

COM335: Foundations of Strategic Communication

Credit Hours: 3

Contact Hours: This is a 3-credit course, offered in accelerated format. This means that 16 weeks of material is covered in 8 weeks. The exact number of hours per week that you can expect to spend on each course will vary based upon the weekly coursework, as well as your study style and preferences. You should plan to spend 10-25 hours per week in each course reading material, interacting on the discussion boards, writing papers, completing projects, and doing research.

Faculty Information



Faculty contact information and office hours can be found on the faculty profile page.

Course Description and Outcomes



Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to an understanding of strategic communication from a theoretical and strategic management perspective. In addition, this course introduces students to the practical writing skills associated with entry-level strategic communications practice. Students will be exposed to different forms and styles of strategic writing and how these communication activities are guided by theory.

Course Overview:

Every day we engage with organizations as we work, play, worship, and shop. At the same time those organizations and countless others are trying to engage with us, either directly or as a part of a demographic they consider to be important to their success. However, strategic communication isn't something that is just left to the world of marketing, advertising, and public relations; it's also an internal phenomenon as we interact within our organizations. We have to manage complex environments at a personal level with our organizations as well.

The purpose of this course is both to introduce you to the field of strategic communication and to emphasize the importance of writing itself as a strategic activity. As the selected content will demonstrate, strategic communication enables our organizations to achieve their goals better. With the explosion of social media into our lives in the 21st century, writing has never been more important to these strategic goals.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Summarize and explain the history and development of the field of strategic communication.
2. Analyze and assess the role and ethics of strategic communication in modern societies.

3. Evaluate the relationships and differences between public relations, journalism, advertising, marketing, and other communication disciplines.
4. Create multi-media materials, suitable for social media and traditional release, as well as a portfolio of professional writing samples.

Participation & Attendance



Prompt and consistent attendance in your online courses is essential for your success at CSU-Global Campus. Failure to verify your attendance within the first seven days of this course may result in your withdrawal. If for some reason you would like to drop a course, please contact your advisor.

Online classes have deadlines, assignments, and participation requirements just like on-campus classes. Budget your time carefully and keep an open line of communication with your instructor. If you are having technical problems, problems with your assignments, or other problems that are impeding your progress, let your instructor know as soon as possible.

Course Materials



Required:

Wilcox, D. L., & Reber, B. H. (2013). *Public relations writing and media techniques* (7th ed.). Pearson. ISBN: 9780205211678.

Suggested:

NOTE: All non-textbook required readings and materials necessary to complete assignments, discussions, and/or supplemental or required exercises are provided within the course itself. Please read through each course module carefully.

Course Schedule



Due Dates

The Academic Week at CSU-Global begins on Monday and ends the following Sunday.

- Discussion Boards: The original post must be completed by Thursday at 11:59 p.m. MT and Peer Responses posted by Sunday 11:59 p.m. MT. Late posts may not be awarded points.
- Opening Exercises: Take the opening exercise before reading each week's content to see which areas you will need to focus on. You may take these exercises as many times as you need. The opening exercises will not affect your final grade.
- Mastery Exercises: Students may access and retake mastery exercises through the last day of class until they achieve the scores they desire.
- Critical Thinking: Assignments are due Sunday at 11:59 p.m. MT.

Week #	Readings	Assignments
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1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 1 & 2 in <i>Public relations writing and media techniques</i> • Thomas, G. F., & Stephens, K. J. (2015). An introduction to strategic communication. <i>International Journal of Business Communication</i>, 52(1), 3-11, DOI: 10.1177/2329488414560469. • Falkheimer, J., & Heide, M. (2014). From public relations to strategic communication in Sweden. <i>Nordicom Review</i>, 35(2), 123-138. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (25 points) • Opening Exercise (0 points) • Mastery Exercise (10 points) • Critical Thinking (100 points)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 13 & 14 in <i>Public relations writing and media techniques</i> • Mishra, K., Boynton, L., & Mishra, A. (2014). Driving employee engagement: The expanded role of Internal Communications. <i>International Journal of Business Communication</i>, 51(2), 183-202, DOI: 10.1177/2329488414525399 • Zwijze-Koning, K. H., De Jong, M. D. T., & Van Vuuren, M. (2015). Evaluating internal public relations using the critical incident technique. <i>Journal of Public Relations Research</i>, 27(1), 46-62, DOI: 10.1080/1062726X.2014.924840. • McCown, Nance. (2007). The role of public relations with internal activists. <i>Journal of Public Relations Research</i>, 19(1), 47-68. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (25 points) • Opening Exercise (0 points) • Mastery Exercise (10 points) • Critical Thinking (135 points)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 3, 4 & 5 in <i>Public relations writing and media techniques</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (25 points) • Opening Exercise (0 points) • Mastery Exercise (10 points) • Portfolio Milestone (90 points)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 6 & 10 in <i>Public relations writing and media techniques</i> • Cannon, J. (2006). The :60 second pitch. <i>Public Relations Quarterly</i>, 51(4), 28-30. • Waters, R. D., Tindall, N. T. J., & Morton, T. S. (2010). Media catching and the journalist-public relations practitioner relationship: How social media are changing the practice of media relations. <i>Journal of Public Relations Research</i>, 22(3), 241-264, DOI: 10.1080/10627261003799202. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (25 points) • Opening Exercise (0 points) • Mastery Exercise (10 points) • Portfolio Milestone (90 points)
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 7 & 12 in <i>Public relations writing and media techniques</i> • Diers, A. R. (2012). Reconceptualizing mass communication as engagement: The influence of social media. <i>Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism</i>, 2(1), e104, DOI:10.4172/2165-7912.1000e104. • Johnston, K. A. (2014). Public relations and engagement: Theoretical imperatives of a multidimensional concept. <i>Journal of Public Relations Research</i>, 26, 381-383, DOI: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (25 points) • Opening Exercise (0 points) • Mastery Exercise (10 points) • Critical Thinking (135 points)

	<p>10.1080/1062726X.2014.959863.</p> <p>Select one of the following articles to form the basis of your discussion board posts for the week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capriotti, P. (2013). Managing strategic communication in museums: The case of Catalan museums. <i>Communication & Society</i>, 26(3), 98-116. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metzgar, E. T., & Maruggi, A. (2009). Social media and the 2008 Presidential election. <i>Journal of New Communications Research</i>, 4(1), 141-165. 	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8 in <i>Public relations writing and media techniques</i> • Champlin, S., Lazard, A., Mackert, M., & Pasch, K. E. Perceptions of design quality: An eye tracking study of attention and appeal in health advertisements. <i>Journal of Communication in Healthcare</i>, 7(4), 285-294. • Seo, K., Dillard, J. P., & Shen, F. (2013). The effects of message framing and visual image on persuasion. <i>Communication Quarterly</i>, 61(5), 564-583, DOI: 10.1080/01463373.2013.822403 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (25 points) • Opening Exercise (0 points) • Mastery Exercise (10 points) • Portfolio Milestone (40 points)
7	<p>Chapters 16, 18 & 19 in <i>Public relations writing and media techniques</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (25 points) • Opening Exercise (0 points) • Mastery Exercise (10 points)
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 17 in <i>Public relations writing and media techniques</i> • Smolianov, P., & Aiyeku, J. F. (2009). Corporate marketing objectives and evaluation measures for integrated television advertising and sports event sponsorships. <i>Journal of Promotion Management</i>, 15, 74-89, DOI: 10.1080/10496490902901977. • Ahola, E. K. (2012). Towards and understanding of the role of trade fairs as facilitators of consumer creativity. <i>Journal of Marketing Communication</i>, 18(5), 321-333. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (25 points) • Opening Exercise (0 points) • Mastery Exercise (10 points) • Portfolio (130 points)

Assignment Details



This course includes the following assignments/projects:

Module 1

Critical Thinking: (100 points)

Choose one of the following two assignments to complete this week. Do not do both assignments. Identify your assignment choice in the title of your submission.

Option #1: Connecting PR & Writing

Review a copy of IABC's *Communication World* or *PR Week* (linked in the assignment in Week 1 folder), or another publication in the public relations field. Select a topic of interest to you and write a two to three-page analysis (not counting the title and reference pages that you must include) of that topic. Focus on answering the question, "How does this topic apply to public relations writing?" OR "How does this apply to design elements in strategic communication?"

Strong responses will:

- Demonstrate the ability to apply the argument/critique structure discussed in the interactive for this week.
- Articulate a clear position.
- Be formatted according to the *CSU-Global Guide to Writing and APA Requirements*.
- Provide support for your statements with in-text citations from a minimum of four scholarly articles—two of these sources may be from the class readings, textbook, or lectures, but two must be external. The CSU-Global Library is a good place to find these references.
- Utilize headings to organize the content in your work.

Option #2: Connecting Writing & Technology

Visit a local electronics store. Interview salespeople and do some research on what type of computer (e.g., laptop, tablet, external storage, etc.) and software would be the best for a professional writer. Write a two to three-page recommendation (not counting the title and reference pages that you must include) for what you consider to be the best option for a professional writer. You may find that this analysis will help you as you complete your Portfolio Project or as you consider future purchases that support your career focus.

Strong responses will:

- Demonstrate the ability to apply the argument/critique structure discussed in the interactive for this week.
- Articulate a clear recommendation
- Be formatted according to the *CSU-Global Guide to Writing and APA Requirements*.
- Provide support for your statements with in-text citations from a minimum of four scholarly articles—two of these sources may be from the class readings, textbook, or lectures, but two must be external. The CSU-Global Library is a good place to find these references.
- Utilize headings to organize the content in your work.

Portfolio Project Milestone Options 1 & 2: Virtual Writing Portfolio (0 points)

A Portfolio Project will be due at the end of Week 8. Your first assignment for that project is to this week read the Portfolio Project requirements and rubric, which you can find in Week 8. Begin soon to conduct library research to locate resources that you may be able to use for this project. Use the CSU-Global Library as a primary resource for conducting your research.

Deliverable: By the end of the week, select either Portfolio Option 1 or Option 2 and submit your choice and topic to your instructor with a brief project plan of no more than a page in length.

Module 2

Critical Thinking: (135 points)

Option #1: Analyzing Internal Communication

Collect several copies of an organization's internal newsletter, newspaper, or magazine. Critique these publications from two perspectives:

- 1) First, do content analysis. Given what you have read about what concerns employees and the organizational purpose of such publications, how does this publication measure up?
- 2) Second, given the design guidelines in the chapter, how does the publication measure up? What changes would you recommend?

This should be formatted as a professional email to the organization's public relations/ marketing communication department (i.e., the department identified as the author). Use at least two credible sources to support your assertions.

Construct your email in a document for submission of the assignment. Your email should be no longer than four pages (not counting the title and reference pages that you must include).

Strong responses will:

- Follow the formatting guidelines established in your text.
- Be analytic and not merely descriptive.
- Incorporate concrete examples from the publication(s).
- Base your critique on credible research. Provide support for your statements with in-text citations from a minimum of two scholarly articles - one of these sources may be from the class readings, textbook, or lectures, but one must be external. The CSU-Global Library is a good place to find these references.
- Utilize headings to organize the content in your work.
- Attach or include links to any publications you critique in an appendix.

Option #2: Analyzing Position Papers

Visit the websites of several large corporations that have posted position papers on topics of importance to their organization or industry. Imagine you've been hired as public relations counsel for the organization and have been asked to critique this position paper.

- Using the standards noted in *Tips for Success: Writing a Position Paper* in Chapter 14, critique **one** of these position papers in memorandum format.
- Address the memorandum to the director of corporate communications. Note both positive and negative aspects of the position paper. Remember, you may be hired to help with this or future position papers so you want to be gentle and constructive in your critique memo.
- Use at least two credible sources to support your assertions.

Your memo should be no more than four pages (not counting the title and reference pages that you must include).

Strong responses will:

- Follow the formatting guidelines established in your text
- Be analytic and not merely descriptive
- Incorporate concrete examples from the publication(s)
- Base your critique on credible research. Provide support for your statements with in-text citations from a minimum of two scholarly articles - one of these sources may be from the class readings, textbook, or lectures, but one must be external. The CSU-Global Library is a good place to find these references.
- Utilize headings to organize the content in your work.
- Attach or include links to any publications you critique in an appendix.

Portfolio Project Milestone: (90 points)

Options #1 and #2: Media Kit News Release

Write a news release related to your portfolio assignment (for either Portfolio Project 1 or 2). Your release should be one page and follow the formatting and content guidance in Chapter 5 of your course text.

Strong CT assignments will:

- Be properly formatted for the purpose of the writing
- Demonstrate clear mastery of the tips and recommendations for writing effective news releases.

You will receive feedback and then will be expected to revise your news release to improve your media kit/ virtual writing portfolio.

Module 4

Portfolio Project Milestone: (90 points)

Options #1 and #2: The Fact Sheet

Write a fact sheet related to your portfolio project (for either Portfolio Project 1 or 2). Your fact sheet should be no more than one page long.

Strong assignments will:

- Conform to the formatting recommendations in your text for this type of writing
- Be visually appealing – apply the principles of visual design discussed in Chapter 6
- Be potentially useful to journalists or bloggers.

You will receive feedback and then will be expected to revise your news release to improve your media kit/virtual writing portfolio.

Module 5

Critical Thinking: (135 points)

Choose one of the following two assignments to complete this week. Do not do both assignments. Identify your assignment choice in the title of your submission.

Option #1: Evaluating Social Media Customer Service

Select two companies that have a consistent presence on either Facebook or Twitter as well as customers engaging with them, asking questions, complaining, etc.

Track the types of customer feedback as well as the company's responses to them for three to four days. In a well-crafted essay between three and four pages in length, respond to the central question, "What should companies do in order to engage their customers effectively on social media?" In so doing, your essay should:

- (1) identify the key themes emerging in social media-based customer service and how the companies respond to them and
- (2) evaluate the appropriateness (and timeliness) of the responses based on the guidelines from your readings for the week to demonstrate your mastery of the concepts.

Strong assignments will:

- Conform to the formatting and content appropriate to the particular piece of writing you have chosen.
- Demonstrate clear mastery of the process of writing features and/or op-eds.

Option #2: Evaluating Public Relations Blogs

Select two public relations blogs such as prconversations.com, teachingpr.org, dummyspit.wordpress.com, pr-squared.com, blog.holtz.com, blog.ogilvypr.com, or others that you identify.

Track the posts and viewer comments on these for three to four days. In a well-crafted essay that's between three and four pages, respond to the central question, "How effectively do the blogs engage readers through their use of features and/or op-eds?" in so doing, your essay should:

- (1) identify the key themes emerging in the blogs and how those themes are reflected by the user comments, and
- (2) evaluate the blog posts based on the guidelines from your readings for the week to demonstrate your mastery of the concepts.

Strong assignments will:

- Conform to the formatting and content appropriate to the particular piece of writing you have chosen.
- Demonstrate clear mastery of the process of writing features and/or op-eds.

Module 6

Portfolio Project Milestone: (40 points)

Options #1 and #2: Designing Visuals

Produce at least two original visuals related to your portfolio project (for either Portfolio Project 1 or 2). They can be any visual but must conform to the standards discussed in the material this week. Possible examples include logos, photographs, banner ads, articles, print ads, infographics, etc. Be creative, and consider integrating your visuals with text.

Include the text that you would use in your portfolio project to explain and integrate them into the project.

Strong assignments will:

- Actively integrate the standards for visual design discussed in the material to demonstrate mastery of the material.
- Effectively integrate text and visual messages to achieve a specific goal.

Module 8

Portfolio Project: (130 Points)

Choose one of the following two assignments to complete this week. Do not do both assignments. Identify your assignment choice in the title of your submission.

Option #1: Media Kit

For Portfolio Option 1 you will gain experience in the process of creating a media kit to launch a “new product or service.” The new product or service you choose is entirely up to you – and it can be as practical or wacky as you choose; however, it must be something that DOES NOT exist AND it has to be something that solves a problem.

Your portfolio should conform to professional writing and formatting standards as described in your course textbook. It SHOULD NOT reflect APA formatting.

For the launch and project you are required to incorporate:

- A pitch letter to an appropriate media outlet for the product or service.
- A properly formatted news release. (Note: this is your Portfolio Project Milestone from Week 3. Visit the Week 3 folder to read the grading rubric to understand how this assignment will be graded.)
- A fact sheet. (Note: this is your Portfolio Project Milestone from Week 4. Visit the Week 4 folder to read the grading rubric to understand how this assignment will be graded.)
- A feature article or op-ed.
- Original visuals (e.g., photographs, graphic design). (Note: this is your Portfolio Project Milestone from Week 6. Visit the Week 6 folder to read the grading rubric to understand how this assignment will be graded.)
- At least a 30-second piece of original multi-media material.

You are encouraged to be creative (see Chapter 6 on examples of how media kits have been customized to match the products/services they’re pitching).

Option #2: Virtual Writing Portfolio

For Portfolio Option 2, you will gain experience in creating your own virtual writing portfolio. For this, you must create a website (there are several free and really good blogging tools available to customize like WordPress.com). The purpose of such a portfolio is to showcase your writing ability. This can be targeted for a professional purpose (i.e., a tool to help you get a job in the future) or this can be targeted towards any strong interests that you have (e.g., if you have a cause, passion, hobby, or interest that you would like to promote).

Your portfolio should conform to professional writing and formatting standards as described in your course textbook. It SHOULD NOT reflect APA formatting.

For the project, you are required to incorporate the following items on the website:

- A pitch letter targeted to an appropriate outlet to promote your portfolio (submitted via Word document along with the precise web address on the website for each of the other required materials).
- A properly formatted news release. (Note: this is your Portfolio Project Milestone from Week 3. Visit the Week 3 folder to read the grading rubric to understand how this assignment will be graded.)
- A fact sheet. (Note: this is your Portfolio Project Milestone from Week 4. Visit the Week 4 folder to read the grading rubric to understand how this assignment will be graded.)
- A feature article or op-ed.
- Original visuals (e.g., photographs, graphic design). (Note: this is your Portfolio Project Milestone from Week 6. Visit the Week 6 folder to read the grading rubric to understand how this assignment will be graded.)

- At least a 30-second piece of original multi-media material.

You are encouraged to be creative. (See chapter 6 on examples of how media kits have been customized for inspiration.)

Course Policies



Course Grading

20% Discussion Participation
 0% Opening Exercises
 8% Mastery Exercises
 37% Critical Thinking Assignments
 35% Final Portfolio Paper

Grading Scale and Policies

A	95.0 – 100
A-	90.0 – 94.9
B+	86.7 – 89.9
B	83.3 – 86.6
B-	80.0 – 83.2
C+	75.0 – 79.9
C	70.0 – 74.9
D	60.0 – 69.9
F	59.9 or below

In-Classroom Policies

For information on late work and incomplete grade policies, please refer to our [In-Classroom Student Policies and Guidelines](#) or the Academic Catalog for comprehensive documentation of CSU-Global institutional policies.

Academic Integrity

Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, reusing/re-purposing your own work (see *CSU-Global Guide to Writing and APA Requirements* for percentage of repurposed work that can be used in an assignment), unauthorized possession of academic materials, and unauthorized collaboration. The CSU-Global Library provides information on how students can avoid plagiarism by understanding what it is and how to use the Library and Internet resources.

Citing Sources with APA Style

All students are expected to follow the *CSU-Global Guide to Writing and APA Requirements* when citing in APA (based on the APA Style Manual, 6th edition) for all assignments. For details on CSU-Global APA style, please review the APA resources within the CSU-Global Library under the “APA Guide & Resources” link. A link to this document should also be provided within most assignment descriptions in your course.

Disability Services Statement

CSU–Global is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability requesting academic accommodations should contact the Disability Resource Coordinator at 720-279-0650 and/or email ada@CSUGlobal.edu for additional information to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Netiquette

Respect the diversity of opinions among the instructor and classmates and engage with them in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner. All posts and classroom communication must be conducted in accordance

with the student code of conduct. Think before you push the Send button. Did you say just what you meant? How will the person on the other end read the words?

Maintain an environment free of harassment, stalking, threats, abuse, insults or humiliation toward the instructor and classmates. This includes, but is not limited to, demeaning written or oral comments of an ethnic, religious, age, disability, sexist (or sexual orientation), or racist nature; and the unwanted sexual advances or intimidations by email or on discussion boards and other postings within or connected to the online classroom.

If you have concerns about something that has been said, please let your instructor know.