UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
COMM 499 SPECIAL TOPICS CLASS:

“GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT: DESIGNING PUBLIC DIPLOMACY STRATEGIES”

Instructor: Dr. Robert Banks, Clinical Associate Professor of Public Diplomacy

Time & Location: Wednesday, 2:00-4:50pm

Office: G21E

Hours: Wednesday 1:00-2:00pm or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: The field of Public Diplomacy, defined as an international actor’s efforts to achieve its policy objectives by engaging foreign publics, is now an essential dimension of world affairs. Increasingly, PD is not just the province of the nation state, but is a tool used by many actors in the international system; moreover, the message is not in service of a particular actor but increasingly takes the form of an attempt to promulgate an idea or an approach to a global issue. An ideas-based public diplomacy is emerging. This course is born of that ideas-based approach to PD. It will focus on critical global issues or challenges that require some form of intervention from the international community. In each issue area, we will review the problem and evaluate what is being done about it. Students will then be divided into teams and asked to design a public diplomacy strategy to educate multiple audiences about the issues and to transform the key ideas into a transmissible message and plan of action. Class time will be divided into a presentation section in which teams of students present their responses to the issue from the previous week and a briefing section in which the issue for the coming week will be established. In those classes where no student presentations are scheduled, real world-case studies that illuminate the practice of PD will be examined in detail.

Students will be expected to keep track of contemporary developments in geopolitics and to consider their implications for the practice of Public Diplomacy. Time will be set aside at the beginning of each class, starting in Week #3, to discuss issues currently on the global political agenda and to discuss the variety of tools and approaches that the PD practitioner might profitably employ to address them. Active student involvement in these discussions will be factored into that part of the grade devoted to attendance and class participation.
ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Robert Banks joined the United States Foreign Service in 1983. During his 28-year career as a Public Diplomacy practitioner, he served as Assistant Executive Officer in Bonn, West Germany; Deputy Public Affairs Officer (PAO) in Nicosia, Cyprus; Assistant Press Attaché in Seoul, Korea; East Asia Policy Officer in USIA’s Worldnet TV service; Press Attaché in Managua, Nicaragua; Cultural Affairs Officer in Seoul; Examiner for the Foreign Service oral entrance exam in the Bureau of Human Resources; Planning and Coordination Officer in the Office of Public Diplomacy in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs; PAO in Buenos Aires, Argentina; State Department Chair on the faculty of the Marine Corps War College in Quantico, VA., where he taught regional studies; and U.S. Public Diplomat in Residence at the USC Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School. He is currently Clinical Associate Professor of Public Diplomacy in USC’s Masters in Public Diplomacy Program.

REQUIRED READINGS:

2) The Playbook, a website created in conjunction with the British Council designed to provide a range of case studies, Public Diplomacy “plays,” from the past. Browsing this site should help you refine your PD plans. The url is www.the-playbook.com
3) Additional readings are assigned to introduce each global theme (see weekly schedule below).

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand PD’s role in the broader foreign policy framework
- Design a short and long term Public Diplomacy Strategy.
- Extract and communicate core messages for a complex international subject.
- Differentiate between audiences.
- Understand the limits and capabilities of Public Diplomacy in global affairs.
- Be able to work effectively in a team setting.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation: 10%

1st Short Paper (Case study analysis – cultural programs) 15%

2nd Short Paper (Case study analysis – information programs) 15%
Team Assessment: 25%

Final Paper: Creation of an in-depth PD strategy: 35%

Attendance and Participation: Students are required to attend class regularly, to contribute to class discussion, and to do the assigned readings. Students who miss 2 or more classes will have their grades reduced and risk failing the course.

Short Papers: You will be presented with real-life case studies in which PD practitioners have applied information/cultural tools to address a challenging public affairs issue and asked to analyze the approach they have taken. Grades will be based on the overall quality of your analysis, with special attention paid to your understanding of the range and applicability of available PD programming tools and your suggestions on how the practitioners’ chosen approach might be improved/enhanced to ensure the desired outcome. These papers should be 5 pages in length. The first short paper on Cultural Programs will be due in Week #4 and the second in Week #6.

Team Assessment: Teams of 3 or 4 students will work together starting in week 5 to present on the assigned global issue for that week. Teams will present a total of 7 times during the term as designated in the weekly schedule. Team presentations on the week’s assigned global issue will be graded on the basis of the team’s presentation style, the depth and quality of their research, and the aptness of their chosen PD strategy. Style includes how each team organizes itself for the presentation, distributes the presentation load, stays within the set time limit (10-minutes), and prepares a quality power point. Research will include the team’s grasp of necessary background information and context and an understanding of the opportunities and challenges each scenario offers. Strategy will focus on the applicability and feasibility of the team’s approach to the issue at hand, i.e., whether it is workable in the real world and can be expected to produce the desired outcome.

Final Paper: For the final paper, you will be asked to select a global issue and design an in-depth PD strategy to deal with it. You are required to consult with the professor before choosing a topic for your final paper, which will be due on May 7. The paper should be 12 pages in length, done in Word, contain an executive summary, a bibliography and citations, and sent as an email attachment. In this way, it can be graded using Tracked Changes and returned to you with feedback embedded in the text. Late papers will not be accepted. If you have an emergency that affects your ability to turn the paper in on time, you must contact the professor beforehand.

Specific instructions for each assignment will be discussed in detail in class. All assignments must be completed to earn a grade.
THE CLASS WILL OPERATE AS FOLLOWS:

Step One: Orientation

Each subject is introduced by the professor with an orientation briefing offering a general overview of the issue and the record of public diplomacy’s historical engagement, at the end of which an exercise is assigned to each team. Typically three teams will be called on to research and present, while the fourth team will be a ‘Murder Board’ which acts as the audience for and judge of the presentations. The latter must also research the subject in order to ask informed and probing questions of the presenters.

Step Two: Research

Teams research the subject, paying attention to government, international organization, regional organization, and NGO sources and perspectives as appropriate to the question. Academic journals may be consulted, but more typically, you will review relevant websites, news media, blog posts, and government speeches and reports. The teams then prepare a ten minute power point presentations based on the exercise prompts.

Step Three: Presentation

The first part of the following week’s session will be devoted to the presentations based on the exercise. Following each presentation, the Murder Board asks questions of the various teams designed to illuminate the team’s depth of research, understanding of the geo-political context, and the soundness of their proposed strategy.

Step Four: Assessment

Grades for the presentations will then be assessed by both the professor and the team acting that week as the Murder Board. Grades will be based on three factors: style, content, and strategy.

Step Five: Issue Briefing

After a break the class will continue with the orientation briefing for the coming week, and so forth for the duration of the semester.

SAMPLE CLASS

If the issue in question for that week is, for instance, “Global Health,” the professor will present a power point briefing outlining the topic. At the end of the briefing, an exercise will be presented in which each team is assigned a separate health-related problem to address using PD tools. All teams might be asked to represent, say, a U.S. Embassy inter-agency working group, or an NGO, with each individual team being tasked with raising public awareness in a separate target population. Team One might be assigned to focus on the dangers of avian flu in Indonesia;
Team Two on Ebola in Sierra Leone; and Team Three on AIDS in Botswana. The teams then research their particular issue and devise a PD strategy to address the problem. The Murder Board, which may be asked to play the Ambassador or the NGO’s Board of Trustees, listens to each presentation, engages in a Q&A with the presenters, and assigns a grade based on how the teams performed in each of three areas: style, content, and strategy. The professor will also grade each team’s presentations, as well as the performance of the Murder Board.

OUTLINE OF CLASSES

Week #1:

1) Introduction to Public Diplomacy: Its History and Role in Today’s International Foreign Policy and Communications Environment

2) Approaches to PD: Conceptualizing Engagement with Foreign Audiences

Readings:


Week #2:

1) Overview Presentation on the U.S. Foreign Service and American Diplomacy

2) Briefing on U.S. Government PD: Washington and the Field

Readings:


Week #3:

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”

2) Briefing on PD Tools of the Trade

3) Briefings on How to Organize a PD Strategy & Conduct a Press Conference.
Readings:

Rugh, Chapters 8, 9, & 10, “Cultural and Educational Programs,” pp. 129-178.

Week #4:

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”

2) Briefing on PD Advocacy

3) First Global Theme Briefing: Trans-National Organized Crime

4) First short paper on Cultural Programs due.

Readings:

Rugh, Chapters, 5, 6, & 7, “Information Programs,” pp. 81-125.


Week #5

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”

2) Team Presentations on Trans-National Organized Crime

3) Second Global Theme Briefing: Terrorism

Readings:


**Week #6:**

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”

2) Team Presentations on Terrorism

3) Presentation of First Case Study (Korea)

4) Second short paper on Information Programs due.


**Week #7:**

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”

2) Class Discussion of Case Study

3) Third Global Theme Briefing: Conflict Resolution

**Readings:**


**Week #8:**

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”

2) Team Presentations on Conflict Resolution

3) Fourth Global Theme Briefing: Arms Control
Readings:

http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2014/10/20141022310113.html?CP.rss=true#axzz3HB3ag0hp


Week #9:

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”
2) Team Presentation on Arms Control
3) Presentation of Second Case Study (Argentina)

Readings:


Week #10

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”
2) Class Discussion of Second Case Study
3) Fifth Global Theme Briefing: Migration

Readings:


Ronald Skeldon, “Global Migration: Demographic Aspects and Its Relevance for Development,”
Week #11

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”
2) Team Presentations on Migration
3) Sixth Global Theme Briefing: **Environment**

**Readings:**


Week #12

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”
2) Team Presentations on Environment
3) Third Case Study Presentation (Nicaragua)

**Readings:**


Week #13

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”
2) Class Discussion of Third Case Study
3) Seventh Global Theme Briefing: **Human Rights**
Readings:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-end-of-human-rights/2014/01/03/7f8fa83c-6742-11e3-ae56-22de072140a2_story.html

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/02/26/the_human_rights_that_dictators_love

Week #14

1) Discussion of “The Week in PD”
2) Team Presentations on Human Rights
3) Eighth Global Theme Briefing: Disinformation

Readings:

http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=42745


Week #15

Final All-team Crisis Management Simulation Exercise

The last class will be on May 1, 2015. The final paper for this course will be due on May 7, 2015.
IX. Policies and Procedures

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* [https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions](https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, [http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity [http://equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu) or to the Department of Public Safety [http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us](http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us). This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/) provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [http://sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute [http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali](http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information [http://emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.