs: Opportunities & Pitfalls
Lesson 12 3/30	Influence Operations and Misinformation Management
Lesson 13 04/06	Future of Public Affairs in an AI World
Lesson 14 04/13	DROP – Final Prep
Lesson 14 04/20	<i>Final Presentations / Survey / Closeout</i>

Course Assignments / Semester Grading

Participation (50%)

Weekly In-Person Attendance	50 points	25%
Discussion Posts (x 10)	50 points	25%

Final Assignment (50%)

Presentation	100 points	50%
TOTAL:	200 points	100%

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Grading

I will be as fair and impartial as is humanly possible in the grading process. Each of you will be graded on the same criteria.

Weekly Attendance (50 points)

Attendance and active participation are mandatory. Students will be expected to attend and participate in various interactive discussions every week – unless cleared in advance with the professor. After due warning, the professor may prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a lower or failing grade for excessive absences (please note: more than two unexcused absences during the semester will be considered “excessive absences”). You are responsible for notifying the professor in advance of the cause of your absence when possible and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider. For further information on attendance policy, please consult: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>. You will also be graded on your in-class participation. I expect to hear from you throughout the semester. You will receive full credit as long as you demonstrate that you are engaged and paying attention to the class material or discussions.

Discussion Posts (50 points):

For our scheduled meetings, you are expected to submit a Discussion Post on Canvas on the topic material no later than the next scheduled in-person (Zoom) meeting. Failing to submit an insightful discussion post for any asynchronous class meetings will result in a 10-point deduction.

Final Presentation (100 points)

Everyone will make a brief presentation at the end of the semester in the context of our course material and strategic public affairs based on discussions throughout the course of the semester. The details related to the Final Presentation will be delivered no later than 2 weeks prior to execution. The format will be that of a typical conference presentation of 4-5 slides (10-min in length, followed by Q&A). **Students will deliver a ~10-minute presentation (4–5 slides + Q&A) on a real-world strategic communication challenge, integrating lessons on audience, AI, ethics, and institutional strategy.**

- **Presentation Date:** April 20 (Live Zoom)
- **Prompt Drop:** April 13 (Canvas)
- **Format:** Live via Zoom

Course Policies

- Attendance: Required for live sessions. More than 1 unexcused absence will be considered excessive.
- Professional Standards: Clear, AP-style writing and active discussion are expected.
- Recording Policy: Only instructor-posted materials are permitted. No personal recordings without prior permission.
- Academic Integrity: University standards for honesty and conduct apply to all coursework.

Students are not allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, in some cases, I will permit it with prior notification. The purpose 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. **It must be noted that none of the material presented in this class or delivered during class lectures represents or qualifies as the official viewpoints of the instructor's professional organizations or affiliation.**

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. 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.

KEY COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

This course focuses on class participation and group discussion. **Your attendance is an important aspect of succeeding in this course.** Absences will harm your grade. You are responsible for notifying the professor in advance of the cause of your absence and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider. For further information on attendance policy, please consult: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Late or Missed Work

Missing class and missing deadlines for assignments will result in an impact on your overall grade. Some consideration, however, might be given (at the discretion of the instructor) if there are extenuating circumstances such as hospitalization, family death, or extended individual sickness; however, you need to notify the instructor before the deadline is missed, not after.

Email Policy

As a state employee, my email is considered a public record, and can be requested via an open-records request. Because of this, you should not email things that you would be uncomfortable with anyone else reading (personal information, information about grades, etc.). Please make sure that you do not treat email as text (i.e., don't use text abbreviations).

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](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the 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 consult with me. I will report all honor code violations, including cheating and plagiarism.

Professionalism

At this stage of your lives, I expect you to maintain a high level of professionalism in all of our interactions. This includes being courteous and respectful to all members of the course. Being respectful includes making sure you are not distracting to others, arriving, or leaving late.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://www.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 feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals> ([Links to an external site.](#)). Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/> ([Links to an external site.](#)).

Standard UF Policy Information and Links

UF Grading Policy

<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#grades> (Links to an external site.)

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> (Links to an external site.)

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Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see: <http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html> (Links to an external site.)

Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc> (Links to an external site.), and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml> (Links to an external site.).

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://www.crc.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask> (Links to an external site.). Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> (Links to an external site.).

Student Complaints

Campus: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf (Links to an external site.).

On-Line Students Complaints: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process> (Links to an external site.).