

## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

**PUR 4442: Public Interest Communications**

***Mondays 3:00-6:00 p.m***

WEIM 1078

**Instructor:** Luna P. Gonzalez, Department of Public Relations

**Course Time & Location:** WEIM 1078, Mondays 3:00~6:00pm

**Contact:** [lpittetgonzalez@ufl.edu](mailto:lpittetgonzalez@ufl.edu) or via text at +1.352.359.5935

**Office Hours:** Office hours are held via Zoom by scheduled appointment.

### **Course Overview:**

This course introduces you to the fundamentals of public interest communication, exploring essential concepts and frameworks within the discipline. Among these, we'll examine the science of message framing, uncover methods to engage audiences with important issues, and learn strategies for using communications to inspire action. These principles are applicable across various sectors including social change, political, health, and government communication. Throughout the semester, you will select a campaign to analyze through the lens of the topics discussed in class. For your final project, you will synthesize your findings and analyses into a detailed case study, applying your acquired knowledge to propose enhancements and amplify the impact of the campaign.

## Required Materials:

We do not have a specific textbook for this course. As the course materials, research and submissions are conducted online, having access to a computer or tablet with an internet connection is required.

## Suggested Reading:

The March for Our Lives Founders. (2018). *Glimmer of hope: How tragedy sparked a movement*. Penguin Random House.

ISBN-10: 1984836099

## Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Define public interest communications.
- Explain the role of public interest communications in bringing about positive social change.
- Explain key public interest communications concepts and frameworks.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of a public interest organization's communications.
- Apply the key concepts and frameworks to current social issues and real-world public interest communications campaigns.
- Explore the many career opportunities in public interest communications.

## **College of Journalism & Communications' Objectives:**

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

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

## Course Grades:

Final grades will be based on the following scale:

- 93 – 100 percent A
- 90 – 92 percent A-
- 87 – 89 percent B+
- 80 – 86 percent B
- 77 – 79 percent C+
- 70 – 76 percent C
- 60 – 69 percent D
- 0 – 59 percent E

For any questions regarding a given grade, please contact me within 48 hours after the grade is received.

### *Components of the final grade*

#### **Class Participation (35 percent):**

Your grade will be based on attendance, participation in discussions, engagement in activities, and performance in in-class writing assignments. This approach is designed to foster active involvement with the course materials, encourage meaningful interaction with your classmates, and facilitate a dynamic exchange with me.

#### **Writing Assignments (35 percent):**

Each week, you will be required to submit a writing assignment that anticipates the concepts to be discussed in the upcoming class. This approach ensures you are well-prepared and

familiar with the material, allowing us to devote class time to deeper discussions and a more thorough exploration of the topics.

**Final Project (20 percent):**

Your final project will be a detailed case study of a campaign you select. Throughout the semester, your weekly writing assignments will contribute sections to this case study, effectively building it piece by piece. This scaffolding approach allows you to develop your project gradually and integrate feedback along the way. For the final submission at the end of the semester, you will need to submit a revised and comprehensive version that incorporates all sections and addresses the feedback received on your weekly assignments.

**Final Presentation (5 percent):**

The final presentation of your case study serves as a platform for you to synthesize and articulate the knowledge you've gathered throughout the semester. It is an opportunity to reflect on the strategic improvements you've proposed, discuss the impact of these enhancements, and receive constructive feedback. Engaging in this final showcase helps to build your confidence in public speaking and strengthens your ability to argue and support your viewpoints effectively.

**Extra Credit:**

Throughout the semester, you have the chance to earn extra credit for this course by participating in research studies via the college's SONA system. Engaging in these studies not only contributes to the advancement of our field but also provides you with a firsthand look at the ongoing research initiatives within our college. Your participation in these studies is optional and anonymous.

## Course Professionalism:

The College of Journalism and Communications is a professional institution that requires students to maintain a high level of professional behavior at all times. This includes being honest, ethical, and respectful towards fellow students and instructors while adhering to the UF Student Conduct & Honor Codes. Additionally, all class members must observe basic etiquette when communicating via email, threaded discussions, and chats. All students should review the The Netiquette Guide for Online Courses by [clicking here](#).

As this class is conducted online, you are responsible for making sure that your equipment (computer, microphone, camera) is working and that external sources (e.g. friends or family) will not disrupt the class. You are allowed to turn off your microphone and camera for short periods of time (i.e., 5 minutes or less) but are expected to have them on the rest of the time. The deadlines for exams and assignments are definitive, as they usually are in the professional world. Late submissions can be accepted up to 24 hours after the due date if you can provide me with an acceptable excuse for the late submission. Late submissions will not be accepted beyond 24 hours after the due date and will result in a 0. I recommend you to contact me as soon as you realize you might not reach the deadline so we can work on a solution together. Up to 10 points may be deducted from your grade in case of a late submission.

To ensure consistency with university policies, the requirements for make-up assignments and other work in this course can be found by [clicking here](#). If you experience technical issues and need to request a make-up, you must provide the ticket number received from LSS when reporting the problem. This ticket number will document the date and time of the issue. To request a make-up, you must email me within 24 hours of the technical difficulty. The UF Help Desk is available 24/7 to assist with any technical issues and can be contacted at:

- <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

- (352) 392-HELP (4357)
- [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

### **Academic Honesty:**

The work you submit for this course must be your own and any external source must be cited appropriately. These citations must be done in-text and in a reference section, following the APA citation method. Other citation methods can be accepted if previously discussed with myself.

Submitted work must be original. You may not submit anything that was previously made and used for any other purpose than this class, unless we have first discussed it and I have given you permission to do so. In addition, while I encourage you to use any tools available, including technology, to improve your work, I must insist that any submitted work must be your own. Tools such as AI-generated texts can be useful as a start or to perfect what you have already done yourself, but should not be used to complete the assignment in its entirety. Spotting copy-pasted AI generated assignments is easier than you expect and such submissions will result in a 0. In compliance with the UF Honor Code, instances of academic misconduct, which include cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, and fabrication will result in a failing grade for the course, and additional punishment might occur based on university policies.

You are allowed to record this course's lectures for personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the university, or as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. You may not use the recordings of the lectures for any other purpose and you may not publish or share access to the lectures without my written consent.

I strongly encourage you to review the UF Honor Code regularly and contact me if you have any other questions regarding the application of the code in this course. [Click here to review the UF Honor Code.](#)

### **Inclusivity:**

The practice of communication requires us to be open to diverse backgrounds, opinions and experiences. Exposing ourselves to diversity enriches our understanding of the world and enhances our ability to engage with and understand diverse audiences. Therefore, it is crucial for us to be able to have open and respectful dialogues that allow for diverse perspectives to be shared and heard. I aim to make this class a safe and inclusive space for all and welcome and celebrate diversity in our classroom as it is essential to the practice of effective communication.

My goal as an instructor is to help you learn. As we are all different individuals, our needs when it comes to learning can differ. For this reason, I am happy to meet with every student to discuss these needs and set up a strategy to support your success in this class. I would be glad to work on classroom accommodations as well if you are registered with the DRC, as long as you can provide documentation to help me set up these accommodations. You can visit the [Disability Resource Center's Website](#) if you have any questions on accommodations or documentation. Make sure to contact me as early as possible to make sure these accommodations can be set up in time.



## Online Course Evaluation Policy:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. You can find the online evaluations portal [by clicking here](#). These evaluations help us improve the courses and our teaching methods, and are therefore extremely important. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. You can [click here](#) to see summary results of these assessments.

## Schedule:

**Note:** This schedule is subject to change at any time. Students will be notified within 24h of any changes.

JANUARY 13	
Topics	Due
<b>Syllabus Overview</b> <b>Topic:</b> Mapping the Landscape, Movements vs. Campaigns	<b>No assignment due.</b>
JANUARY 20	
<b>No Class</b>	
JANUARY 27	
Topics	Due
<b>Topic:</b> What is “in the public interest”	<b>Campaign Selection &amp; Situation Analysis</b>
FEBRUARY 3	
Topics	Due
<b>Topic:</b> Making People Care about Big Issues	<b>Making People Care Assignment</b>

FEBRUARY 10	
Topics	Due
<b>Topic:</b> Systems Thinking, Systems Change	<b>Systems Thinking Assignment</b>
FEBRUARY 17	
Topics	Due
<b>Topic:</b> The Six Spheres of Influence Part 1	<b>Activism, Policy &amp; Media Assignment</b>
FEBRUARY 24	
Topics	Due
<b>Topic:</b> The Six Spheres of Influence Part 2	<b>Communities of Influence, Market &amp; Social Norms Assignment</b>
MARCH 3	
Topics	Due
<b>Topic:</b> The Four-Question Framework	<b>Goals, Actors &amp; Messengers Assignment</b>
MARCH 10	
Topics	Due
<b>Topic:</b> Message Framing	<b>Message Framing Assignment</b>
MARCH 17	
<b>No Class   Spring Break</b>	
MARCH 24	
Topics	Due
<b>Topic:</b> Emotions	<b>Emotions &amp; Numbers Assignment</b>
MARCH 31	
Topics	Due
<b>Topic:</b> Reaching Actors Using News Media	<b>Earned Media Analysis</b>
APRIL 7	
Topics	Due

<b>Topic:</b> Reaching Actors Using Digital Media	<b>Social Media Analysis</b>
<b>APRIL 14</b>	
<b>Topics</b>	<b>Due</b>
<b>Topic:</b> Visuals	<b>Visuals Analysis</b>
<b>APRIL 21</b>	
<b>Topics</b>	<b>Due</b>
<b>Topic:</b> Case Study Presentations	<b>Final Case Study &amp; Slides</b>