

CMGT 502: Strategic Corporate Communication

Fall 2016—Wednesday—6:30-9:20

Location: ANN L115

Instructor: Jessica Neff, Ph.D.

Office Hours: By Appointment

I. Course Description

This class is taught in a flipped classroom mode. This means that much of the traditional lecture material will be on-line. You will access this material through Blackboard. You are expected to come to class having done all of the reading and all of the online material. In class we will do the work you would normally do as homework. In the case of CMGT 502, this means the case work.

This course focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the corporate communication function with all of a company's stakeholders.

Stakeholders are those individuals or groups who have an interest in the success or failure of the enterprise. This course will examine the strategic communication demands placed on the corporation by a variety of stakeholders: employees, customers, shareholders, the local community, and society at large represented by the media.

Managing relationships with these stakeholders presupposes that processes exist within a corporation to facilitate communications with these constituents on an ongoing basis. In a time of significant change, both technological and societal, it is more important that companies communicate more effectively than ever. As Frank M. Corrado put it, "managers have learned that in the new marketplace of ideas, it is incumbent upon them to develop a perspective, a way of thinking that provides them with a facility in dealing with constituencies, arguing proactively and aggressively the corporate vision expressed by the board." He concludes that effective communications strategy and tactics can make important contributions in:

- helping value the firm correctly in the marketplace so as to maximize shareholder value and lessen chances of unfriendly takeover;
- building employee morale and effectiveness in difficult economic times, thus increasing productivity and profitability;
- improving the marketing of products by lending credibility to their efficacy and value;
- managing crises;
- effectively communicating with the public via the media; and
- enabling a corporation to transform itself into more agile and flexible company to compete more effectively in a changing business environment.

II. Learning Objectives

- To recognize and respond to the communication expectations of various corporate stakeholders.
- To be able to create and implement a strategic corporate communications plan.
- To utilize a variety of communication tools and techniques.
- To apply academic literature to real workplace situations.

III. Grading Breakdown & Assignments

Assignment	% of Grade
Class Participation	15
Emerging Topics Assignments	15
Case Study Assignments (6 times 5%)	30
Case Study Peer Reviews	10
Final Project & Presentation	30
TOTAL	100%

Participation (15%)

All seven modules feature in-class discussion. The issues to be discussed revolve around the module's themes and incorporate concepts from the reading, online instructional materials, and the case study work. These in-class discussions are where students demonstrate their ability to apply the concepts of the content they are studying. Participation in class discussion is an integral component of this course. Doing the readings and reviewing the instructional materials is essential to substantive classroom discussion, and occasional pop-quizzes to assess students' comprehension of the online instructional materials and assigned reading for each module will also be factored into the participation grade.

Emerging Topics Assignment (15%)

For this assignment students will work with a partner to introduce the class to an emerging trend or topic relating to corporate communication. You and your partner should pick a topic area of interest. If possible, the topic should tie-in with the topics covered in the current course module. You will be responsible for preparing a short presentation and write-up on key themes within this topical area. You should draw on both academic articles and practitioner resources (e.g. HBR articles, SME Blog posts, etc.). See Blackboard for more detailed assignment guidelines and a sign-up sheet.

Case Study Assignments (30%) & Case Study Peer Reviews (10%)

There are six group case studies in this course. Their purpose is to create real-life scenarios for the students to experience. Students will be assigned to work in groups to solve the challenge of the case. At the end of each module you should be prepared to present their summary actions to the rest of the class.

Starting with Module 2, at the conclusion of each module, you will have the opportunity to assess the contributions of your group members via a survey. The scores of group members will be averaged to give

you a peer review score for that module. However, if you personally do not turn in your peer reviews by the due date, you will receive a zero for the peer review.

Final Paper: Stakeholder Analysis (30%)

Choose an organization that you are able to gather data upon. This can be non-profit, profit, government, NGO.

Based on your research into the organization (and this can be secondary research if you cannot get direct access) determine a strategic goal for an issue facing it and then an SC goal. Using all manner of research, work your way through the SC Model. More detailed guidelines will be distributed and discussed in class. This is an individual effort.

Grade Ranges

A	93.0% or higher
A-	89.0%-92.9%
B+	87.0%-88.9%
B	83.0%-86.9%
B-	79.0%-82.9%
C+	77.0%-78.9%
C	73.0%-76.9%
C-	70.0%-72.9%
D	60.0%-69.9%
F	59.9% or lower

Late Policy

Late assignments for module activities are not accepted. Term paper loses 5% per day late. No exceptions.

Group Work

You will work with a new group for every module during the course to complete the case study assignments. Groups will be randomly assigned. You will receive the assignments at the beginning of each module.

IV. Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments should be emailed to the instructor unless otherwise specified. For case studies you should also bring a hard copy to class.

V. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- Bolman, L. G. & Deal, T. E. (2013). Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership (5th Edition). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Cornelissen, J. (2014). Corporate Communication (4th Edition). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard

VI. Laptop Policy

Effective fall 2014, all undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors will be 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.

VII. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topic
Week 1 8/24/16	Module 1: Vision & Mission
Week 2 8/31/16	Module 2: Communication & Strategy- Part I
Week 3 9/7/16	Module 2: Communication & Strategy- Part II
Week 4 9/14/16	Module 3: Employee Communication- Part I
Week 5 9/21/16	Module 3: Employee Communication- Part II
Week 6	Module 4: Human Resources Communication- Part I

9/28/16	
Week 7 10/5/16	Module 4: Human Resources Communication- Part II
Week 8 10/12/16	Module 5: Investor & Manager Communication- Part I
Week 9 10/19/16	Module 5: Investor & Manager Communication- Part II
Week 10 10/26/16	Module 6: Media Relations & Marketing- Part I
Week 11 11/2/16	Module 6: Media Relations & Marketing- Part II
Week 12 11/9/16	Module 7: Mergers, Acquisitions and Crisis Communication- Part I
Week 13 11/16/16	Module 7: Mergers, Acquisitions and Crisis Communication- Part II
Week 14 11/23/16	Thanksgiving Break- No Class
Week 15 11/30/16	Final Project Presentations - Part I
Final 12/7/16 7-9pm	Final Project Presentations - Part II

***Note:** 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.*

VIII. Policies and Procedures

A. Plagiarism

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Please see the *SCampus* (<http://scampus.usc.edu/1300-academic-integrity-review/>) for the university's Student Conduct Code.

USC School of Communication Policy on Academic Integrity

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

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as Communication 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.

B. Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

C. 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.

D. Sexual Assault Resource Center

The Center for Women & Men and the Sexual Assault Resource Center are one and the same. Student Counseling Services is a separate place that also offers confidential counseling and support groups on a variety of other topics. To schedule an appointment with Student Counseling Services, call (213) 740-7711 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays or visit the Engemann Student Health Center on the University Park Campus.

E. Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.