



**CMGT (577): Communicating Corporate
Social Responsibility**

4 Units

Spring 2023 – Tuesdays – 6:30 – 9:20PM

January 10, 2022 – May 11, 2022

Section: 21795D

Location: Classroom: ASC 228

Instructor: Catie Saralegui

Office: ZOOM

Office Hours: By Appointment

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Course Description

CSR is the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole. A corporation's CSR initiatives should be driven by the organization's vision and purpose. What needs does the organization seek to meet? An organization may develop a mission statement and develop strategies for pursuing the mission that include CSR objections. As Vogel (2005) states, many corporations are "doing good to do well" (p. 19). We see CSR as complementary to, not competing with, the corporation's mission.

Once thought to be a method for protecting reputation, research has reinforced the business case for CSR and the role it plays in shaping corporate reputation. With multiple stakeholders including NGO's, governments, the Social Responsible Investment (SRI) community and employees all demanding transparency, communicating CSR is complex. And, as our organizations and world become increasingly connected, stakeholders in and outside the organization are looking for opportunities to participate in and shape CSR initiatives. Corporate communicators frequently find themselves at the center of these movements charged with extracting the organization's "story" revolving around a continuum of activities from CSR reporting to employee and stakeholder engagement to the initiation of joint ventures. Communicators operating in this space carry the enormous responsibility of developing and sharing the language by which a company knows itself, and CSR, being all pervasive to an organization, becomes both a strategy and way of being that is highly reliant on people who know how to write well and leverage all available channels to communicate the organization's CSR message. These roles will become increasingly important as our connectivity increases. All that "connectivity" requires content that has the power to move people who have the power to choose their allegiances.

Over the course of the term, we will examine and develop a strategic communications plan around an initiative driven by our in-class "clients. These are real companies with real concerns in implementing CSR initiatives. We will assess, and evaluate the evolution, models, metrics and stakeholders with each client initiative; determine key communication issues in designing and implementing these initiatives, CSR reporting, strategic partnerships and online communities. We will develop an analysis of communication paradoxes that can arise in CSR.

Designed for students considering a career in CSR, the course provides an overview of corporate social responsibility, its evolution, various models, metrics and stakeholders as well as key issues in communicating CSR including the use of social media.

The majority of the course work will be done in teams that we will arrange a few weeks into class with the clients. Once our roster settles, we will confirm clients according to the number of teams we have.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will:

- A. Understand the roots of CSR
- B. Understand the critical elements of a CSR initiative
- C. Understand the CSR communication paradox
- D. Understand the implementation issues of a CSR initiative

Be able to conduct an audit and create a CSR strategic communications plan

Course Notes

Instructor: Grading Type, if other than the assumed letter grade (i.e., Credit No-Credit or Numeric and/or In Progress). Note any unique characteristics of the course or operating procedure. Is the course Web-Enhanced (i.e. Blackboard), Blended or Online? If copies of lecture slides and other class information will be posted on Blackboard, note that here. If multimedia or technology-enhanced learning strategies will be used, please describe them here.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Group work. These two words can conjure very different thoughts and feeling for individual students based on prior experiences and preferred learning styles. For some, these two words are welcoming as learning together in a group provides students the opportunity for processing course material through active, collaborative engagement with classmates — which research has shown improves individual comprehension, increases productivity and performance, and develops long-term learning. Working in a group provides the opportunity for developing skills in three essential areas that underpin professional success: interpersonal skills, team membership skills, and leadership skills. As well, collaborating with others enhances self-awareness of our own personal strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps you are great at listening and have very strong information literacy skills (that is locating, selecting, and using information from a range of information sources to investigate a situation). Or perhaps you are great at embracing contradictions and creating novel or unique ideas. Perhaps connecting, synthesizing and transforming ideas into a coherent whole is not something you are particularly good at. Or perhaps putting a plan into words is daunting, as language clarity, grammar, and syntax are not a personal strength. Recognizing and acknowledging what you are good at and what you need to improve is imperative for building trust with others and achieving group goals.

Conversely, for others the idea of group work is demotivating. Trying to get all members of a group to work effectively together can be strenuous. Conflict is sure to arise as different personalities and communication styles clash. Planning and organizing what needs to be done, who will do it, and when it needs to be done can seemingly take up a lot of time. Then there is the instance of “free-riders” — when a group member makes little to no effort to contribute to the work of the group, but reaps the benefit of the group accomplishments. Or, “social loafing” — when a member makes fewer contributions to the efforts of the group than they might have if they were exclusively responsible for the project.

Communicators often play consultative roles within their organizations; internally managing up, and/or across business units and/or functions — as well as, externally managing outside resources and partnerships. As well, new product/service development imposes the requirement for self-organized, cross-functional and highly productive teams to address complex problems and ensure the highest possible value. This is no different in CSR.

So, becoming proficient at group work is essential.

Two tools you may want to consider adapting to help you manage your team’s work include: [Work Breakdown Structure](#) and [Responsibility Assignment Matrix](#).

Peer Evaluations

Peer evaluations will be used as a component of the final grade to properly reflect the actual contribution of each individual to the project. Peer evaluations account for 15% of your grade. Each team member will rate their own performance and the performance of the team members. The evaluation form consists of two parts (see below).

Part A Evaluation Criteria (scale of 1 to 4, 4 being best)

- Contribution to group projects (logistics, analysis, research, ideas)
- Task dedication (meeting prep, logistics, editing, timely arrival)
- Attitude towards group
- Effectiveness as a team player
- Ability to effectively communicate within group_

Part B (ranking individual group member contributions as compared to yours)

- Overall contributions — equal or better than mine
- Overall contribution — slightly below mine
- Overall contribution — below mine
- Overall contribution — considerable below mine

[NOTE: Groups may choose to modify the criteria above. Any modifications must be agreed upon by all members of the group and submitted to the professor by the start of the 3rd week of the course.]

Grading

a. Grading Breakdown

Description of assessments and corresponding points and percentage of grade.

| Assignment | Points | % of Grade |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| In class projects/assignments | 200 | 20% |
| Team writing assignment | 50 | 5% |
| Midterm Paper and Presentation | 200 | 20% |
| Midterm Team Papers + Presentations | 150 | 15% |
| Final Team Papers + Presentations | 200 | 20% |
| In-Class Participation & Speaker's Committee | 100 | 10% |
| Self/Peer Evaluations | 100 | 10% |
| TOTAL | 1,000 | 100% |

b. Course Grading Scale

Letter grades and corresponding point value ranges.

| Letter grade and corresponding numerical point range | | |
|--|--------------------------|----------------|
| 95% to 100%: A | 80% to 83%: B- | 67% to 69%: D+ |
| 90% to 94%: A- (A minus) | 77% to 79%: C+ (C plus) | 64% to 66%: D |
| 87% to 89%: B+ | 74% to 76%: C | 60% to 63%: D- |
| 84% to 86%: B | 70% to 73%: C- (C minus) | 0% to 59%: F |

c. Grading Standards

| Letter Grade | Description |
|--------------|--|
| A | Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded. |
| B | Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings. |
| C | Satisfactory/Fair; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding. |

| | |
|----------|--|
| D | Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding. |
| F | Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding. |

d. Grading Timeline

I commit to having feedback on assignments within 2 weeks of the due dates.

Assignment Submission Policy

- A. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will risk a grade reduction.
- B. Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard/Turnitin or msaraleg@usc.edu as per the assignment specifications.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Textbook: Managing Corporate Social Responsibility, A communication Approach, Coombs & Holladay

ISBN 9781444336290 (Hardback)

ISBN 9781444336450 (Paperback)

Kindle edition available on amazon.com

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 Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001

(15 weeks: 1/9/2023 – 4/28/2023; Final Exam Period: 5/3-10/2023)

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20231/calendar/>

Last day to add: Friday, January 27, 2023

Last day to drop without a mark of "W" and receive a refund: Friday, January 27, 2023

Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit: Saturday, January 28, 2023 [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Last day to add/drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund or change to Audit:

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

Last day to withdraw without a "W" on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade: Friday, February 24, 2023 [Mark of "W" will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply.]

*Please drop any course by the end of week three for session 001 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]

Last day to drop with a mark of "W": Friday, April 7, 2023

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

| | Topics/Daily Activities | Readings/Homework | Deliverable/Due Dates |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Week 1 Dates: 1/9-1/13 | Intro, Overview and Appreciative Inquiry/Group Work practices | https://cvdl.ben.edu/blog/what-is-appreciative-inquiry/ Chapters 1-2, 9 in <i>Managing Corporate Social Responsibility</i> Chapters 1-2 in <i>The Triple Bottom Line</i> | |
| Week 2 Dates: 1/16-1/20 | Review and Discuss Midterm and Final Client Presentations and Team Selections Intro: The Triple Bottom Line Sweet Spot/The Purpose Construct Guests: Team Client Representatives Pick clients and teams! Form Speaker's Committee | The 10 most innovative corporate social responsibility companies of 2021 <i>These companies are taking bold stances to improve their communities and the world beyond.</i> <i>How CSR Initiatives Have Failed in the Past and what the NFP Sector Can Do About It</i> <u>How to stop talking and start taking action on CSR</u> The Best & Worst of CSR Campaigns Case Study: <u>CocaCola Drinking the World Dry</u> | [Martin Luther King's Birthday: Monday, January 16] |
| Week 3 Dates: 1/23-1/27 | Continue: The Triple Bottom Line Sweet Spot/The Purpose Construct Topic: Perception is Reality in CSR Study: 71% of consumers tire of empty promises, spurring 'age of cynicism' <i>Poverty, Inc. -</i> https://youtu.be/yPmawWgpXOs Acgtion over Communication Team Class Cases: <u>Microsoft, Grove Collaborative, Twisted X, and Verizon</u> | Salesforce: https://www.salesforce.com/blog/corporate-social-responsibility-empower-employees/ GE: https://www.ge.com/in/ge-td-india-limited/CSR Burt's Bees: PDF on Blackboard <u>CSR: Creating Value Through Partnerships</u> Chapters 4-5 in <i>Managing Corporate Social Responsibility</i> Chapters 1 and 5 in <i>The Triple Bottom Line</i> | |
| Week 4 Dates: 1/30-2/3 | Topics/Daily Activities | Readings/Homework | |

| | Topics/Daily Activities | Readings/Homework | Deliverable/Due Dates |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Week 5 Dates: 2/6- 2/10</p> | <p>Topic: Lessons on Launching and Sustaining Sustainability Efforts Strategic Alliances</p> <p>Team Class Cases: <u>Wal-Mart</u>, <u>Salesforce</u>, <u>GE</u>, <u>Burt's Bees</u></p> | <p><u>What Is a CSR Report & Why Is It Important?</u> Includes examples Cisco, Walt Disney, IBM, and Warby Parker Reports on Blackboard Chapter 7, 11, 13, and 15 in <i>Managing Corporate Social Responsibility</i> TEAM WRITING ASSIGNMENT – DUE 2/14/22 A short description of your team project will be submitted at the beginning of the semester. The paper will be corrected and then returned to students for necessary revisions. The grade will be based on the revised submission, if needed.</p> | |
| <p>Week 6 Dates: 2/13- 2/17</p> | <p>Topic: Anatomy of a Communications Plan and CSR Report Guest: James Bobo, Director – Visual Storytelling Team Class Cases: Cisco; Walt Disney Company, IBM, and Warby Parker</p> | <p>Finalize Midterm Papers and Presentations</p> | |
| <p>Week 7 Dates: 2/20- 2/24</p> | <p>[Presidents' Day: Monday, February 21] No class</p> | | <p>[President's Day: Monday, February 20]</p> |
| <p>Week 8 Dates: 2/27- 3/3</p> | <p>Team Midterm Presentations to Clients</p> | <p>Case Study: <u>CSR In the US</u> <u>Global Environmental Health in the 21st Century: From Governmental Regulation to Corporate Social Responsibility: Workshop Summary</u> The Responsibility Paradox: Multinational Firms and Global Corporate Social Responsibility (PDF on BlackBoard) Drivers of Global Corporate Social Responsibility and its Effect on Global Brand Reputation (PDF on BlackBoard) <u>Defining Social Innovation</u></p> | |

| | Topics/Daily Activities | Readings/Homework | Deliverable/Due Dates |
|----------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------|
| Week 9 Dates: 3/6-3/10 | Topic: Social Innovation CSR Around the World Guest: Marco Magallon/CEO of SwoopIn & Kevin Merideth Author if Destination: Innovation | SOCIAL IMPACT BONDS: STATE OF PLAY & LESSONS LEARNT (PDF on Blackboard) UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL IMPACT BONDS (PDF on Blackboard) | |
| Spring Break Dates: 3/13-3/17 | Spring Break No Classes | | |
| Week 10 Dates: 3/20-3/24 | Topic: Sustainable Investing and ESG Guest: Kay Yang - Tinkerbot | Class Case 3 – 5 Critical Elements of Investment in CSR https://www.forbes.com/sites/csr/2011/04/26/the-five-elements-of-the-best-csr-programs/?sh=3e9864c64bd5 How corporations can maximize their investments in CSR: business-based social purpose, clear theory of change, quality and depth of information, concentrated effort, and partnering with experts. | |
| Week 11 Dates: 3/27-3/31 | Topic: Sustainability in Technology Guest: David Ambroz / Head of External Affairs & Community Engagement, Amazon (Formerly CSR Disney) | Class Case 4 & 5 – Global CSR – Crisis in Ukraine (Due 4/8) | |
| Week 12 Dates: 4/3-4/7 | Topic: Sustainability in Entertainment Guest: Mark Cirilli | | |
| Week 13 Dates: 4/10-4/14 | Guest: TBD Team Presentation and Paper Workshop | TBD | |

| | Topics/Daily Activities | Readings/Homework | Deliverable/Due Dates |
|---|---|---|--|
| Week 14 Dates: 4/17-4/21 | Guest: TBD Team Presentation and Paper Workshop – Dry Run in Class for notes | TBD | |
| Week 15 Dates: 4/24-4/28 | Course Wrap-Up & Final Team Presentations to Clients | | [Instructor: Please be sure to set aside time at the beginning of your final class meeting for students to submit their USC Course Evaluations.] |
| FINAL EXAM PERIOD Dates: 5/3-5/10 | Review and Discuss Midterm and Final Client Presentations and Team Selections Intro: The Triple Bottom Line Sweet Spot/The Purpose Construct Guests: Team Client Representatives Pick clients and teams! Form Speaker’s Committee | <u>The 10 most innovative corporate social responsibility companies of 2021</u> <i>These companies are taking bold stances to improve their communities and the world beyond.</i> <u>How CSR Initiatives Have Failed in the Past and what the NFP Sector Can Do About It</u> <u>How to stop talking and start taking action on CSR</u> <u>The Best & Worst of CSR Campaigns</u> Case Study: <u>CocaCola Drinking the World Dry</u> | Date: For the date and time of the final for this class, please consult the <u>Spring 2023 Final Exam Schedule</u> . Graded work (exam, paper, project, etc.) must be due on the scheduled date of the final exam. |

Communication

Please ask questions! Feel free to email, call or text me at any time (within reasonable hours). Happy to contribute to our learning journey wherever needed!

(323) 898-4565 (mobile)

msaraleg@usc.edu

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

The USC Student Handbook (https://policy.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/USC_StudentCode_August2022.pdf)

Academic Integrity

USC’s Unifying Value of integrity is a foundational principle that inspires the community to match its values to its actions. Academic integrity is ultimately the sole guarantor of the legitimacy of one’s education, and therefore, is

vitaly important not just for oneself, but for the entire USC community. The value of all USC degrees is negatively impacted by violations of academic integrity. In the classroom, general principles of academic integrity 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.

Academic Integrity violations (academic dishonesty) include, but are not limited to:

Plagiarism and Cheating

- The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student's own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.
- Re-using any portion of one's own work (essay, term paper, project, or other assignment) previously submitted without citation of such and without permission of the instructor(s) involved.
- Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers, including drafts. Also, all students involved in collaborative work (as permitted by the instructor) are expected to proofread the work and are responsible for all particulars of the final draft.
- Acquisition of academic work, such as term papers, solutions, or other assignments, from any source and the subsequent presentation of those materials as the student's own work, or providing academic work, such as term papers, solutions, or assignments that another student submits as their own work.

The School of Communication maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

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.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenbergscholarships.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergscholarships-and-awards>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Annenberg Student Emergency Aid Fund

<https://annenbergscholarships.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergscholarships-and-awards>

Awards are distributed to students experiencing unforeseen circumstances and emergencies impacting their ability to pay tuition or cover everyday living expenses. These awards are not intended to cover full-tuition expenses, but rather serve as bridge funding to guarantee students' continued enrollment at USC until other resources, such as scholarships or loans, become available. Students are encouraged to provide as much information in their application, as well as contact their academic advisor directly with questions about additional resources available to them.

About Your Instructor

I'm very excited to be teaching at USC. Teaching and mentoring is something I have wanted to do more formally for many years. I do thrive in developing my staff and colleagues; and view mentorship as an invaluable part of my job in managing people. I had some terrific mentors throughout my career. And I think it made all the difference in my trajectory from admin assistant to the C-Suite. I hope to ignite your curiosity around the wide world of Corporate Social Responsibility communications. And, to help inspire you to be solid advocates in the causes you may choose throughout your life.

I write this syllabus from 20+ years of experience in the for and not for profit sectors. I have worked on nonprofits small and large from an agency partner perspective as well as my own personal interests which are varied. The Open Fist Theatre Company, LupusLA, Easter Seals, Merlin Mobility Foundation, Border Angels, Animal Wellness Foundation (and others), American Heart Association, and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) are a few of the organizations I've had the pleasure to influence.

"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."- Harriet Tubman

Let's get together and see if we can make the world a little bit better place. If you take anything away from this course and me , it's to do the right thing because it's the right thing to do.