

4 credit hours

Section: 21050D

Spring 2016 – Mon. & Wed. – 2-3:40 p.m.

syllabus v. 3, updated 1/28/2016

Location: ANN L115

Instructor: Daren C. Brabham, Ph.D.

Office: ANN 310K

Office Hours: Appointments are best. Generally available Tuesdays 11 a.m. to 1 p.m and available online.

Contact Info: Brabham@usc.edu | 213-740-2007 office | Google Chat: daren.brabham

I. Course Description

This course provides students with an intellectual and conceptual foundation for the study and practice of strategic communication and public relations. We review theories and concepts relevant to this ever-expanding professional practice and social phenomenon, and discuss research endeavors underlying three core areas: publics and public opinion, organizations and relationships, and public relations and society. The course is designed for students anticipating careers in strategic communication/PR. It aims to prepare them to think critically in their pursuits of strategic communication and to help them become more discerning consumers of information.

Prerequisite: JOUR 250: Strategic Public Relations—An Introduction.

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

Students are expected to:

- develop a solid understanding of a broad range of conceptual topics, including the dynamics of persuasion, how and why messages travel through social networks, why people gather into brand and fan communities, and critical theories of public relations in society;
- appreciate the role of theory and the importance of bridging theory and practice;
- be able to apply theoretical principles to the practices of strategic communication through cases and campaigns.

Mastery of course content will be assessed through a variety of activities, including class discussion and interactive/experiential exercises; interaction with guest lecturers; supplemental learning through readings/multimedia presentations beyond the texts; and written assignments, including reflective writings and papers.

III. Assignments

a. Description of Assignments

Reflection Papers – 140 points total (2 papers @ 70 points each)

For each reflection paper, you will synthesize what you have learned in class and from the readings. Pick one or two ideas that you found interesting and write about your reactions. Feel free to use “I.” What you think about the readings matters and how you link the readings together with what you are learning in your other classes or internships is useful for you to reflect upon. While they can use first-person voice and include your opinion, these should still be well written, carefully argued essays. Do not simply summarize the readings—engage with them. Have an opinion and back it up. The length of each paper should be 750-1,000 words. Your first reflection paper will be due before Spring Break (by March 11 at 5 p.m.) and your second paper is due at the end of the semester (by April 22 at 5 p.m.). You may turn in a reflection paper at any time in those two time windows and are encouraged not to put them off until the last minute. You may not focus a reflection paper on a topic that is substantially similar to your final paper.

Group Theory and Practice Presentations – 110 points total (2 @ 55 points each)

In small groups (2-3 students), you will make two presentations over the course of the semester. These short, informal presentations will give you the opportunity to connect what you are learning in class to a current event. Dates and topics of presentations will be assigned in class. Your group must send an email summarizing your intended presentation to the professor at least one day before the date of the presentation. Note that this means you will have to do the readings a bit early on the weeks you present.

Midterm Exam – 200 points

This will be a take-home exam consisting of short essay responses to prompts. You will have at least a week to work on it.

Final Group Paper and Presentation – 350 points total (300 points for paper, 50 points for presentation)

In small groups (3-4 students, different from the students you work with in your Theory and Practice Presentations), you will choose a challenge from a list of possible challenges provided by the instructor. The challenge might be, for example, “How might we reduce e-cigarette use among college students?” The group will work to develop a 3,000-4,000 word campaign proposal to address the challenge that draws from one (or ideally a few) theories discussed in class. There will be some class time devoted to group work, but groups will be expected to coordinate outside of class in order to put in the time necessary to produce a high-quality campaign paper. At the end of the semester, each group will deliver a presentation on their campaign proposal. All members of the group will receive the same grade as a starting point, but the grade can deviate up to a full letter for specific individuals in the group who do not pull their weight as assessed by confidential peer evaluations supported by substantial documentation. This is not typical, but it exists as a safeguard against freeloading. Tips for successful teamwork will be covered in class.

In-class Activities – 80 points total (8 @ 10 points each)

Brief in-class activities will occur throughout the semester, individually or in groups. These can include short writing exercises, games, field experiments, and other activities to be determined. At least eight of these will occur throughout the semester, often unannounced, and students may not make them up if absent (and unexcused). If more than eight occur throughout the semester, only the top eight scores will be recorded in the grade book.

Discussion/Class Participation – 120 points

It is important to attend class and actively participate, since class activities and interaction with peers encourage creative dialogue and diversity of perspective, which helps enhance your learning. It is expected that students will come to class having read the materials and prepared to join class discussions, contributing questions and comments about the materials. If you are unable to attend class for some reason, please notify the instructor as soon as possible, and assume personal responsibility for gathering notes from other classmates. At the end of the semester, points will be allocated to students based upon:

- ✓ Consistent (i.e., every week) demonstration that they have read the material for scheduled class discussion
- ✓ Contribution to class discussion, answering questions, asking relevant questions (sitting quietly with perfect attendance is not considered participation)
- ✓ Demonstrating respect for fellow classmates, guest speakers, and instructor (including appropriate use of personal technologies during classroom time and on-time arrival to class)
- ✓ Mature classroom behavior that supports learning

b. Research and Citations

On occasion, you may be asked to prepare materials on topics with which you have little knowledge. Many online resources are available to assist you, and thorough secondary research is encouraged. Please note, however, that the largely subjective nature of “wikis” makes them unacceptable resources for this course. Additionally, all public relations writers must learn to create original work, and inappropriate use of existing resources/materials – including failure to provide proper citation, verbatim usage of other materials, presenting existing material as

one's original work, lack of proper citation, and/or similar practices – may be construed as an act of plagiarism, and subject to the School's or university's disciplinary policy on acts of academic dishonesty and plagiarism (see below). You may use any acceptable mainstream citation style – in-text parentheticals, footnotes, endnotes, APA, MLA, Chicago, etc. – so long as your style is consistent, you adhere to the rules of a particular style, and all citations are complete. Use of photos, illustrations, etc. from other sources also requires attribution in a caption.

IV. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points Possible
Reflection Papers (2)	140
Group Theory and Practice Presentations (2)	110
Midterm Exam	200
Final Group Paper/Presentation	350
In-class Activities	80
Class Discussion/Participation	120
TOTAL	1,000

b. Grading Scale

Final course grades are calculated as the total of points earned as a percentage of total points possible. Grades follow a typical pattern: A = 94-100%, A- = 90-93%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 84-86%, B- = 80-83%, and so on. Performance below 60% receives a failing grade ("F"). Please note that for graduate credit, a "C-" is considered a failing grade.

c. Grading Standards

Please consult the grading guidelines available in the USC Office of Academic Records and Registrar: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/grades/index.html>. Grades are earned, not given, and "A" grades are reserved for truly "excellent" performance. Work that meets the minimum requirements of an assignment or demonstrates a basic command of course concepts will likely earn a "good" grade in the "B" range, give or take with regards to other factors, such as writing quality. Work in the "A" range not only checks all the basic boxes of an assignment and is error-free but also demonstrates deeper, more sophisticated understanding of course concepts; incorporates additional research or perspective beyond what was discussed in class; and/or is somehow provocative or creative or interesting. In other words, to earn top marks in the course, students will need to go above and beyond in some way. Note that a claim of "hard work" or expending considerable time on an assignment is not relevant to how the resulting product will be graded.

d. Late Work Policy

Work is considered late when it is not turned in by the start of class on the day it is due (or by another specific time as stated in the assignment/syllabus). See submission policy below. All late work receives a failing grade right from the start. That is, an assignment that is late receives an automatic 40% deduction. If the assignment is not turned in within 24 hours of the due date and time, the grade drops another 20% from the original points possible. After another 24 hours, it drops another 20%. Assignments will not be accepted after 48 hours of being late. Some assignments may also be noted as being never accepted late. You are strongly cautioned to allow plenty of time before an assignment is due to account for spotty Internet connections, computer glitches, traffic jams, and other impediments beyond your control. Do not put turning in an assignment off until the last minute. You are also strongly encouraged to save your work frequently and to periodically back up your files onto flash drives or remote backup servers. If you manage your time well, you should have enough of a cushion to account for pretty much all possible hindrances. For all other major impediments known in advance of a due date, such as family emergencies, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor to discuss possible deadline adjustments (note: instructor reserves the right not to honor a deadline extension request or to see documentation of emergency).

V. Assignment Submission Policy

This is a paperless course. All of your work will be turned in electronically via Blackboard unless otherwise stated on a specific assignment.

VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

There is no book to purchase for this class. All materials required for the course can be found as digital files or links to websites organized on the course Blackboard site.

VII. Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Virtual Commons](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

VIII. Policies and Procedures

a. Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

b. A Respectful Class Environment

You are expected to be well-prepared for each class meeting, provide value to the class discussion, and remain courteous and sensitive to the needs and opinions of your classmates. Please be on time, be awake, put phones away, and stay on task on your computer. Interactions with guest speakers should always be professional and enthusiastic.

When contributing to a discussion, make statements that are respectful to other students in the class and different groups of people. Be careful not to personalize your arguments and be aware that not all of your classmates are as comfortable as you may be in presenting ideas in a classroom setting. Different viewpoints are highly encouraged in class discussion – play devil's advocate if you want. Do not avoid conflict merely because you feel you will be in the minority in presenting your opinion. You are however expected to avoid the use of sexist, racist, homophobic, and other intolerant language in your speech and writing. This is more than an issue of so-called political correctness; this is an issue of professionalism and of excellence in communication, knowing how to be precise and fair and accurate in expression, and understanding that there are diverse stakeholders in any conversation.

c. Official Class Communication

As important announcements will be made via Blackboard and Blackboard's email communication tool, it is important that you check Blackboard and emails sent from Blackboard (which may be forwarded to an email account of your choosing) regularly. Get in the habit of checking your USC email account as that will be utilized in Blackboard.

IX. Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. 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/b/11-00-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/>.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

"Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an 'F' on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators."

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating (including how to properly attribute a quote or scholarly source in an assignment), please ask the professor.

b. Support Systems

Equity and Diversity

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/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <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/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <https://sarc.usc.edu/> describes reporting options and other resources. Additionally, the instructor for this course has received specialized training in working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning students and should be considered a "Safe Zone" if you need to talk confidentially about these or other topics.

Support with Scholarly Writing

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>, 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 provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate

documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. The office is located in the Student Union room 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776. Please understand that the professor is not qualified or permitted under university policies to provide any disability-related accommodations without authorization from DSP.

Stress Management

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

Emergency Information

If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <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.

X. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: *Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

Date	Topic / In-Class	Before Class You Should:
1/11	Welcome to the class; what to expect; syllabus; PR model refresher	
1/13	Basics of theory, its role in research, and its use in PR practice	
1/18	No class – Martin Luther King Day	
1/20	Strategy; strategic communication	READ: Wall Street Journal’s “What is Strategy?” READ: Hallahan et al.’s “Defining Strategic Communication”
1/25	Publics and public opinion; stakeholders	READ: Price’s “The Public and Public Opinion in Political Theories”
1/27	Issues management	READ: Dougall’s “Issues Management”
2/1	Systems theory; situational theory of publics; excellence theory	READ: Grunig & Grunig’s “Excellence Theory in Public Relations: Past, Present, and Future”
2/3	Excellence theory; relationship management	READ: Ledingham’s “Explicating Relationship Management as a General Theory of Public Relations”
2/8	Participant-curator model; user-generated content	READ: Phillips & Brabham’s “How Today’s Digital Landscape Redefines the Notion of Power in Public Relations”
2/10	Brand community	READ: Muniz & O’Guinn’s “Brand Community”
2/15	No class – Presidents Day	
2/17	Agenda setting; priming; framing	READ: Scheufele & Tewksbury’s “Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming”
2/22	Persuasion; elaboration likelihood model; semiotics; language	READ: Hallahan’s “Seven Models of Framing: Implications for Public Relations”

2/24	TBD – probably guest speaker	
2/29	Persuasion; elaboration likelihood model; semiotics; language	READ: Botan & Soto’s “A Semiotic Approach to the Internal Functioning of Publics”
3/2	Behavior change; theory of planned behavior; AIDA	READ: Kim & Karpova’s “Consumer Attitudes Toward Fashion Counterfeits”
3/7	Behavior change; theory of planned behavior; AIDA	READ: Gilkerson et al.’s “The Other Hangover”
3/9	Attribution theory; situational crisis communication theory	DUE: Midterm READ: Coombs’ “Attribution Theory as a Guide for Post-Crisis Communication Research” REMINDER: Your last chance to turn in your first Reflection Paper is March 11 by 5 p.m.
3/14	No class – Spring Break	
3/16	No class – Spring Break	
3/21	Public participation theory	READ: Innes & Booher’s “Reframing Public Participation”
3/23	No formal class meeting – group work time	
3/28	Message tailoring; news values and news production; agenda building	READ: Swann’s “Are You Pouring on the Pounds?”
3/30	Spreadability, virality, word-of-mouth, social networks	READ: Berger & Milkman’s “What Makes Online Content Viral?”
4/4	Spreadability, virality, word-of-mouth, social networks	READ: Berger & Milkman’s “What Makes Online Content Viral?”
4/6	Misinformation; agnotology	READ: Brandt’s “Inventing Conflicts of Interest”
4/11	Corporate social responsibility; cause marketing	READ: Garriga & Mele’s “Corporate Social Responsibility Theories: Mapping the Territory”
4/13	Critical theories; feminist theories; ideology and the state	READ: Felluga’s “Modules on Althusser II: On Ideological State Apparatuses”
4/18	Professional ethics; image of PR in society	
4/20	No formal class meeting – group work time	REMINDER: Your last chance to turn in your second Reflection Paper is April 22 by 5 p.m.
4/25	Final group presentations	DUE: Final campaign proposals for those groups presenting today.
4/27	Final group presentations	DUE: Final campaign proposals for those groups presenting today.

XI. About Your Instructor

Daren C. Brabham, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at USC Annenberg and the founding editor of *Case Studies in Strategic Communication*. His research expertise is in crowdsourcing, an online, distributed problem solving and production model that leverages the collective intelligence of online communities to serve organizational needs. He is the author of the books *Crowdsourcing* (MIT Press, 2013), which has been translated into Chinese and Korean, and *Crowdsourcing in the Public Sector* (Georgetown University Press, 2015). His professional experience includes marketing and development for nonprofits, user experience design for an IT research firm, and crowdsourcing consulting. He has an M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Utah and a B.A. from Trinity University.