



1231.3961 – Information Overload, Communication and Business

גודש מידע, תקשורת ועסקים

Prerequisites/ Parallel requirements: none

Spring Semester 2nd Half –2024

Section	Day	Hour	Final Task	Lecturer	Email	Telephone
	*	18:45-21:30	NO Exam	Ido Aharoni Aronoff	ido.aharoni@nyu.edu idoaronoff@gmail.com	+972 50-620-3126 (Israel) +1-646-483-4005 (WhatsApp)

*one week course on Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday and Thursday

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Units

Course units 1 YAS = 4 ECTS

The ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) is a framework defined by the European Commission to allow for unified recognition of student academic achievements from different countries.

Course Description

Expression is necessary to evolution. Humans cannot survive, or thrive, without communicating with each other. Understanding communications on all levels – verbal and non-verbal; inter-personal and mass; micro and macro – could serve as an essential tool to help people achieve their aspirations and goals in an effective and efficient manner.

The rise of the digital age, also known as the 'age of information', turned humans from rather passive consumers into pro-active producers of content. The impact of readily accessible participation is profound on all the systems surrounding us – economy, politics, culture, and society. Never before were we able to produce so much data, access and analyze it so easily and even self-design our own informational feed. This revolution signals a dramatic shift in the role of corporations, governments, and civic institutions.

This course is taught from a practitioner's perspective aiming to equip students with practical tools and insights towards designing an effective communications strategy.

In this course, we explore strategic communication in the age of information by introducing its complexity and unique characteristics. Through the analysis of case studies in media crisis management, theoretical discussion about pertinent issues, such as the age-old debate about media influence, and hands-on class projects, we will develop a practical set of tools and an overall professional approach to efficient and meaningful communications.

The course includes several encounters with professionals in the field of communications, advertising, marketing, and branding.

Course Objectives

Upon completion, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate general knowledge of communication theory and application.
- Identify key concepts and central discussions within the professional and academic fields of modern-day communication.
- Practice critical thinking to evaluate communication strategies.
- Develop a strategic framework for effective communication campaigns.

Evaluation of Student and Composition of Grade

The course is organized around three modules:

1. **Basics (topics 1-4):** Introduction to key concepts, history of media and medium, discussions, theory, and methodology
2. **Practical Applications (topics 5-10):** An overview of different approaches. Discuss philosophical, operational, and ethical implications of strategic communication in a multi-mediated world
3. **Execution and operations (topics 11-14):** Utilizing tools and knowledge given in class, students will work through their own projects, case presentations and feedback.

Throughout the course, short lectures are combined with student presentations, group work, field and case studies, and in-class activities.

Group Work:

Students will be divided into several work groups. These groups will implement and execute projects throughout the semester, such as devising social media strategy for a “client” or deconstructing media strategy for a political candidate, etc. Group presentation will take place during the semester as well. Participation in group work is mandatory. The student’s level of participation in a group setting will also influence the engagement grade. All students will be assigned two types of groups:

Study groups (2-3 students in each): who will prepare a class presentation covering lessons learned in class, theory, and case studies.

Project groups (4-5 students in each): who work on the final semester project and report.

Grading Components:

Class Engagement (50 %)

According to the following breakdown:

Class Participation (20%): This includes attendance, level of preparation and involvement in class activities, and active participation in field studies and on study tours.

Case Presentation (10 %): Each study group is required to present a communications case that illustrates some of the concepts we discuss in class. The presentation should be analytical rather than descriptive, and students should be able to relate the case to at least two academic sources.

Individual Assignment (20%): Each student is required to present a 2000-word written assignment, which will describe and reflect on key concepts discussed in class. The assignment should demonstrate theoretical insights and critical thought.

Final Project (50 %) – During the semester, students will work to create a strategic communications approach for a **Fortune 500** company, serving a real-world challenge. In the final report, students must explain their strategic choices and use viable academic arguments, including market segmentation, micro-targeting, relevance, groups, etc., and connect them to theoretical concepts discussed in class.

This proposed communications strategy will include the following elements (based on the R-SWIM model):

1. Overview of findings and the discovery phase.
2. Articulation of overall strategy, as well communications strategy.
Presentation of work plan with emphasis on the following elements:
 - Devising a micro-targeting approach (based on market research).
 - Designing a ‘media event’ to support the company’s overall strategy.
 - Construction of a press conference.
 - Outlining the basic parameters for a global advertising campaign for the company (main media as well as social media).
 - Description of a 500-word ‘mock interview’ with one of the company’s top managers.
 - Articulating the company’s ‘elevator pitch’ for all staff (through human resources

Final Projects will be assessed according to these elements:

- Overall structure
- Reliance on theoretical background
- Research capabilities
- Strategic discussion
- Work Plan description
- Implementation of Work Plan
- Measurement of effectiveness

Course Plan (Tentative):

Session	Date	Time	Content
1	16.6	18:45-21:30	Class Orientation Key Terminology: What is Strategic Communication? Marketing 101
2	17.6	18:45-21:30	Media Influence: Theories; Morality; Authenticity Issue & Crisis management
3	18.6	18:45-21:30	Introduction to R-SWIM & SWOT Analysis; Research in Communications
4	19.6	18:45-21:30	The Information Revolution; The Algorithm
5	20.6	18:45-21:30	Participatory Culture; Messaging; Storytelling

Guest Speakers will be announced separately

Bibliography - Required Readings:

Research & Methodologies:

Keyton, Joann: *Introduction to Qualitative Research*, in: Communication Research. Asking Questions, Finding Answers (2011).

Holtzhausen, Derina & Zerfass, Ansgar: *Strategic Communication. Opportunities and Challenges of the Research Area*, in: Holtzhausen & Zerfass (ed.): *The Routledge Handbook of Strategic Communication*, (2015)

Participatory Culture:

Jenkins, Henry: *Convergence Culture- Where Old and New Media Collide*; New York University Press; (2006)

Jenkins, Henry: *The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence*; MIT; (2004)

Marketing, Branding, Positioning:

Godin, Seth: *Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable*; Penguin Books (2002).

Olins, Wally: *On Brand*; Thames & Hudson (2004).

Porter, Michael: *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*; Harvard Business Review; March-April 1990.

Kotler, Philip: *Marketing Insights from A to Z*; John Wiley & Sons Inc. (2003)

Schultz, Majken: *A Cross-Disciplinary Perspective on Corporate Branding*, in: Schultz et al. (ed): *Corporate Branding. Purpose/People/Process* (2005)

Media Influence:

Braudy, Leo: *The Frenzy of Renown – Fame and its History*; Oxford University Press (1986).

McQuail, Denis: *Mass Communication Theory*; Sage Publications (1997).

Dehaene, Stanislas: *Consciousness and the Brain*; Penguin Books (2014).

Alasuutari, Pertti (ed): *Rethinking the Media Audience*; Sage Publications (1999).

The Technological Revolution:

Tapscott, Don: *Four Principles for the Open World*, TED Global (2012).

https://www.ted.com/talks/don_tapscott_four_principles_for_the_open_world/transcript?language=en

Rubin, James; Carmichael, Barie: *Reset – Business and Society in the New Social Landscape*; Columbia Business School (2018).

Dart, Michael; Lewis, Robin: *Retail's Seismic Shift*; St. Martin's Press, New York (2017).

Aharoni, Ido: *How Technology Has Revolutionized Diplomacy*; Time Magazine, Sept 8th, 2015.

Place Branding:

Aharoni, Ido: *Countries Must Initiate A Different Conversation*; PR Week, Feb 1st, 2012.

Grinstein, Amir; Aharoni, Ido: *How to (re)position a country? A case study of the power of micro-marketing*; Place Branding & Public Diplomacy Jan 18, 2012.

Lattouf Abou Atmi, Maria: *Building Israel's Brand: An Interview with Ambassador Ido Aharoni*; Public Diplomacy Magazine, April 1st, 2017.

Aronczyk, Melissa: *Living the Brand: The Identity Strategies of Nation-Branding Consultants*, in: *Branding the Nation. The Global Business of National Identity* (2013).

Public Relations:

Bowen, Shannon: *'We are professional manipulators' – PR pros, are we lying to ourselves?* PR Week, University of South Carolina, August 12, 2015.

https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/cic/journalism_and_mass_communications/news/professional_manipulators.php#.X5at83gzZUI

Phillips, Robert: *The Death of PR. The Only Agency We Need Is Change*, in: *Trust Me, PR is Dead* (2015)

From the Practitioner's View:

Brinkmann, Svend & Kvale, Steinar: *Conducting an Interview*, in: *Interviews. Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2015)

Issue & Crisis Management:

Doorley, John & Garcia, Helio Fred: *Crisis Communication*, in: Reputation Management: The Key to Successful Public Relations and Corporate Communication (2011)

American Marketing Association (AMA): 7 Golden Rules for Crisis Communication (2018).
https://medium.com/@AMA_Marketing/7-golden-rules-for-crisis-communication-649916d8c29d

Suggested Reading:

Cornelissen, Joep: *Stakeholder Management and Communication and Issues Management* in: Corporate Communication. A Guide to Theory & Practice (2017)

Enli, Gunn: *The Paradox of Mediated Authenticity*, in: Mediated Authenticity. How the Media Constructs Reality (2015)

Lakoff, George: *Framing 101: How to Take Back Public Discourse*, in: Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate (2004)

Murphy, Priscilla: *Contextual Distortion. Strategic Communication versus the Networked Nature of Nearly Everything*: in: Holtzhausen & Zerfass (ed.): The Routledge Handbook of Strategic Communication, (2015)

Neill, Marlene: *Counterpoint: PR Practitioners Can Not Afford to Lose Credibility*. PR Say, August 19, 2015

Rose, Chris: *Communicating with Humans*, in: How to Win Campaigns: Communications for Change (2010 [2005])

Zeynep, Tufekci: *It's the (Democracy-Poisoning) Golden Age of Free Speech*, in Wired, January 16, 2018.

Students are expected to follow the news and stay updated on current events to the extent that you will be able to discuss these from a communications' perspective.