



# Course Syllabus

## Public Interest Communications

**PUR 4442/MMC6936**

**Class Time:** M: 11:00-1:45 W:11:00-1:45      **Class Location:** WEIM 1078

**Instructor:** Nader Dagher      **Email:** [ndagher@ufl.edu](mailto:ndagher@ufl.edu)      **Phone:** 3527092776

**Office:** 2041B Weimer Hall. **Office Hours:** W 2:30-4:00 or by appointment

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### Course Objectives

1. You will be able to describe the role of communication in driving positive social change.
2. You will be able to critique or create strategic communications plans for social change efforts.
3. You will understand and be able to apply a set of frameworks that are built on social, behavioral, and cognitive science.
4. You will be able to determine how to use and combine the six spheres through which communicators work to achieve change: policy, media, social marketing, the market, activism, and communities of influence.
5. You will be able to critique campaign design and results.
6. You will be able to design campaigns for social change using a set of research-driven
7. You will develop skills to interpret and incorporate fundamental changes in how we communicate as a society and their implications for this field.

### Course Overview

Effective communication is the accelerant of the fire of social change. Public interest communications is a form of strategic communication through which organizations, causes, or movements take on specific communications objectives that will have a benefit to society. This benefit transcends the particular interest of any single organization undertaking a campaign or communications effort.

This is an evolving field, and its practitioners are continuously applying new insights and techniques to support positive social change. The field is not as well-established as its sister fields of public relations, advertising, journalism, and marketing; however, an increased recognition among change makers of the importance of communications to social change means that there are more resources available than there once were. This is also an entrepreneurial field, which results in significant innovation.

Public interest communications is a large and complex field, and it will not be possible to cover all its aspects during the 16 weeks we have together. To make the most of our time, the course will focus on the principles and fundamentals on which the field stands.

In this course, you will learn the six spheres through which we can drive social change, the strategic planning process for an effective social change communications campaign, and the tools, qualities, and tactics that make these campaigns real. You will gain insight into the richness of the field, the power that effective communications have to address a problem and profoundly affect people's lives, and begin to see the astonishing range of careers and opportunities that this field holds.

### **Course Format**

Our course will include brief lectures, discussions, reflections, guest lectures, and student case presentations.

### **Required Reading, Viewing, and Listening**

Writing, reading, viewing, and listening assignments are listed on the syllabus. There is no textbook for this course. I may add readings and assignments over the course of the semester.

### **College of Journalism and Communications Objectives**

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation, all students should be able to:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the United States
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional and ethical principles, and work ethically to pursue truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively, and independently.

- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences, and purposes they serve
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style, and grammatical correctness.
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work and understand the digital world.

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

The evaluation of coursework will be based on your performance in four major areas, each of which constitutes a proportion of the final grade. Your grade will be calculated by the following:

### **1. In-Class Attendance & Participation: 30%**

Attendance and active participation are mandatory. Absences count from the first class following drop/add. After due warning, the professor may prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a lower or failing grade for excessive absences; more than two unexcused absences during the semester will be considered "excessive absences." You are responsible for notifying Professor before your absence and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider.

Participation means you are fully engaged in the classroom discussion and not using cell phones or laptops except when directed to as part of classroom activities. It means you arrive to class early or on time, ready to learn and engage.

This course's requirements for assignments and other work follow UF policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

### **2. Weekly Assignments: 25%**

The class will include readings, videos, podcasts et al., and there will be written assignments for some of them. You'll need to complete these assignments at the direction of the instructor. These in-class assignments may not be made up if you miss class.

### **3. Case Study-Final Project: 30%**

You will write and present a complete a case study of an organization working to make a specific change and offer recommendations for how that organization might have taken

a different approach that would have been more effective. You will present your case in class on **April 24**.

#### **4. Case Study Foundations: 15%**

Throughout the course, you will complete short assignments with your team that lay the groundwork for your final project.

***Note: Students enrolled in PUR 4212 will complete this assignment with partners or groups, students enrolled in MMC 6936 will complete this assignment alone.***

This written or recorded reflection will give you an opportunity to share what you have learned this semester. Details will be distributed soon. This is due **November 28, 2022**.

**Late assignments are automatically subject to %24 /day or %1 /hour deductions**

**The grading scale for the course is:**

A 94%-100%

A- 90%- 94%

B+ 87%- 90%

B 84%-87%

B- 80%-84%

C+ 77%- 80%

C 74%- 77%

C- 70%-74%

D+ 67%-70%

D 64%- 67%

D- 61%- 64%

E 0%- 61%

Follows current UF policies

(<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

#### **Availability**

Please don't hesitate to talk to me during the semester about any questions or concerns you have during my office hours or by appointment. (You can also reach me by email, and I'll do my best to get back to you within 24 hours.)

## **Students Requiring Accommodations**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [dso.ufl.edu/drc](https://dso.ufl.edu/drc)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

## **Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/).

Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/)

## **University Honesty Policy**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

The Honor Code ([sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/](https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/)) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

## **CAMPUS RESOURCES**

### **U Matter, We Care**

If you or someone you know is in distress, please get in touch with [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [umatter.ufl.edu/](https://umatter.ufl.edu/) to refer or report a concern, and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

### **Counseling and Wellness Center**

Visit [counseling.ufl.edu/](https://counseling.ufl.edu/) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis and non-crisis services. Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit [shcc.ufl.edu/](https://shcc.ufl.edu/).

### **University Police Department**

Visit [police.ufl.edu/](https://police.ufl.edu/) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). UF Health Shands

### **Emergency Room / Trauma Center**

For immediate medical care, call 352-733- 0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center](https://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center).

### **E-learning Technical Support**

Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

### **Career Connections Center**

Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services [career.ufl.edu/](https://career.ufl.edu/). Library Support: [cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask](https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask) various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. [teachingcenter.ufl.edu/](https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/) Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. [writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/](https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/) Student Complaints On-Campus: [sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code](https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code) student-conduct

### **A Note on Recording**

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal, educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University or by a guest instructor as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

**Assignments:** Please refer to Canvas for full details and rubrics.

#### **Guidelines for Assignment Grades:**

- You should rely heavily on research and exploration.
- Compare favorably with the examples of work I share in class
- Are organized
- Rely heavily on stories and visual language
- Show an understanding of both the lecture and the assignment
- Include strong transitions
- Are concise but complete—not overwritten or puffy, but include relevant messages and information
- Are consistent with your message
- Are free of fact errors
- Accurately cite source materials
- Clearly support your argument/ideas/goals with research

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

*Note: This schedule may change as the semester progresses to reflect the progress and needs of the class and the timing of our guest speakers, visits, and other activities.*

*Please be prepared to have individual and group exercises, training, and presentations in every class. Absence can affect your participation and overall grades. This is a short semester.*

<b>Week 1</b>	May 13	Welcome! Public interest communications. Course overview.  The Six Spheres of Influence  Select a case study campaign (individual assignment)
	May 15	The Six Spheres of Influence.  Application on your case study.  Present your (individual assignment) campaign goals, media, funding, leadership, activities, etc.
<b>Week 2</b>	May 20	The Six Spheres of Influence.  Application on your case study
	May 22	The Four Questions.  Final project group formation and campaign selection  Case study application
<b>Week 3</b>	May 27	Holiday (Memorial Day)
	May 29	No class meeting  PIC Summer Institute- Denver  Write and submit the Mid-term case study (individual assignment)
<b>Week 4</b>	June 3	The four questions.  How to make people care about big issues  Case study exercises (groups)



	June 5	<p>Craft messages that move people.</p> <p>The science behind message framing.</p> <p>Group exercises</p>
<b>Week 5</b>	June 10	<p>The science behind emotions.</p> <p>Plus, painting a picture with words.</p>
	June 12	<p>Using visuals to communicate your message</p> <p>Digital media. Measuring success.</p> <p>Presentation tips.</p> <p>Meetings with groups.</p>
<b>Week 6</b>	June 17	<p>Final project presentations</p>