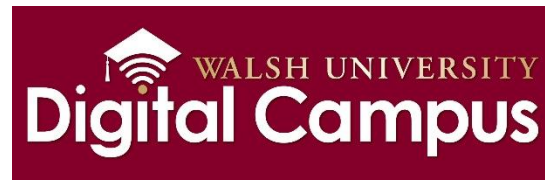# COM 475: Corporate Communications Senior Capstone Experience
Session 8Wx YEAR
3 Hours

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dianne Digianantonio
Email: ddigianantonio@walsh.edu and diannedigi@gmail.com
Phone: 330.232.5899
Virtual Office Hours: Flexible to meet students' needs via phone, email and text

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to provide you with opportunities to develop professional written and oral presentation skills. You will learn practical techniques related to communications for managers, as well as for professional communicators. Your professor will serve as your mentor and coach. The primary goal of the course is for you to demonstrate a deep understanding of and capabilities related to communication strategies and programs.

You will integrate skills and knowledge garnered in previous coursework throughout your corporate communication major. This course will focus on the strategies, practices and ethics of communications in organizations.

You will analyze the communications strengths and weaknesses of for-profit and not-for-profit organizations and their campaigns. You will gain practical experience by researching, writing and presenting, while furthering your understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of corporate communication.

You might be surprised to see a book that was written in 1936 appear in our required course materials. Dale Carnegie's book "*How to Win Friends and Influence People*" has been a must-read for generations of business people, public relations practitioners and leaders in all fields who want to improve their interpersonal skills. One of today's most influential people, billionaire Warren Buffett, told an interviewer that he never forgot a course developed by Dale Carnegie. "This $100 college course gave me the most important degree I have—and it's why I'm successful today." That course now costs considerably more, but we will cover the key lessons each week in class – at no additional charge!

Course Prerequisites: Must major in Corporate Communication and hold senior status.

PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (PSLOS)

- PSLO 1: Develop a lifelong interest in learning from news and feature articles in all media.
- PSLO 2: Communicate simple and complex information accurately using professional techniques that attract and hold readers' interest.
- PSLO 3: Critically analyze available information and sources to determine whether more fact-checking is needed before writing and publishing articles.
- PSLO 4: Demonstrate high ethical standards in researching, writing and publishing, while complying with relevant state and federal laws regulating mass media.

COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (CSLOS)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Use primary and secondary research tools to help solve communication problems.
- Describe the process of planning and implementing a public relations campaign, from setting objectives through evaluation
- Demonstrate continuous improvement in writing and speaking skills.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Developing the Public Relations Campaign – A Team-Based Approach, 3rd edition. Randy Bobbitt & Ruth Sullivan (2014). Pearson Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-0-205-06672-8 ISBN-10: 0-205-06672-0

AP Stylebook (Associated Press Stylebook), available at apstylebook.com

How to Win Friends and Influence People. Dale Carnegie. Publisher: Simon & Schuster, Inc. ISBN: 0-671-02703-4

Additional Readings, Handouts and Resources: As assigned by instructor.

Students are responsible for all material discussed and assigned in class throughout the semester.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance/Course Participation
It is an expectation in this course that all students complete the readings and other assignments, and actively contribute to all discussion topics. Many of the course activities are built upon collaborative learning and rely on the input and feedback of others. Because of the nature of online course work, late or missing activities may have a negative impact on the overall student learning and course performance.

Participation in this course is taken to mean sharing of self with others with respect to thoughts and feelings as well as engaging actively in the exercises and experiences that are a part of the teaching-learning design. There is also the expectation that contributions made should reflect a growing understanding of course topic(s). Students are required to reflect informed and articulate answers and thoughts based on careful readings and completion of assigned activities and materials.

Computer and Digital Literacy
Students need access to a computer (Mac or Windows) and the Internet for major amounts of time for this course, Students are expected to have a working knowledge and capability with computer hardware and a variety of software applications before beginning this class. Students must know how to use and check their email daily. Each student will need to download the lockdown browser for testing purposes.

All students need a working understanding of ECN, as well as the Microsoft Office Suite. Students will be asked to submit assignments using the Assignments tool. Students will also be asked to use the Discussion Forum. Correspondence with the instructor will be conducted through the ECN messaging application and through Walsh email. If you are not sure how to use any of these technologies, please contact the course instructor.

Oral Presentations using Zoom and Microsoft Stream
During this class, you will "track" a public company of your choice by closely observing and analyzing its public communications. Three times during the class you will record yourself making a PowerPoint presentation about that company. You will upload it to the class' Microsoft Streaming site where only your professor and fellow students can view it.

You will find detailed instructions on the corresponding three Lesson pages and the Resources tab. If you have questions, please contact your professor.

Discussion Forum Participation

Participation in discussion forums is critical for maximizing students' learning experiences and is required for the online delivery of this course. Each student is required to be part of an online community who interact, through discussion, to enhance and support the professional development of the group.

Active participation in discussion topics is defined as making at least one (1) original posting per week for each discussion topic and at least two (2) responses to colleagues' postings. This will result in a minimum total of three (3) postings each week, per topic.

NOTE: Your original post will be due each week by Wednesday at 11:55 p.m. and all subsequent posts will be due by Sunday at 11:55 p.m.

The course discussion rubric provides specific guidelines on how discussion contributions will be graded and what is considered a substantive response. Some characteristics that are considered to be a part of excellent discussion contributions are outlined below. The instructor will consider these characteristics when assessing students' quality and level of participation.

- Each student should submit his/her initial post(s) early in the session and your subsequent responses to the posts of other learners at timely intervals within the duration of the session. Keep in mind the goal is to have a dynamic discussion that lasts throughout the entire session.

- Posts and responses should be thorough, thoughtful and properly posted BEFORE the due dates for the week. Just posting an "I agree" or "Good ideas" will not be considered adequate. Support statements with examples, experiences, or references. However, students are encouraged to be brief — try to keep each post and response to one or two short paragraphs. Keep in mind that fellow students will be reading and responding too.

- Make certain to address the discussion prompt(s). This does not mean one should not extend the topic, but do not stray from the topic.

- Discussions occur when there is dialogue. Build upon the posts and responses of other learners to create discussion threads. Revisit the discussion forum and respond (if necessary) to what other learners have posted to initial responses.

- When relevant, add to the discussion by including prior knowledge, work experiences, references, websites, resources, etc. (giving credit when appropriate).

- Contributions to the discussions (posts and responses) should be complete and free of grammatical or structural errors.

- The instructor will read all your contributions. If posts are satisfactory, the instructor may not comment. For incomplete or incorrect posts, the instructor will highlight what is missing or what is wrong. The instructor will certainly highlight exceptional answers and open the opportunity for further discussions and questions, if the need arises.

Assignments

All course written requirements should be submitted via the Assignments tool in ECN. Lessons will run Monday-Sunday of each course week. Lessons will open on the Friday prior to the start of a lesson. All assignments, other than discussion forum posts, should be completed and submitted by the last day of the lesson week (Sunday) at 11:55 p.m. Because of the way the course is structured, students must stay on track with assignment dates and cannot complete assignments from previous weeks once the due date is passed.

Computerized Web-Based Evaluations for Courses/Faculty

Students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course and faculty at the end of the semester. Students have a professional responsibility and obligation to complete these evaluations.

GRADING METHODOLOGY AND POLICIES

Final course grade will be based on graded assignments, interactive participation, and demonstration of ethical and professional clinical conduct in all learning activities. Course assignments will be weighted as follows:

Category	Points (%)
Company profile-initial, #1	38 points
Company profile-middle, #2	38 points
Company profile-final, #3	38 points
Case studies (do 4 of 5, each 22 points)	88 points
Mid-term exam	60 points
Final exam	65 points
Discussion forum (14 at 8 points each	112 points
TOTAL:	**439 points**

Grading is based on rubrics included in syllabus.
- Company profile: Writing 16 pts, Content 6 pts, Presentation 16 pts Target: 38 pts
- Case studies: Writing 16 points, Content 6 pts Target 22 pts

A grade will be assigned based upon achievement of points within one of the following ranges:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Total Points
A	93% – 100%	408 points
A -	90% – 92%	395 points
B+	87% – 89%	382 points
B	83% – 86%	364 points
B-	80% – 82%	351 points
C+	77% – 79%	338 points
C	73% – 76%	320 points
C-	70% – 72%	307 points
D+	67% – 69%	294 points
D	63% – 66%	277 points
D-	60% – 62%	263 points
F	Below 60%	below 259 points

Late Assignments

All assignments are due by on the day indicated on the assignment

Make-up assignments will only be permissible under EXCEPTIONAL circumstances. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor in-advance of the assignment. The instructor will evaluate each situation on a case-by-case basis. A request is not synonymous with approval. In some cases, the assignment will be due or examination taken prior to the original due-date.

All course assignments must be completed before a course grade will be issued. If not completed, an incomplete grade may be negotiated. Refer to Walsh University Catalog for incomplete grade protocol and policies.

Grade Appeal

Refer to the Walsh University Catalog for the specific policy.

COURSE POLICIES

Develop a lifelong habit of staying up-to-date on the news

Every student is expected to read the news daily and look for contemporary articles related to media law issues covered in this class. Our objective is to keep the class as fresh as current events and watch as stories unfold on the public stage.

Communicate with Your Instructor

Instead of sending email questions/concerns regarding the course, please post course questions in the General Discussion Forum. This is the best place to post all non-private questions that pertain to the course because other students will benefit from the exchange. The instructor will respond to all questions posted there within 48 hours.

However, please contact the instructor via Walsh email (see Page 1) if you have an urgent message or if you have personal and/or private issues or questions. The instructor will respond within 24 hours. You are also welcome to telephone or text your instructor, if you have an urgent issue.

Readings: Please keep up with the reading assignments, slide decks and supplemental readings. Every weekday, you should read a print or online copy of your local newspaper and a national newspaper (*Wall Street Journal, New York Times or Washington Post*). We will draw on these articles for our online course discussions.

Graded Assignments: All assignments must be submitted with a file name of "your last name and project name" to the ECN Assignment section by the due date. No late work accepted without prior permission from the professor If you do not meet course deadlines, the grade may result in an "F" for the assignment. No extra credit will be given. All grades are live on ECN. The final grade on ECN will be the final grade you receive; there will be no rounding up or no rounding down.

UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Academic Integrity

Appropriate source documentation must be supplied for all quoted and/or referenced materials. If any student has specific questions about proper citations, quotations, etc., please contact the instructor.

The Walsh Digital Campus subscribes to the Academic Integrity Policy as published in the Walsh University Catalog ("Academic Integrity Policies & Procedures" section). If a student engages in academic dishonesty – as defined by the policy – the penalties may include an "F" for the assignment, an "F" for the course, and/or submission of the student's (or group's) name to the University for further action. The instructor will follow procedures set forth in handling issues of alleged violations. The student should become familiar with these policies, procedures, etc.

Accessibility Services for Students with Disabilities

Walsh University is committed to fostering an institutional climate in which qualified students with disabilities have full access to the academic environment. It is our practice to create an inclusive and accessible learning environment consistent with federal law.

If you feel that you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or temporary medical condition, please contact Meredith Soduk, the Director of Academic Support Services, at 330-490-7529 or msoduk@walsh.edu. Accessibility Services will confidentially discuss your needs, review your documentation, and determine your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Please know that it is the student's responsibility to request and coordinate accommodations. Although students may contact Accessibility Services at any point throughout the semester, it is ideal for a student's accommodations to be arranged and communicated as early as possible because accommodations are not retroactive.

University Administrative Withdrawal Policy

After one written warning to the student, and with appropriate notice of such a practice in the syllabus, an instructor may administratively withdraw a student from a course after unexcused non-attendance in an on-ground course, or unexcused non- participation in an online course, in at least 20% of the specific course schedule per the following schedule:

- 8 week course – after two weeks

The student must receive one written warning from the instructor to the student's Walsh University email address. Administrative withdrawals will not be permitted after the last day to withdraw from the term (per appropriate term of the Academic calendar) without permission of the Associate Vice President and Dean of Academic Administration and Department Chair of the program. Refer to the academic calendar for specific dates. A student who is administratively withdrawn from a class will receive a final grade of W (withdrawal).

STUDENT SUCCESS SUPPORT

Sara Shaffer, MAT
Manager, Recruitment and Retention
Cell Phone: 330.933.5417
Email: sshaffer@walsh.edu

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Walsh University Help Desk
Phone: 330-244-4357
Email: helpdesk@walsh.edu

COURSE ORGANIZATION AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

This course is organized in alignment with Walsh University's online course template. Each lesson contains an overview and outcomes, readings and related materials, learning activities and assessments, as well as supplemental resources. The schedule below is tentative; all assignments, projects, grades, and due dates are subject to change through the course of the semester as needed at the instructor's discretion.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1- INTRODUCTION

- Chapter 1: Nature of Persuasive Campaigns
- **Company presentation - Initial**
- Carnegie: How to Win Friends and Influence People
- AP Style: Periods and commas

WEEK 2- PR PROCESS

- Chapter 2: PR Process
- Case study 1: Product launch / Marketing Communications
- Carnegie: How to Win Friends and Influence People
- AP Style: Question marks / Quotation marks

WEEK 3- RESEARCH

- Chapter 3-4: Secondary and Primary Research
- Case study 2: Trade show / Special events
- Carnegie: How to Win Friends and Influence People
- AP Style: More punctuation

WEEK 4- IDENTIFYING THE BASICS

- Chapter 5: Goals/Objectives, Messages, Channels, Strategies
- Case study 3: Employee / Internal Communications
- **Company presentation – Mid-term update**
- Carnegie: How to Win Friends and Influence People
- AP Style: Capitalization

WEEK 5- MEDIA

- Chapter 6: Media
- Case study 4: News release
- Carnegie: How to Win Friends and Influence People
- AP Style: Numbers
- **Mid-term exam**

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WEEK 6- MEDIA

- Chapters 7-8: Media
- Case study 5: Crisis Communications
- Carnegie: How to Win Friends and Influence People
- AP Style: Internet terms

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WEEK 7- BUDGETING, PLANNING AND EVALUATION

- Chapters 9-10: Logistics and Evaluation
- **Company presentation – Final update**
- Carnegie: How to Win Friends and Influence People
- AP Style: Misused words

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WEEK 8- LEGAL AND MULTICULTURAL ISSUES

- Chapters 11-12: Legal and ethical considerations; International, multicultural and gender issues
- **Final exam**

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Weekly Topic(s)	Deliverables	Due Date
Lesson 1: Nature of Persuasive Campaigns	Company Profile - Initial	Sept. 8
Lesson 2: Public Relations Process	Case Study 1: Product Launch/Marketing Communications	Sept. 8
Lesson 3: Research	Case Study 2: Trade Show/Special Events	Sept 15
Lesson 4: Identifying the Basics	Case Study 3: Employee/Internal Communications Company Profile – Mid-term update	Sept 22
Lesson 5: Media	Case Study 4: News Release Mid-term Exam	Sept 29
Lesson 6: Media	Case Study 5: Crisis Communications	Oct 6
Lesson 7: Budgeting, Planning and Evaluation	Company Profile - Final	Oct 13
Lesson 8: Legal and Multicultural issues	Final Exam	Oct 19

APPENDICES

Writing Rubric

Criterion	Not Acceptable -0	Needs Improvement-1	Satisfactory-2	Exemplary-3	Score*
Organization & Coherence	Unorganized and incoherent.	The paper is weak in organization and/or coherence. The reader cannot identify a line of reasoning.	The paper is generally organized and coherent. The reader can mostly follow the line of reasoning.	The paper is well organized and coherent throughout. The reader can follow the line of reasoning.	
Professional Tone/Voice	Tone and voice are inappropriate throughout.	Frequent lapses in tone and voice. The writing does not engage the reader.	Tone and voice are generally appropriate with only minor lapses.	Tone and voice are professional and consistently appropriate throughout.	
Presentation of Ideas	Lacking in flow of thoughts and ideas.	Minimal flow of thoughts and ideas.	Flow of thoughts and ideas is generally consistent.	Flow of thoughts and ideas is consistent throughout.	
Word Choice	Word choice is confusing, unclear and/or inappropriate.	Word choice is poor and/or inappropriate.	Word choice is generally clear, concise and appropriate.	Word choice is accurate, clear, concise and appropriate throughout.	
Sentence Structure	Sentences are fragmented and incomplete.	Several sentences are constructed incorrectly.	Most sentences are well phrased, clear and varied.	Sentences are well phrased, clear and varied throughout.	
Grammar & Spelling	No attention given to grammar and spelling.	Errors are frequent and distracting.	Minor errors are apparent but do not detract from or obscure meaning.	Writing is error free throughout.	
Punctuation & Capitalization	No attention given to punctuation and capitalization.	Errors are frequent and distracting.	Minor errors are apparent but do not detract from or obscure meaning.	Writing is error free throughout.	
Format (Length, Report, Essay, APA)	No apparent format.	Inappropriate format and/or frequent inconsistency in application.	Writing is error free throughout. Appropriate format but with minor inconsistencies in application.	Appropriate format consistently applied and artifact within assigned page length.	
Total Score: (May be recorded in decimals or fractions)					

Content Rubric for Case Studies

Criterion	Not Acceptable-0	Needs Improvement-3	Satisfactory-6	Exemplary-10	Score*
Content	Insufficient information to complete assignment	Basic Information	Sufficient information to cover the topic	Supplemental information showing additional research	Max 10
Analysis	No analysis of assignment topic	Basic analysis	Adequate analysis and conclusions	Insightful analysis and meaningful conclusions	Max 10
Total Score: (May be recorded in decimals or fractions)					20

Oral Presentation Rubric

Criterion	Not Acceptable-0	Needs Improvement-1	Satisfactory-2	Exemplary-3	Score*
Organization & Coherence	Unorganized and incoherent.	The presentation is weak in organization and/or coherence. The audience cannot identify a line of reasoning.	The presentation is generally organized and coherent. The audience can mostly follow the line of reasoning.	The presentation is well organized and coherent throughout. The audience can follow the line of reasoning.	
Flow (smooth transitions from point to point & slide to slide, where applicable)	Fragmented.	With few exceptions, flow is generally disjointed.	Flow supports delivery of the message.	Flow is supportive and seamless.	
Non-Verbal (eye contact, gestures, movement, posture)	Lacking in all attributes.	Needs Improvement: eye contact, gestures, movement, posture.	Generally acceptable in all areas with minor lapses.	Exceptional in all areas.	
Verbal Crutches (use of ah, um, uh, you know, etc.)	Inarticulate.	Frequent use of verbal crutches.	Generally fluent with minor lapses.	Fluent throughout.	
Appearance	No attention to appearance.	Inappropriate appearance.	Generally professional in appearance.	Professional appearance.	
Demeanor (Professional conduct)	No attention to demeanor.	Inappropriate demeanor.	Generally professional in demeanor.	Professional demeanor. Exudes confidence and poise throughout.	
Length	> +/- 2 minutes	+/- 2 minutes	+/- 1 minute	Used allotted time.	
Visual Appeal/Satisfaction (originality, creativity, charts, graphs)	Ineffective or inappropriate.	Lacks variety, originality, boring. Graphics do not support the message.	Supports the message and engages audience but does little to enhance the presentation.	Exceptional in originality and/or creativity. Graphics enhance and reinforce the message.	
			Total Score: (May be recorded in decimals or fractions)		

Discussion Rubric

Criterion	Below Average-0	Average-1	Very Good-2	Excellent-3	Score*
Quality of Information in Posting	Posting simply restates the main concept.	Postings consistently focus on the week's topic, but do not relate the underlying concepts in the readings to the discussion. No details and/or examples are given.	Postings consistently focus on the week's topic and relate the underlying concepts in the readings to the discussion. Provides at least 1 supporting detail or example.	Postings consistently focus on the week's topic and relate the underlying concepts in the readings to the discussion. Comments including several supporting and details and/or examples.	Max 3
Citations and Resource Development	Never cites sources and /or does not provide information regarding outside resources related to the topic.	Rarely cites sources or provides information regarding outside resources related to the topic.	Occasionally cites sources or provides information regarding outside resources related to the topic.	Consistently cites sources used to develop posting and provides information regarding outside resources related to the topic.	Max 3
Critical Thinking	Does not identify and summarize the problem, is confused or identifies a different or inappropriate problem	Identifies the main problem and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the problem	Identifies not only the basics of the issue, but recognizes nuances of the issue	Provides exemplary insights, engages other opposing postings, and draws support from experience and information not available from assigned sources	Max 3
Participation	A post own comments but does not interact with others in the online community.	Rarely interacts or responds to other members of the online community other than required responses.	Occasionally responds to other members of the online community over the required minimum number of postings.	Consistently encourages and facilitates interaction among members of the online community on an ongoing basis over the required minimum number of postings.	Max 3
Total Score: (May be recorded in decimals or fractions)					12