

SPEA-V 550 Summer 2017

May 9 – July 28

Instructor Information: Brian L. DeLong, IU Senior Lecturer, Director of Debate

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00 - 1:00 PM, **Email:** Brdelong@indiana.edu, **Phone:** 812-856-7585, **Office:** SPEA 323

I. Course Introduction and a greeting to SPEA Connect students

SPEA Connect students, I am thrilled to welcome you to the online SPEA V550 Professional Communication course. The class seeks to empower and increase current student and practitioner knowledge, skills and engagement with strategic public communication theories, practices, problems and solutions. As spatially disparate students you will be bridging the divide as you join the digital classroom to construct a new learning community. You carry with you your various experiences, your expertise, and your identities that will prove critical in creating an academic environment where you and your fellow students will seek to reveal the best means of navigating the human communication problems that we face in our daily lives. I look forward to guiding this class towards achieving its full potential as we tackle the exciting issues of communication that are relevant to the missions, goals, problems, strategies and tactics that are relevant to you and the organization(s) that you care about.

Course Description:

SPEA V550 is a course that is dedicated to strategic communications and public affairs. In this course, you will navigate the theoretical predicament of the human condition of communication and persuasion. You will be provided with readings that contain a breadth of examples of organizations (both non-profit and public) who have achieved successes and failures with their target audiences. These readings will provide criteria for successful communication strategies, including press releases and analysis of contemporary communication channels (Websites, RSS feeds, social media, twitter, facebook etc.). These tools will be useful in framing and delivering powerful messages while also verifying success and failures of communication campaigns. The major project in the course will be the development of a strategic communication plan. Student's will select an organization that they are keenly interested in (possibly employed with) as the subject for a course-length analysis. As problems often arise when we least expect, there will be an assignment dedicated to crisis communication scenarios with a small response time window. Students will game-plan talking points and prepare for an online mock-interview with the professor. We will use IU Zoom's powerful and easy to use collaboration software to facilitate the interview (<https://uits.iu.edu/zoom>). The semester long course seeks to hone the skills that control the messy, imperfect, yet beautiful capacity of humans and their organizations to set goals, connect and understand each other at the symbolic and communicative level.

An inquiry for the student:

What unites and connects these people and their situations? 1) A small five-person non-profit is seeking to increase local public commitment to remove barriers to wheelchair accessible infrastructure. 2) A CDC official is concerned after reading an alarming report of voluntary

reductions in child MMR vaccination in pockets of cities around the United States. 3) A solar business is trying to increase public policy support for new rooftop development in Indiana. 4) A mayor wants to ban plastic bags and local grocers have hired a PR company to resist the proposal. 5) An ancient cave dweller named Ugg has discovered the wheel. Ugg's friends ignore the value of the device despite what Ugg perceives to be self-evident. Should Ugg take up the spear (coercion) to improve the society around him or should he seek other means of people-action conversion (persuasion & rhetoric)?

Answer: At its most fundamental level, each of these individuals are facing a problem of communication with publics and stakeholders. Their worldview includes a problem, an exigence (imperfection) that is not receiving its due regard by fellow humans and their beliefs, actions, and/or commitments. The choices each one of these characters faces is typical of our own lived situations. When faced with resistance or a problem do we give up? Do we use force or a threat of violence? Do we figure out how best (ethically) to persuade using our systems of symbols, signs, images and communication channels to goad others to act, to align their interests with ours, or our own interests with theirs (convergence). When we connect the dots across history and time, the problems we face as humans tend to centralize around our ability to understand one another, to understand our reality, and to motivate action. It is at this nexus point where this class will dwell for the semester. As Kenneth Burke, a leading rhetorical scholar, suggests, the problems identified in the query above is central to humanity because we are the symbol using animal. He defines *us* in 1966: "Man is the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal, inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative), separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order), and rotten with perfection" (Language As Symbolic Action).

II. Learning Objectives

- 1) Learn to conceptualize and deploy rhetoric and public relations theories, vocabulary, and ethical frameworks
- 2) Understand how strategic communication works in the construction of organizational messaging
- 3) Learn to complete all components of a strategic communication plan
- 4) Strategically develop messages for relevant media channels
- 5) Develop and test a crisis communication plan
- 6) Analyze and critique public relations test cases

III. Text and Readings

- 1) Austin, Erica Weintraub; Pinkleton, Bruce E (2015). *Strategic Public Relations Management: Planning and Managing Effective Communication Campaigns*.
- 2) Cathy Bonk, Emily Tynes, Henry Griggs, and Phil Sparks, *Strategic Communications for Nonprofits* (2nd Edition).
- 3) Seth Mnookin, *Panic Virus*
- 4) Chip Heath and Dan Heath, *Made To Stick*
- 5) Case studies and supplemental readings will be uploaded and accessible in each module on canvas.
- 6) Professor narrated power point

Readings How to:

- Texts are available as online texts through Amazon Kindle Editions. Note – you do not need a Kindle device. Amazon software works on computers, browsers, and phone apps.
- Readings are laid out into two categories, “core” and “supplemental.” The core readings primarily include the two strategic communication textbooks listed above followed by supplemental readings that add to the discussion. Note, the Austin & Pinkleton and the Bonk, et al. texts are very good as a step-by-step guide in developing a strategic communication plan. They are helpful however they tend to gloss over the “messy” nature of communication as well as some of the controversies in the strategic communications field. Supplemental readings are critical to add substance and context to your orientation to the guidelines of the texts. The supplemental readings will add depth to our dialogue on canvas with additional angles and talking points. My suggestion is to use Austin & Pinkleton and Bonk et al. as primary guides to help you think through the major strategic communication components that you have due throughout the semester. Utilize the case studies for ideas on what “works” and what does not “work” for your project and online discussions. Students are responsible for using the readings to advance their education. The course assumes readings will be read in a timely manner as outlined by the schedule. Supplemental readings are subject to change and may be adapted to student interests.
- I will error on the side of more readings rather than less to provide you with more material for your studies. Graduate students should be able to wisely evaluate how best to navigate the material without being overwhelmed!
- When relevant, the professor will add narrated power points to add background and clarification for the week’s readings

IV. Tentative Course Calendar

Semester Week	Readings Due	Assignments
May 9 th – 13 th Module 1 – Introduction to course	Austin & Pinkleton CH 1-2, Ch 16 (Scan Ch. 16 for now) Bonk et al Ch 1-2	➤ Introduce yourself on Canvas, identify personal/professional goals
May 14 – 21st Module 2 – Learning the Strat. Comm. Method	Austin & Pinkleton CH 3-4 Bonk et al Ch 3-4 Case Study #1	➤ Client proposal due ➤ Case Study Analysis #1
May 22nd – 28th Module 3 – Research and Evidence	Austin & Pinkleton Ch 5, 7, 11 Panic Virus Intro, Ch 1, 2, 8, 9, 13, 16, 17, 24, Epilogue	➤ Mission statement & Values analysis paper due.
May 29th – June 4th Module 4 – Ideas that work, ideas that fail.	CH 13 – 15 Made To Stick Why Do Ideas Fail/Succeed? Diffusion Theory Case Study #2	➤ Situational Analysis and Research Plan Due ➤ Case Study Analysis #2
June 5 – 11 th Module 5 – Stakeholder ethics	Case Study #3 Oncourse Ethic Readings	➤ Case Study Analysis #3
June 12th – 18th Module 6 – New Media Communication	Case Study #4 Ccmc.org reading New Media Communication Strategies (Oncourse)	➤ Case Study Analysis #4 ➤ Strategic communication part #1 due for group evaluation
June 18 – 25th Module 7 – Example Strategic Comm Plans	Austin & Pinkleton Ch. 16 (Oncourse readings)	➤ Strategic communication part #2 due for group evaluation
June 26th – July 2nd Module 8 – Crisis Comm and Interviews	Crisis Communication Readings (Oncourse) Memo writing	➤ Case Study Analysis #4

July 3rd – July 9th Module 9 – Professional communication, memos & more	Readings from <i>Public Relations Writing</i> (Oncourse) Case Study #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Crisis Communication Plan Due ➤ Setup webchat interview time with professor for next week
July 10th – July 16th Module 10	Case Study #6 (Oncourse Readings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Crisis communication Scenario – Digital interview ➤ Case Study Analysis #6
July 17th – July 23rd Module 11	(Oncourse Readings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Final Strategic Communication Plan Draft Due Message Boards – Peer Review
July 24th – 30th Module 12 – The Finished Product	No readings, finish final communication plan!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Final Strategic Communication Plan Due

V. Assignments

Assignment Title	Point Value
Welcome Assignment	50 points
Weekly Posts	100 points
Case studiesx3	100 points
Strategic Development Stages	300 points
Crisis communication scenario	150 points
Final communication plan	300 points
Total:	1000 points

Assignment description:

***Note: Specific assignment prompts and rubrics will be posted under each week's modules. It is wise to look a week ahead of time.

1) Welcome Assignment (5%)

- a. Introduce yourself
- b. Tell us about your experience with communication oriented coursework and professional work
- c. Tell us about what you would like to accomplish in a course dedicated to strategic communication

2) Weekly board posts (20%):

- a. Initial reflection posts on that week's readings (Friday at Midnight)
 - i. Extract a quote or two from the reading that you believe is significant and worthy of a second look
 - ii. Link a news story and include a paragraph of analysis on its relevance
- b. Response posts to colleague's work (Sunday at Midnight) (1-2 substantive response posts a week)
- c. Three Case Study Analysis

3) Strategic Plan Development Stages (30%)

- a. **Client proposal. Choose your organization. Approval from Professor needed**
 - i. Define Organization
 - ii. Give us a sense of what possible problems or opportunities await the organization
 - iii. 1-2 page single space.
- b. **Mission statement and values analysis**
 - i. Find your organization's mission statement. Use Ch 2 – Austin and Pinkleton to evaluate the quality of the mission statement. Would you suggest altering the mission? If no, why? If Yes, why and with what? Are

the values clearly stated and align well with what you know about the organization?

c. Situational analysis

- i. Based on current knowledge, Define the good, the bad, and the possible as you currently understand it.
- ii. Identify research needs. Write a research objective. What “gap” in your knowledge do you seek to fix
- iii. Research the situation, identify results and implications of the research.

d. Strategic Communication proposal

- i. Goals/Objectives
- ii. Strategies/Tactic
- iii. Timeline

4) 48-Hour crisis communication planning (15%)

- a. Prepare for a crisis situation
- b. Internal talking organization guidance (Memo)
- c. Interview - ***Note*** This assignment will require a computer with a working webcam and microphone!

5) Final Strategic Communication Plan Project (30%)

- a. End of semester polished and compiled strategic communication plan.

VI. Course Policies & Assignments

Technology: It is assumed that each student enrolled in this course owns or has regular access to a computer, high-speed internet, a webcam and microphone.. Certainly, all of us have experiences with computers crashing, printers jamming or running out of ink, and long lines in the computer lab. When machines fail when we need them to work, it does not constitute an “excuse” or “emergency.” You should work with the habit of preparing your assignments with enough time in advance so that *when* your computer malfunctions you can respond to the problem and turn in the assignment on time.

Communication: Please use canvas, my email, and my office phone (in this order) for any correspondence. Please plan for a 24-hour turn around on all emails. You are responsible for asking questions sooner rather than later! Canvas does have a “questions” section for all student participants.

Civility and Ethics

Students who accept admission to Indiana University agree to be ethical, take responsibility for their actions, behave respectfully and treat others with civility, and to use university resources and facilities in accordance with applicable policies. All students are responsible for reading and understanding the Indiana University Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is a serious event that may result in an academic penalty or sanction. Misconduct includes cheating, fabrication, facilitation of cheating, unauthorized collaboration, interference, plagiarism, and violation of course rules. This includes, but is not limited to, assignments and examinations. Students should not print or save exams without express faculty permission. All course work should be the result of individual effort except where group effort has been specified. Sanctions can result in a lower or failing grade on an assignment or exam. Sanctions can also result in probation or a course grade of "W" or "F".

Policy for Religious Holidays

It is the policy of Indiana University that faculty must allow reasonable accommodations for students' observance of religious holidays when academic requirements conflict with those observances. Students must notify faculty *within the first two weeks of the term* of the conflict and work through *mutually agreeable accommodations*.

Special Needs

Students with documented disabilities that impact their academic performance may receive certain accommodations through their home campus. Students are responsible for following their home campus policies and procedures for accessing and utilizing these services, including requesting services in a timely manner. Students must inform course faculty of their need for accommodations *when the course begins*, and provide documentation as required.

Late Assignments: Late assignments are not accepted. All assignments must be submitted to Canvas by the beginning of class on the day they are due. There are no "make-ups." If you anticipate special circumstances that affect your ability to complete an assignment by its deadline, it is your responsibility to contact me to make alternative arrangements. I respond to these on a case-by-case basis.

Grade Disputes: Communication with your professor about your grades is a good practice. My policy for grade disputes is that the student must wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before discussing the matter. Learn to be a good advocate for yourself. All discussions should take place no sooner than 24 hours after the assignment is returned, and no later than one week after the assignment is returned.