

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
MCOM 295:001, Fall 2017
A Service-Learning Course
1:20 p.m. – 3 p.m., Karpen RM 12

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Office Hours: 11:45-12:45 p.m. on Tuesday/Thursday, 1-4 p.m. on Wednesday

Course Description and Objectives

This course will focus on seminal events influencing crisis communication and strategic planning for public relations campaigns as well as the exploration, application and production of public relations tactics for both traditional and social media. This course can count as one of the two required courses for the academic honor of Community Engaged Scholar so long as the student earns at least a B-minus in the course.

Student Learning Outcomes

You will have the opportunity to learn, discuss & apply the following:

- Best practices in strategic communication;
- Research, strategy, tactics, and evaluation components of a communication plan;
- Through class partnerships with Dogwood Alliance, Clean Water NC, and Asheville GreenWorks, gain a working knowledge about the function of strategic communication for an environmental non-profit organization;
- Ethical guidelines set forth by professional public relations associations for public relations practice;
- Apply knowledge and skills of strategic communications in the development of a written communications plan for one of the three organizations

Requirements of this Service-Learning Designated Course

You are responsible for completing a minimum of 20 hours with the assigned environmental non-profit organization. The service-learning hours will allow you to learn about the organization's impact on the community. From knowledge gained through your service learning experience, you will write three reflective e essays, complete three service learning evaluations, meet in peer groups to discuss your service learning experience, and write a communication's plan to assist the organization in their community outreach efforts. Students will work in pairs for the written communications plan.

You are responsible for completing the assigned readings and all content presented during class. Readings are due for discussion on the date listed. You should be prepared to discuss readings and assignments and may be called by name to offer summary, commentary and analysis.

Required Reading

Strategic Planning for Public Relations, 5th Edition, by Ronald D. Smith
Associated Press Stylebook 2017

Graded Assignments

20 hours with the organization, including three service-learning evaluations – 25%

Tests – 25%

Written communications plan – 30%

Class Assignments/Peer Mentor Groups, including completion of three reflective essays – 20%

Please note that as the semester progresses you will notice an increase in peer mentor group activities. These class sessions will be invaluable for developing your communication plan. Furthermore, failure to attend the peer group meetings will result in a grade reduction for your communications plan.

Grading Scale

93 - 100	A	87 – 89	B+	77 – 79	C+	60 – 69	D
90 - 92	A-	83 – 86	B	73 – 76	C	Below 60	F
		80 – 82	B-	70 – 72	C-		

Attendance, Late Arrivals and Participation

Students who attend class and regularly participate in class discussions perform better on tests. I will take attendance at each class session. You may have one absence without lowering your participation grade unless the absence is on a test day. If either of the later should occur, you will need a written doctor's note to make up the test. Repeated tardiness or leaving early will count as a missed class. Missed sessions are only excused for serious medical reasons with a note from a health care provider, student athletes participating in UNCA athletic events, participation in an academic conference, or serving as an official representative of the university. It is the responsibility of the student to provide documentation for an excused absence and to make sure appropriate credit is awarded. Students not prepared to discuss reading or to participate in class assignments may receive a loss of credit from their participation grade.

Missed Tests, Advance Tests, Make-up Tests and Extra Credit

Missed tests or a missed presentation will receive a score of zero. No tests are given in advance. No make-up tests are given. Exception to this rule: University excused absences for academic/athletic events, or medical documentation of an illness. No extra credit assignments will be provided unless it is provided to the entire class. All students get to drop the lowest exam score, which can be used to miss an exam.

Class assignments and Obtaining material covered in a missed session

Please make arrangements with other students in this class for obtaining notes and assignments for any missed sessions. Please note that most class assignments will be given and completed during class time. Missed class assignments given and due in the same class period will receive a grade of "0".

Electronic Devices

Audio and video recording of class sessions is not permitted.

Effective participation is compromised by distractions such as cell phones and laptop computers. Therefore, you should **turn off your cell phones** before class begins (silencing does not always turn off audible text notifications). Repeat violators of this policy will have their attendance and/or participation grades penalized. If you have an

emergency situation in which you need to be reached immediately, you should discuss this with me. Use of laptops is strongly discouraged since they provide too much temptation for some to check email or Facebook, play games, etc. In some courses, use of laptops to access course readings may be allowed as a concession to sustainability, but **I reserve the right at any time to suspend the use of laptops by individual students or by the entire class** should they prove disruptive.

Communicating

Email is the best means for contacting me (sdipalma@unca.edu). However, during office hours, you may contact me via my office phone – 828-250-2316. Throughout the school week, I typically respond to emails within 24 hours, except for weekends. When I send emails, I use your UNCA email address. If you receive your email at another address, please have your UNCA email forwarded to that address. **Please include your first and last name along with the course number or title within the body of your email. I do not respond to anonymous emails.** Also, I do not respond to emails that are inappropriate, or disrespectful.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

UNC-Asheville values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary injuries/conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities, course design, technology used for curricular purposes, or other campus resources. Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let the professor know and make an appointment to meet with the Office of Academic Accessibility as soon as possible. You can make an appointment by calling [828.232.5050](tel:828.232.5050); by emailing academicaccess@unca.edu; by clicking on <https://uncaoaaintake.youcanbook.me/>; or by dropping by the Academic Accessibility Office, room 005 in the One Stop suite (lower level of Ramsey Library). You can access further information here: <https://oaa.unca.edu/>

Students who receive Letters of Accommodation are strongly encouraged to request, obtain, and present these to their professors as early in the semester as possible so that accommodations can be made in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to follow this process each semester.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. UNC Asheville's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the University but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to any University Responsible Employee – which includes most faculty and staff -- who will report the incident; contact Dr. Jill Moffitt, UNC Asheville's Title IX Administrator, at (828) 232-5658; or report anonymously at <https://police.unca.edu/anonymous-report>. For more information regarding Title IX and resources concerning sexual harassment and its prevention please visit <https://police.unca.edu/about-title-ix>.

Understanding Academic Alerts

Faculty at UNCA are encouraged to use the university's Academic Alert system to communicate with students about their progress in courses. Academic Alerts can reflect that a student's performance is satisfactory at the time the alert is submitted, or they can indicate concerns (e.g., academic difficulty, attendance problems, or other concerns). Professors use the alert system because they are invested in student success and want to encourage open conversations about how students can improve their learning, and students who respond to alerts quickly are consistently more likely to earn credit for the course. *Please note, professors of 100-level courses are required to submit at least one alert about each student on or before the fifth week of classes.*

When a faculty member submits an alert that expresses a concern, the student receives an email from Academic Advising notifying them of the alert and subsequent registration hold on their account. To clear the hold, the student must complete a short Google Response Form included in the alert e-mail; the results will be shared with their instructor and advising staff. Instructors may also request to meet with the student to discuss the alert.

Questions about the Academic Alert system can be directed to Anne Marie Roberts (amrober1@unca.edu) in OneStop Advising and Learning Support.

Plagiarism

Don't submit work that isn't yours! Plagiarism is a serious academic offense that will result in an automatic "F" for the assignment and a letter grade reduction for the course. Please refer to your student handbook for additional information on plagiarism. The following actions constitute plagiarism:

- Summarizing someone else's ideas in your own words without citing the source properly,
- Quoting part of a sentence or a key phrase without citing the source properly,
- Quoting a whole sentence without citing the source properly,
- Quoting several sentences, a whole paragraph or more without citing the source properly, and/or
- Turning in a paper that you did not write as if it were your own work.

I AM REQUIRED TO REPORT ALL ACTS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY, WHICH INCLUDES PLAGIARISM TO DR. PATRICIA MCCLELLAN, ASSISTANT PROVOST, ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION.

Academic Honesty

It is the responsibility of students to be aware of the UNC Asheville Academic Honesty Policy as printed in your student handbook. Ignorance of this policy will not be an acceptable defense if you are charged with academic dishonesty. One or more sanctions may be imposed upon a student who commits act(s) of academic dishonesty. These include grade-reduction penalty within the course, a failing grade of "F" for the course, temporary suspension from enrollment at the University, or permanent dismissal from the University.

From the UNC Asheville Catalog:

As a community of scholars dedicated to learning and the pursuit of knowledge, UNC Asheville relies on the honesty and academic integrity of all the members of its community. Any act of plagiarism, cheating, or use of unauthorized materials or assistance is academic dishonesty. A person who knowingly assists another in academic dishonesty is likewise guilty of dishonesty. According to the instructor's view of the gravity of the offense and the instructor's syllabus policy, a student may be punished by a failing grade or a grade of zero for the assignment or test, or a failing grade in the course. The faculty member may also require that the student complete additional sanctions, such as the completion of an online course on plagiarism or resubmission of the original assignment.

In all situations where a student has been disciplined for academic dishonesty, the instructor must submit a brief statement of the case to the Senior Director of Student Success with a copy to the student. The Senior Director maintains records of academic dishonesty incidents and notifies the instructor when a student is found to have multiple offenses. Depending upon the severity and/or repetition of the offense, the Senior Director and/or instructor may recommend that the Provost impose an additional penalty, such as cancellation of graduation with honors, cancellation of scholarships, or dismissal from the university. If the Provost decides that additional penalties are warranted, the student will be notified in writing.

If a student feels that he or she has been unjustly accused of academic dishonesty, the student has ten (10) class days from the date of the instructor's written notification to the student to respond in writing. This response is to be sent to both the instructor and the Senior Director of Student Success. The instructor should then meet with the student to discuss the charges within five (5) class days. If needed, the student may then contact the Senior Director for assistance in identifying options for possible resolution. If needed, the Faculty Conciliator will be contacted to mediate and/or convene the Academic Appeals Board.

Incomplete Grades

The university policy indicates that incompletes may be awarded for extreme situations, in which there is a minimal amount of work missing late in the semester.

**MCOM 295.001 – STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS
FALL 2017 COURSE OUTLINE**

This is a service learning designated course. This course outline may be updated to as needed to accommodate the service learning experience of the course.

Any updates will be announced in class. Class assignments will be given in class.

Week 1

- 8/22 Syllabus, Course Outline, Service Learning, Final Project
8/24 Overview of the environmental non-profits selected for this course
Please read Introduction, pp. 1-23, for discussion

Week 2

- 8/29 Scot Quaranda – Dogwood Alliance, Dawn Chàvez, Executive Director, and Joèle Emma, Director of Education, Asheville GreenWorks; Please read Phase One – Formative Research – Step 1: Analyzing the Situation, pp. 25-46
8/31 Katie Hicks – Clean Water for NC;
Please read Step 2: Analyzing the Organization, pp. 47-62

Starting next week – Dogwood Alliance, Committee for *Woods and Wilds* – Every Tuesday from 5-6 pm at our office up until the event on Oct. 1 at the Salvage Station

Week 3

- 9/05 Please read Step 3: Analyzing the Publics, pp. 63-99
9/07 Social Media Analytics Introduction; Analyzing your organization – Class Assignment

Week 4

- 9/12 Peer Mentor groups, First reflection essay due, Review for Test 1
On-site visit Clean Water for NC 1-2:30 p.m.
9/12 Dogwood Alliance - Statewide Call-in Gov. Cooper regarding permit to a wood pellet company
9/14 **Test #1 – Phase One**
9/16 Hard to Recycle event, Asheville Greenworks

Week 5

- 9/19 Please read Phase Two – Strategy – Step 4: Establishing Goals & Objectives, pp. 101-121, Checklist 4 – Class Assignment
9/21 Please read Step 5: Proactive Strategies, pp. 122-154
TBA Clean Water for NC – Training for upcoming rally & workshop
9/23 Root Ball, Asheville GreenWorks

Week 6

- 9/26 Please read Media Theory – Reactive Strategies, pp. 155-193
9/27 Clean Water for NC – Rally at Pack’s Square Park, Court House. Rally, public NC Utilities Commission on Duke Energy rate hikes. Students can observe: CWFNC in action bringing directly impacted speakers to be

featured in the media and participate in public comment processes; collaboration with other groups; policy advocacy on water / energy issues impacting the public & ratepayers (approx. 4 hours - 5-9pm)

9/28 Please read Step 6: Developing the Message Strategy, pp. 197-227

Week 7

Saturday/TBA Citizen monitoring workshop in Cleveland County, NC (about 6 hours, including travel, on a Saturday TBD)

10/03 Please read Step 6: Developing the Message Strategy, pp. 228-253
Class Assignment – Steps 5 & 6, Peer Mentor Groups

10/05 **Test # 2 – Phase Two**

Week 8

10/09-10 **FALL BREAK – NO CLASSES**

10/12 Please read Step 7 – Selecting Communication Tactics, pp. 257-319

Week 9

10/17 Please read Step 7 – Selecting Communication Tactics, pp. 320-336
Class Assignment – Selecting Communication Tactics for your organization, Peer Mentor Groups

10/19 Please read Step 8 – Implementing the Strategic Plan, pp. 337-362

Week 10

10/24 Class Assignment – Implementing the Strategic Plan for your organization, Peer Mentor Groups

10/26 Please read Phase Four – Evaluative Research – Step 9, pp. 365-393

TBD Composting Workshop, Asheville GreenWorks

Week 11

10/31 **Test 3 – Phase Three & Phase Four**

11/02 Phase One – Peer Mentor Groups, Meetings with instructor
Second reflection essay due

11/04 Tire Amnesty Day

Week 12

11/07 Phase One – Peer Mentor Groups, Meetings with instructor

11/09 **Phase One Draft Due**

Phase Two – Peer Mentor Groups, Meetings with instructor

Week 13

11/14 Phase Two – Peer Mentor Groups, Meetings with instructor

11/16 **Phase Two Draft Due**

Phase Three – Peer Mentor Groups, Meetings with instructor

Week 14

11/21 Phase Three – Peer Mentor Groups, Meetings with instructor

11/22-24 **THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASSES**

Week 15

11/28 **Phase Three Draft Due**
Phase Four – Peer Mentor Groups, Meetings with Instructor
11/29 **Celebration Expo – Group presentation on projects**
11/30 Phase Four – Peer Mentor Groups, Meetings with Instructor

Week 16

12/05 Undergraduate Research Symposium – Large group presentations
12/06 Reading Day: No Classes
12/07 FINAL EXAMS BEGIN
12/07 **11:30 a.m. Presentation of strategic communication plans, all plans due, final reflection due**