Course MMC 6936 Corporate Reputation and Communication (☼)
Spring 2014 Online

Instructor: Dr. Craig E. Carroll
Contact: craig.carroll@jou.ufl.edu  Phone: 917-410-0627
Office Hours: By appointment only. Skype, phone or chat.

(☼) This syllabus is subject to change, as the professor deems appropriate and necessary.

Course Description
This course examines the fundamental roles that communication plays in corporate reputation affairs, including its

- production
- conceptualization
- dimensions
- topics and attributes
- associations
- monitoring
- measurement
- evaluation
- management
- effects
- valorization
- valuation

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

Objectives
Students are expected:
1. To become familiar with the key questions, assumptions, problem areas and potential contributions that the different disciplinary perspectives within communication offer to matters tied to corporate reputation.
2. To learn:
   - how, where, and why corporate reputations emerge,
   - what the organizational, communicative, and relational consequences are,
   - how organizations should respond, and
   - how one should lead the organization's responsive process;
3. To develop communication strategies, policies, performance metrics, and feedback loops for building desired corporate reputations and avoiding undesirable ones;
4. To gain experience with the variety of methodologies that can be applied to the measurement and management of corporate reputation;
5. To develop one's sensitivity, moral compass, ethical framework, and values as a foundation for corporate reputation development and change.
6. Develop skills by writing and proposing a strategic communication plan focused on corporate reputation plan, including formative and evaluative research, strategy, and tactics.
Course Format:
This course consists of readings, reflective journal entries, discussions, exploratory activities and exercises, and a consulting project proposal. There are few lectures led by the instructor. This course is organized as a "journey" where exploration, reflection, and co-construction of knowledge occurs rather than definitive, expert answers given.

GRADERS
Final grades will be determined according to the following weights:

Percentage Allocation

1. Discussion Forum 30% 3pts each
2. Four (4) Quizzes 20% 5pts each
3. Mini-Case Study (Due Week 4) 05%
4. Preliminary Plan with Goals/Objectives (Due Week 8) 10%
5. Full Case Study (Due Week 9) 15%
6. Formative Research Plan (Due Week 10) 10%
7. Consulting Project/Plan (Due Week 12) 10%

Grading Scale
The grading scale for the course is as follows:

Grading Scale:  
A 92-100 points
A- 90-91 points
B+ 87-89 points
B 82-86 points
B- 80-82 points
C+ 77-79 points
C 72-76 points
C- 70-71 points
D+ 67-69 points
D 62-66 points
D- 60-62 points
E below 60 points

FYI, University’s Grading Policy:
http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html

Grades for this graduate course will be based on the total points earned over the term
DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

**Ten Online Postings 30% (3pts each)**
- Each week students will submit written critiques of the readings via the SAKAI Discussion Forum.
- The critiques must have a minimum of 250 words.
- Students should use argument rather than narrative as their form of critique.
- Students should cite any additional consulted materials.

**Online Quizzes**
- The four (4) quizzes of the course are designed to test the graduate student’s knowledge of the main ideas covered in each of the modules, including readings, handouts, and online discussions as specified in the syllabus.
- The quizzes will be multiple-choice and non-cumulative.
- Grades will be posted on Sakai.

**Case studies**
- Students work with three different case studies over the course of the semester: a short case (week 4), an extended case (week 9), and the case used for the consulting project (weeks 4, 10, and 12).
- All case organizations and focal topics must be approved ahead of time via SAKAI Sign Up sheets on a first-come, first serve basis. No two students may select the same case study topic.
- Signup sheets will be posted the second week of classes or as soon as we know the exact number of students in the class.

**Short Case Study: Due Week 4**
- Students will submit a 2,000 word case study of a contemporary organization facing a reputation challenge.
- The case study should be modeled after Smith (2013) pp. 34-35, with one exception.
- Consult the Assignment guidelines for details concerning the assignment and its delivery.

**Consulting Project-Formative Research Plan: Due Week 8**
For your case study, write a short research plan that details specific questions you need answered and the methodologies for answering those questions. Your plan should address questions about the issue at stake, the organization, and the publics involved.

**Extended Case Study Due Week 9**
- Students will submit a 7,500 word case study that describes an organizational problem or crisis modeled after the Notre Dame cases used in our class. Students should strive for the case's usefulness and general value to the profession and the
classroom. The case should address the significance of the business problem, the critical issues identified, and how it relates to corporate communication and corporate reputation.

- Students will include an abstract (50 to 100 words), a PowerPoint, and a teaching note.

**Consulting project: Reputation Management Goals and Objectives: Due Week 10**

- Consult the Assignment guidelines for details concerning the assignment and its delivery.
- This reports should model Smith's (2013) "Planning Example 4" precisely, including a position statement, goals and objectives.
- Students should use the "Elements of Objectives" (Smith, 2013, p. 101-103) as their criteria for evaluation.
- Students should also consult "Developing Objectives," (Smith, 2013, p. 106-107), "Writing Objectives," (Smith, 2013, 107-108), and "Poorly Worded Objectives" (Smith 2013, p. 109) as the guides.
- Objectives should be properly-worded based on the examples of properly-worded and poorly-worded examples in the textbook boxed examples within the text.

**Consulting Project/Proposal (20%) Due Week 12**

- Consult the Assignment guidelines for details concerning the assignment and its delivery.
- Students will submit a case solution using the strategic planning model presented by Smith (2005/2013), consisting of a 15 page single-spaced paper (font size = 12), and a PPT.

---

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE**

**Online Course Administration**

Sakai ([https://lss.at.ufl.edu](https://lss.at.ufl.edu)) will be used to administer the course communication, materials (i.e., PowerPoint files, reaction comments / discussions, readings, assignment guidelines, quizzes) and grades.

**Required Course Texts**

3. A *Reading Packet* available through Sakai. Please see the course schedule for the complete list of readings. There may be additional readings in the form of handouts or Sakai postings at various times during the term.

**Software, Hardware, and Internet Access:**

Students are expected to have the following at their disposal:

- Internet access
a University of Florida email account,
a Google account
a Twitter account
Microsoft Office Word, PowerPoint, Excel 2010 or more recent,
Adobe Acrobat Reader 10.0
Computer audio/visual capabilities (microphone/camera)
Photo editing software

Students are expected to know the norms, etiquette, and how to use e-mail, Discussion boards, weblogs (blogs), Twitter, wikis, Google docs (docs, forms, sheets, and slides), basic Powerpoint, basic Excel, and basic Word.

Use of alternative software packages to Microsoft or Adobe products must be converted to appropriate formats: *.docx, *.xlsx, *.pptx, *.pdf, etc.
Students are expected to learn on their own, attend a workshop, or consult a peer for these learning technologies. The professor does not advise on these techniques.

WORKING WITH THE PROFESSOR

Instructor Contact

Instructor Availability
• As an online summer course, the instructor is available by appointment only.
• Appointment Format: Phone, Skype. The professor splits his time for this course between the U.S. and Europe, and is not available for in-person appointments.
• Feel free to set up a time to discuss any matters related to course work, academic and/or career advising, or anything else you would like to discuss.
• For faster response, questions about the course should be e-mailed to the instructor through the e-mail tool in E-learning rather than direct email.
• Please be aware that the professor will not be able to respond immediately to your communication. As a rule, allow up to 48 hours for a response.
• The professor's out-of-pocket times will be posted on SAKAI.

Communication from the Instructor
• For "up-to-date" information, consult "Announcements" on SAKAI.
• The Announcements tab will be an archive of all communications and activities from the instructor. This archive is also available via an RSS Feed that you can bookmark.
• In the interest of fairness, the professor prefers to address the whole class rather than individual students on questions concerning assignments.

Communication from Students
• Personal emails from students are always welcome.
• Emails pertaining to the curse should be directed through SAKAI. The professor receives automatic emails of your messages anyway, but this allows a centralized, historical archive in one place tied to the course.
• Emails unrelated to the course can be sent straight to craig.carroll@jou.ufl.edu.
• Use our online discussion forum, FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) for questions that concern the whole class.
• Use private email through SAKAI for questions that you concern only you (e.g., grades, personal situation, etc.)
• Except for emergency situations when it cannot be avoided, contact the instructor well in advance of a deadline in order to give the professor adequate time to respond you.
• Upon receipt of feedback or grades from assignments, please wait 48 hours before contacting the instructor for questions or discussion. (This is a nice, guaranteed "cooling off" period to ensure our discussion is helpful.)
• Emails requesting "receipt" or "confirmation" of an email or an assignment will not be acknowledged. If you submitted it through SAKAI, the professor has received your assignment.

Class Policies

Students must:
• adopt a journey-view point with goals, milestones, and a destination in mind;
• complete the readings and assignments ahead of schedule;
• engage in thoughtful online discussion that advances knowledge;
• ask pertinent and productive questions of the professor and fellow students;
• demonstrate command of the subject matter;
• develop and offer their own insights and opinions;
• contribute to the collective learning of all participants.

The onus is on you to contribute constructively to your own learning and that of your classmates.

Class Participation Expectations

Class participation includes the degree to which you
• bring up insightful ideas,
• create constructive debates with your classmates,
• contribute to the learning of your classmates, and
• maintain a professional and civil level of conduct that does not interfere with the learning or dignity of anyone in our online class.

General Student Expectations

Students are expected to:
1. Complete assigned readings (before engaging in online discussion);
2. Engage in online discussions;
3. Ask good questions
4. Create value and knowledge
5. Contribute to the learning of his or herself, classmates, and professor;
6. Be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars

Extra Credit
- Extra credit means extra work on top of core assignments.
- Extra credit is not available for students who have not submitted all assignments on time.
- Extra credit is not available for assignments that have incurred penalties.

The University of Florida Honor Code
The University of Florida Honor Code applies to all work related to this online graduate course (see page 10).

The University of Florida Honor Code was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Code: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. 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."

For more information about academic honesty, contact, Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

You can review UF’s academic honesty guidelines in detail at: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/honestybrochure.php

Students with Challenges
- I am committed to helping students with special challenges overcome difficulties with comprehending the subject matter, while abiding by the standard code of confidentiality.
If you are serious about improving your performance in the course, *the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem*—whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

In order to address academic needs, I must be informed of the student’s circumstance *at the beginning of the semester* before performance becomes a factor.

The steps are:
1. Students must register with the Dean of Students Office.
2. DSO provides the professor documentation.
3. Student submits documentation to the professor.
4. If needed, the professor contacts DSO.

This is not to imply that standards of fairness will not be generally applied when evaluating student work; only that reasonable and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that officially recognized challenges do not become a hindrance to a student’s ability to succeed in this course.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Module 1: Communication's Multi-disciplinary Perspectives / Corporate Reputation

Objective: To become familiar with the key questions, assumptions, problem areas and potential contributions the different disciplinary perspectives within communication offer to matters tied to corporate reputation

WEEK 1: DEFINITIONS OF CORPORATE REPUTATION

Objective
To become familiar with the key questions, assumptions, problem areas and potential contributions the different disciplinary perspectives within communication offer to matters tied to corporate reputation

Readings

WEEK 2: HUMAN COMMUNICATION DISCIPLINES OF CORPORATE REPUTATION

Objective
To become familiar with the key questions, assumptions, problem areas and potential contributions of human communication disciplines tied to matters of corporate reputation

Readings
WEEK 3: MASS COMMUNICATION DISCIPLINES OF CORPORATE REPUTATION

Objective
Objective: To become familiar with the key questions, assumptions, problem areas and potential contributions of mass communication disciplines tied to matters of corporate reputation

Readings

Module 2: Understanding Corporate Reputation

WEEK 4: DIMENSIONS OF CORPORATE REPUTATION: PROMINENCE, ESTEEM, ATTRIBUTES, ASSOCIATIONS

Objective
To learn about the primary dimensions of corporate reputation (Prominence, Esteem, Attributes, Associations)

Readings

WEEK 5: REPUTATION ATTRIBUTES

Objectives
To learn about the primary attributes that are the focus of corporate reputation

Readings

WEEK 6: INFLUENCES ON REPUTATION

Objectives
To learn how, where and why corporate reputations emerge and what the organizational, communicative, and relational consequences are.

Readings
WEEK 7: REPUTATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

Objectives
- To learn about the effects of corporate reputation.

Readings
Module 3: Measuring Reputation in Communication Research

WEEK 8: CORPORATE REPUTATION, COMMUNICATION, AND FORMATIVE AND EVALUATIVE RESEARCH

Objective
To gain exposure to variety of methodologies that can be applied to the measurement and management of corporate reputation.

Readings

WEEK 9: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND REPUTATION BUILDING

Objectives
- To develop skills by writing and proposing a strategic communication plan focused on corporate reputation plan, including formative and evaluative research, strategy, and tactics.
- To develop communication strategies, policies, performance metrics, and feedback loops for building desired corporate reputations and avoiding undesirable ones;
- To gain experience with the variety of methodologies that can be applied to the measurement and management of corporate reputation.

Readings
WEEK 10: COMMUNICATION RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND REPUTATION

Objectives
To gain exposure to variety of methodologies that can be applied to the measurement and management of corporate reputation.

Readings
Module 4: Managing Reputation through Communication

WEEK 11: HOW CAN CORPORATE REPUTATION BE MANAGED, OR CAN IT?

Objectives
To become familiar with the key questions, assumptions, problem areas and potential contributions that the different disciplinary perspectives within communication offer to matters tied to corporate reputation.
To learn:
• how organizations should respond, and
• how one should lead the organization’s responsive process;

Readings
Module 5: Putting it All Together

WEEK 12: HOW CAN CORPORATE REPUTATION BE MANAGED, OR CAN IT?

Objectives

1. To learn:
   - how organizations should respond, and
   - how one should lead the organization's responsive process;
2. To develop communication strategies, policies, performance metrics, and feedback loops for building desired corporate reputations and avoiding undesirable ones;
3. To develop one's sensitivity, moral compass, ethical framework, and values as a foundation for corporate reputation development and change.
4. Develop skills by writing and proposing a strategic communication plan focused on corporate reputation plan, including formative and evaluative research, strategy, and tactics.

Readings