



The International MA Program in Conflict Resolution and Mediation

The Gershon H. Gordon
Faculty of Social Sciences
Tel Aviv University

Strategic Communication: Strategies for Governance, Policy, and Leadership

2025

Naftali room 004

Wednesdays 1:00-2:30pm

Instructor: Sarah Bard

Overview: The COVID pandemic has prompted governments worldwide to experiment with and adopt new communication methods rapidly. This shift has become essential for effectively achieving policy goals and building public trust in government.

This course equips students with the skills to develop and implement effective communication strategies across written, spoken, and digital formats in the post-COVID era using practical tools and real-world applications to teach students how to create clear, persuasive, and impactful messages that engage diverse audiences. It also addresses the most significant challenges and opportunities in the public, nonprofit, private, and advocacy sectors.

Learning Objectives:

1. Develop effective communication strategies across written, spoken, and digital formats in the post-COVID era.
2. Apply practical tools and real-world applications to address significant challenges and opportunities in strategic communication for governance, policy, and leadership.
3. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of various communication strategies in building public trust and achieving policy goals in the post-COVID era.

Course Requirements/Grading:

- **Ungraded Learning Lab:** Throughout the course there are opportunities to practice the skills you are learning. These are all ungraded.
- **Final Graded Project:** Develop a communication plan for a scenario that requires transparency and effective messaging.

Course Outline/Readings:

Class	Objectives	Core Concepts	Learning Lab
Part I: Foundations of Strategic Communication			
1. Introduction to Strategic Communication	Grasp the principles and significance of strategic communication in a post-COVID context to effectively transmit messages across different platforms	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Course overview and expectations, context of COVID and post-COVID era Case study: Best practices from SE Asia COVID communications Framework: Principles of effective communication Workshop: Analyze and rewrite these directions 	[Read] <i>Brookings Institute</i> : “Lessons learned from Taiwan and South Korea’s tech-enabled COVID-19 communications” October 2020
2. The Global Media Landscape	Learn about different media types and their roles in the global landscape, recognizing the challenges and opportunities in traditional and digital media environments.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Media types and platforms (traditional vs. creator/influencer), market analysis, challenges and opportunities Guest speaker: Erica Marom - Author, BBC journalist, CCO at Aleph VC 	[Podcast] <i>The Verge: Decoder with Nilay Patel</i> “Platforms need the news — but they’re killing it” December 2024 (53 min)
3. Communication Strategies	Develop skills in setting goals, identifying target audiences, and crafting core messages tailored for specific demographics and situations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Communications planning Case study: The Affordable Care Act (“ACA”) Framework: Communications plan - goal setting, target audience, core message, and framing Workshop: Complete the message box for President Obama’s ACA Speech. 	Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew’s “Never Fear” speech
4. Structure, Function of Argument, and Storytelling	Improve abilities in structuring arguments and telling compelling stories, using AI tools to explore narrative variations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Structure and function of argument and storytelling Case study: The hero’s journey, from Star Wars to JD Vance Framework: Narrative structures Workshop: Rewrite a classic fairytale in 3 different narrative structures using AI. 	Use Google Notebook LLM to create a podcast that explores cultural differences in narrative approaches across various regions. Directions
Part II: Applications of Strategic Communication			
5. Communications Workshop	Enhance public speaking and presentation through practical workshops.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Public speaking Presentation skills 	
6. Public Sector Strategies	Implement transparent communication strategies that build trust, engage stakeholders, and effectively disseminate policy information.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Building trust through transparency, stakeholder engagement, policy storytelling, multichannel communication, role of technology. Case study: Rwanda’s plastic reduction campaign Framework: AIDA Model Workshop: Design a local public health campaign 	Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions in Brazil <i>OECD</i> December 2023 (Exec summary) World Bank “Rwanda’s Anti-Corruption Experience: Actions, Accomplishments, and Lessons” (Framing the effort—addressing corruption as a dimension of state building- pages 41-43) June 2020
7. Policy Advocacy: Design and Delivery	Understand the advocacy cycle, create emotionally resonant and rational arguments, and generate impactful calls to action.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Advocacy cycle stages, emotional vs. rational arguments, actionable calls to action Case study: A fight for \$15 Framework: Pyramid principle Workshop: Design a creative for an advocacy campaign 	<i>Ted Talk: Eve Pearlman</i> How to lead a conversation between people who disagree (9 min) <i>Ted Talk: Zahra Biabani</i> The eco-creators helping the climate through social media (9 min)

8. Private Sector	Apply strategic communication principles to business contexts, focusing on marketing, corporate social responsibility, and cross-sector collaboration.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Role of communication in business, applying marketing frameworks, crafting CSR narratives, cross-sector collaboration. Case study: Bird Scooters Workshop: Write a press release 	Weeks, Holly. <i>Harvard Management Communication Letter</i> . “The Best Memo You’ll Ever Write.”
9. Political and Campaign Messaging	Analyze and apply the dynamics of campaign messaging, understanding the balance between persuasion and mobilization.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Campaigns as startups, persuasion vs. mobilizing, the message is the medium Framework: 3 Cs of Campaign Messaging (Candidate, Cause, Constituency) Workshop: Write a 30 second TV ad 	<i>The New York Times</i> . Why a presidential campaign is the ultimate start-up. Ezra Klein’s Podcast “How TV, Twitter, and TikTok Remade Politics” (1 hour)
Part III: Advanced Topics and Capstone			
10. Pulse Points: Navigating Public Opinion	Equip with advanced skills in polling and analytics to navigate complex public opinion landscapes effectively.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Understanding and measuring public opinion, how advanced techniques in polling and social media analytics are shaping communications. Guest speakers: TBD, ZenCity and Philippe Assouline, pollster and social media expert. 	[Podcast] FiveThirtyEight Politics Podcast: 2016 Anniversary Edition (49 min)
11. Timing: Rapid Response, Combatting Disinformation, Crisis Communication	Develop comprehensive strategies for crisis communication, managing disinformation campaigns, and executing rapid response actions to swiftly address emerging issues and maintain public trust during volatile situations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Rapid response, combatting disinformation (pre-bunking), crisis communications Case Study: Presidential debates and rapid response Workshop: Crisis management plan 	<i>Ted Talk:</i> Peter Pomerantsev How To Fight (And Win) An Information War (16 min) [Read] Ethical Pact Against Disinformation in Uruguay
12. Ethical Considerations of Emerging Technologies	Learn the ethical implications of emerging technologies, especially concerning AI and automation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Ethics, AI, and automation in communication. Current guidelines and regulations. Case Study: AI lawyers 	EU guidelines on ethics in artificial intelligence: Context and implementation
13. KPI’s: Measuring Impact and Performance	Learn to define and use key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the effectiveness of communication campaigns.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key concepts: Evaluating communication campaigns, defining KPIs, common impact measurement (qualitative and quantitative). Workshop: Construct a KPI dashboard for an existing communications campaign. 	
14. Capstone Project Presentations	Finalize and present capstone project, incorporating peer and instructor feedback.		

Academic Fraud

Any person found guilty of academic fraud will be subject to severe sanctions. Some examples of academic fraud include:

- plagiarism or cheating of any kind;
- submitting work of which the student is not the author, in whole or in part (except for duly cited quotations or references);
- presenting research data that has been falsified or concocted in any way; and
- submitting, without written prior approval from the professors concerned, the same work for more than one course.

Classroom rules

- Students are expected to arrive to all classes on time.
- Please do the readings as parts of the class discussion

