

MEJO 720: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
A.K.A. HOW TO MARKET ANYTHING TO ANYONE

Course Syllabus & Schedule
Fall 2019
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COURSE DETAILS & LOGISTICS

INSTRUCTOR	Lisa Stockman (Mauriello) - please call me Lisa
MOST DAYS	President, Syneos Health Communications
OTHER DAYS	Lecturer, UNC School of Media and Journalism
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OFFICE HOURS	Office hours are available via appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The definition of communications has dramatically changed over the last decade. In the not-too-distant past, companies could take a “set it and forget it” approach to communications. Now, in the world of Kickstarter, ad blockers, always-on connectivity and on-demand content, effective communication strategies are a must-have – not a nice-to-have.

The skills learned in this course will be beneficial in many job functions at organizations of any size, even without the specific job title of communications strategist. Together, we will explore how marketing communication, in particular, is being transformed by changes in culture and technology. While organizations have always engaged in strategic communication to inform and influence publics, the rich and exponentially cluttered information environment today presents vast opportunities and mind-boggling challenges. Today, everything communicates.

From the global transnational media firm, to the state-wide environmental activist organization, to the local public school, today’s organizations are grappling to create and sustain relationships through strategic, targeted, and integrated communication that supports organizational goals. The field of strategic communication is much broader than marketing communications. It is impossible, however, to adequately cover all sub-disciplines of strategic communications within the scope of a one-semester course.

We will focus specifically on general marketing communications for this course, and the concepts, strategies and tactics we study can be applied to corporations, for-profit and nonprofit organizations, activist groups, nongovernmental organizations, organizations promoting forms of social change, political parties or movements, and government organizations. Similarly, when you see the terms “buyers” or “customers”, you can also think of subscribers, voters, volunteers, applicants, and donors.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Underpinned by appropriate theory, best practice models, and ethical frameworks of practice, this course challenges students to consider the evolving roles and definitions of marketing, advertising, and public relations. The analysis of case studies and current situations is integrated throughout the course to stimulate critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills.

The course will provide you with opportunities to apply analytical skills to a variety of communication problems across multiple industries and to help you:

- Understand the role of research and planning in successfully engaging with internal stakeholders and external audiences
- Understand the differences between paid, owned and earned media; describe the impact of digital media on traditional marketing strategy; and integrate paid, earned and owned media into effective marketing communication campaigns
- Evaluate integrated marketing strategies and plans for a brand or an organization
- Create an integrated advertising and marketing plan for a brand or organization to solve a business challenge
- Measure, monitor and calibrate integrated advertising and marketing strategies for a brand or organization as part of a communications plan

Students will integrate the knowledge they've learned in the program to identify a real-world challenge – perhaps a brand believed to be underperforming in the marketplace or building support for a ballot referendum – and use concepts from the course to evaluate the situation and propose a comprehensive marketing communication plan (using a combination of owned, paid and earned media) to advance the objectives and goals of the organization. More information about the marketing communication plan will be presented later in the semester.

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS & OTHER PRE-WORK

You will be required to purchase several HBR Case Studies and Articles for \$24.95, which can be accessed at this link <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/652256> . Note, the articles show Heidi's name.

Additional chapter excerpts, articles and TED Talks will be noted on each module's overview and posted to Sakai via links, course e-reserves, and/or PDFs. If something interesting and pertinent breaks during the semester, I may also share additional materials.

OPTIONAL READING

If students are interested in learning more about these topics from other sources, please see the following books:

Heath, C. and Dan Heath. (2007). *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*. 2007. New York: Random House. ISBN: 1400064287

Weinberg, G. and Justin Mares (2015). *Traction: How Any Startup Can Achieve Explosive Customer Growth*. New York: Portfolio/Penguin. ISBN: 1591848369

Lafley, A.G. and Roger L. Martin (2013). *Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press. ISBN: 142218739X

EXPECTATIONS

1. Attend. If you are going to be “absent” online for several days due to business trip or other issues, please let me know in advance.
2. Participate. The success of this course is dependent on you playing an active role, both in-person and online in the discussion board.
3. Share. Sharing your ideas with others by presenting them well can set you apart from your colleagues in the real world. We will have plenty of practice with sharing your ideas.
4. Write. Writing clearly and succinctly is a key skill in whatever job you pursue.

COURSE CADENCE

Our course “weeks” will begin on Thursdays and run for fourteen (14) days, with an assignment due approximately two (2) weeks later on Wednesdays by 11:59pm ET. Synchronous Sessions will be held in the middle of each module. Half of these sessions are back to back with Professor Eggleston’s MEJO 721 course and the other half are on alternate weeks. Our Synch Session will run from 7:30pm-8:30pm EST every other Thursday on the following dates: August 22, September 5, September 19, October 3, October 24, November 7.

The course calendar can be divided into three main parts:

Part 1. Onboarding (Week 1): The first week of the semester will serve as an onboarding experience as you read materials that cover basic marketing concepts, and then apply those concepts to your work environment through interaction with your colleagues and classmates.

Part 2. Learning Modules (Weeks 2 through 13): These weeks have been grouped into six (6) two-week modules with a variety of touch points and will flow as follows:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				Module Begins	Reading Day	Reading Day
				Reading Day		
Reading Day	Discussion Board	Discussion Board	Discussion Board	Discussion Board	Synch Session Survey	Work on Assignment
				Synch Session 7:30pm-8:30pm	Work on Assignment	
Work on Assignment	Work on Assignment	Work on Assignment	Work on Assignment	NEXT Module Begins		
			Assignment Due: 11:59pm	Reading Day		

Reading Days: The first four (4) days of each module are set aside for students to read the assigned materials in preparation for the Discussion Boards and Synchronous Session.

Discussion Boards: The next four (4) days of each module are set aside for engagement on the Discussion Board. The Discussion Board is intended for you to share with your colleagues examples of how the concepts we are studying can be applied to real-world examples, be it from your own personal experience or through trade articles or RSS feeds about other companies. These posts provide a proof point for your ability to apply the concepts; the assignments will provide another opportunity for you to apply the material.

Synchronous Sessions: These will be held the second Thursday of each module from 7:30pm-8:30pm EST. When Professor Eggleston's session is held at 8:30pm, we'll end a 5-10 minutes early to allow a break between the sessions. These sessions will be part lecture and part discussion. If you are unable to attend "live," please view the video of the session to enable you to answer the Synch Session Survey.

Synch Session Survey: At the end of every Synch Session, please email me by end of day Sunday with succinct answers to these three questions:

1. In 1-2 sentences, what did you learn in this module that you plan to use at your job?
2. In 1-2 sentences, what conclusion did you arrive at based on our discussion today?
3. What do you still want to know?

Assignments: Friday through Wednesday of the second week will focus on Assignments. You will complete four (4) assignments total during the course; two (2) will be individual assignments and two (2) will be team assignments. Additional information on how to access and post completed assignments is provided later in this syllabus.

Part 3. Final Project (Weeks 14-16): These weeks will be dedicated to completing your final project for the course. I will make additional office hours available weeks 14 and 15 to try to answer as many questions as immediately as possible. By Wednesday 12/4 at 11:59pm, you should have all your questions answered, and should be focused on writing and editing. Your final projects will be due on Wednesday, 12/11 at 11:59pm.

MODULE DETAILS

Weeks	Dates	Module Number	Topic
1	8/22-8/28	—	Course Introduction and Onboarding
2-3	8/29-9/11	1	What are we trying to accomplish with communications? Understanding the business and communications challenges.
4-5	9/12-9/25	2	Whom are we trying to reach? What is our 'brand' all about? Understanding the intersection of audiences and brands.
6-7	9/26-10/9	3	What do we say? What do we do? How to create compelling, relevant messages and behaviors.
8-9	10/10-10/30	4	Where do we reach them? Part I. Understanding the media landscape.

10-11	10/31-11/13	5	Where do we reach them? Part II. How to choose the best media channel mix.
12-13	11/14-11/26	6	How did it work? What should we change for next time? How to design a measurement plan to know if/when the initiative is successful.
14-16	11/27-12/11	—	Final Project

GRADING POLICY

Final graduate course grades are H, P, L, and F. Failure to turn in any of the assignments or the final project will result in a F in the course. An assignment that is one second late is considered not turned in. **Late papers and late assignments will not accepted, no excuses.** Failure to participate in one or more Module discussion board sessions will result in an L for the course. I will drop your lowest discussion board week. Here's a general description of graduate grades:

- H means a truly outstanding performance in the class and on assignments.
- P is a good, solid performance overall in the class and on assignments.
- L is a performance in the class and on assignments that is below the acceptable level for graduate students. It means the student does not understand the course material very well, or has not participated in one or more Discussion Boards.
- F is failing. It is given rarely in the circumstance that a student has not handed in H, P, L graded assignments.

Your grade for the course will be determined by your performance in three areas:

ASSIGNMENT	% of GRADE
1) PARTICIPATION	
Weekly Discussion Board Contributions and Synch Session Surveys	15%
Online Discussion Board "Hot Seat" Leading	10%
2) ASSIGNMENTS	
Assignment #1	10%
Assignment #2	10%
Assignment #3: Final Project Proposal	10%
Assignment #4	10%
3) FINAL PROJECT	
Final Project Deliverable	35%

DISCUSSION BOARDS/SYNCH SESSION SURVEYS: 15% OF FINAL GRADE

As you well know, the success of any graduate seminar depends on the quality of discussion that we engage in, so please speak up! For every week of class, there will be one or two general threads of discussion.

It is expected that all of you will participate in all threads started by me each week with at least one substantive original post for each thread and at least one response post (responding to one of your classmates' posts) for each thread. If you must be completely absent from the Discussion Board for an entire week because of some major extenuating circumstance, please notify me in advance.

Please spend your Reading Days reading and thinking. Following those days, the Discussion Board will "open" each week at 6am on Mondays and "close" at 6pm on Thursdays. You are required to post on at least two of the four days that the Discussion Board is open. (Please do not take this to mean that it's acceptable to post at 11:55pm on Monday and 12:05am on Tuesday and count that as two separate days!) "Binge posting" is not helpful to your classmates or your education. It is expected that you will check in with the Discussion Board and read your classmates' posts even on (most) days that you do not post yourself. Early and/or late posts are not counted for grading purposes.

P: A weekly discussion grade of P can be earned by completing the required two original and two response posts, demonstrating an understanding of the assigned material and an ability to apply it to a practical professional setting.

H: A weekly discussion grade of H can be earned by increasing the quality (more so than the quantity) of your posts. H grades are reserved for those who bring high-quality additional information to the discussion, making connections that are not already made by the assigned readings, the instructor or classmates. These posts help others synthesize and apply the material and/or suggest new ways of examining the issue under consideration.

L: A weekly discussion grade of L can be earned by completing fewer than the required number of posts and/or by doing overly brief or superficial posts that fail to show an understanding and application of the assigned material.

F: A weekly discussion grade of F can be earned by not posting to the Discussion Board in any given week.

HOT SEAT DISCUSSION BOARD LEADING: 10% OF FINAL GRADE

In addition to contributing every Discussion Board week, you will be on the "Hot Seat" for one week during the semester. During this week, you (and a few of your other classmates) are expected to log in every day (if not multiple times per day) to keep the conversation moving. Please note: this is not a team assignment. You may prompt with a question inspired by the readings or pre-work, respond to posts from classmates, ask follow-up questions of classmates, or any other number of things. If you are unsure of what to post or how to lead during your "Hot Seat" week, please email the Instructor prior to posting.

Hot Seat weeks are assigned below. This a shared responsibility, NOT a team assignment.

Module	On the “Hot Seat”
1	Kinnard, Nelson
2	Baier, Hove, Donegan
3	Bordeaux, Dillon Davis
4	Chappell, Rimer, Sellers
5	Foreman, Hendrickson, Tie
6	Moorefield, Morales

ASSIGNMENTS: 40% OF FINAL GRADE

Each of the four (4) assignments will be worth 10% of your final grade. Assignment instructions will be posted in the “Instructor Overview” for each Module.

Completed assignments should be posted to the Assignment section of Sakai by 11:59pm on the last day (Wednesday) of the two-week Module.

Two (2) assignments will be individual assignments and two (2) assignments will be team assignments. Each student has been assigned to a team as follows:

Team #	Team Members
Team 1	Foreman, Kinnard, Nelson, Tie
Team 2	Bordeaux, Dillon Davis, Hendrickson
Team 3	Chappell, Donegan, Moorefield, Sellers
Team 4	Baier, Hove, Morales, Rimer

For those of you unfamiliar with the case study approach, here are recommendations for how to approach reading and digesting an HBR case study – which begins with reading the case three times:

1. The first reading should be a quick run-through of the text in the case. It should give you a feeling for what the case is about and the types of data contained in the case.
2. Your second reading should be more in-depth. Many people like to underline or otherwise mark up their cases to pick out important points that they know will be needed later. For example, analyze the case with respect to customer behavior and trends, competitor’s behaviors and trends, and the firm’s strengths and weaknesses. On your second reading, carefully examine the exhibits in the case. It is generally true that the case writer has put the exhibits there for a purpose. They contain information that will be useful in analyzing the situation. You will often find that you will need to apply some analytical technique to the exhibit

in order to benefit from the information in the raw data. Many of the questions I ask will focus on interpreting the exhibits in the case and assessing the implications of these findings.

3. On your third reading, you should have a good idea of the fundamentals of the case. Now you will be searching to understand the specific situation. You will want to get at the root causes of problems and gather data from the case that will allow you to make specific action recommendations. Before the third reading, you may want to review the questions in the outline of class assignments. It is during and after the third reading that you should be able to prepare your answers to the discussion questions. As is often the situation in actual practice, cases may not have all the data that you would like. Nevertheless, it is critical that you develop a reasoned plan of attack on the basis of data available. Moreover, you should not attempt to find out what happened to the company or business as a basis for making your decision.

For each case study, examine the case (both text and exhibits) and be able to share what specific actions your team would recommend that the company take, and why. Specific queries will be posted for each assignment. As a benchmark, a typical, successful and well-written Case Assignment will have taken around 8 to 10 hours to complete, per person. Case Assignments may not exceed five (5) pages, double-spaced, 12 point font in the main body and maximum of 6 pages of supporting appendix material as needed. For team assignments, please appoint one team member to post the completed case assignment to the “Assignment” section of the Sakai site by 11:59pm on the Wednesday it is due.

Here is the Assignment Schedule:

Module	Individual or Team?	Due	Case/Topic
1	Individual	9/11 at 11:59pm EST	Bose Corporation: Communication Strategy for Challenging Apple’s Beats by Dr. Dre
2	Team	9/25 at 11:59pm EST	Kindle Fire: Amazon's Heated Battle for the Tablet Market
3	Individual	10/9 at 11:59pm EST	<i>Final Project Proposal</i>
5	Team	11/13 at 11:59pm EST	The Hunger Games: Catching Fire: Using Digital and Social Media for Brand Storytelling

Please note: Peer surveys will be distributed for the two team assignments; your individual grade may be downgraded based on input from your peers.

FINAL PROJECT DELIVERABLE: 35% OF FINAL GRADE

Each individual student will develop a comprehensive digital marketing communication plan that integrates paid, earned, and owned media strategies. Your plan will address a communication problem or challenge and will articulate a compelling goal and specify measurable objectives, suggest strategic solutions, and propose tactics comprised of owned, earned or paid media.

There two parts to the final project – a project proposal and a final plan. Detailed requirements for the proposal and the final plan will be posted in the “Final Project” folder in the Resources section of Sakai by Friday, September 6th.

Begin thinking about issue or business challenge you would like to address. Some of you may want to tie-in with an initiative in which your employer is involved, which could include an eCommerce site, a corporate social responsibility (CSR) endeavor, or a new product launch. Others may want to work on a plan for a hobby or non-profit initiative.

Project Proposals (counts as individual assignment #3): Step one will be to post to the “Assignments” section of Sakai a completed proposal form by 9/25 at 11:59pm EST. Here you will make the case for why this business issue needs to be addressed and share details about your target market/audience. I will be in touch with each of you so I can provide feedback and focus, allowing you to begin to work on the plan itself.

Marketing Communications Plan: Step two will be to complete a comprehensive marketing communications plan that includes everything we cover in the Learning Modules, applied to your specific communications challenge. This plan is due by Wednesday, 12/11 at 11:59pm EST.

STAYING CURRENT

It is highly recommended that you subscribe to RSS feeds or monitor these resources to help you immerse yourself in the field this semester and source ideas for Discussion Board posts.

<p>Web kottke.org wired.com/blogs readwrite.com avc.com zephoria.org/thoughts Techmeme.com</p>	<p>Media mashable.com insidefacebook.com digitalbuzzblog.com venturebeat.com @contagious MediaPost</p>	<p>Idea Companies bbh-labs.com madebymany.com/blog droga5.com/news kickstarter.com/blog hugeinc.com/ideas Hubspot blog</p>	<p>Industry News fastcompany.com TheDrum adfreak.com @fastcodesign WARC BusinessInsider.com</p>
<p>Creativity thefwa.com creativity-online.com designobserver.com coudal.com swiss-miss.com</p>	<p>Culture psfk.com monocle.com brainpickings.org springwise.com coolhunting.com</p>	<p>Strategists @uberblond neilperkin.typepad.com tomfishburne.com @bethcomstock markpollard.net</p>	<p>Conferences/Authors poptech.org danpink.com sethgodin.typepad.com 99u.com ted.com</p>

ACCREDITING VALUES AND COMPETENCIES

The School of Media and Journalism’s accrediting body outlines values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. No single course could possibly cover all the values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address the following values and competencies:

- think critically, creatively and independently;
- 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;

HONOR CODE

It is expected that each student in this class will conduct him/herself within the guidelines of the Honor System (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high level of honesty and integrity that this university demands. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please feel able to see the course instructor, speak with the senior associate dean of graduate studies in this school, and/or speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

SEEKING HELP

If you need individual assistance, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem, whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability or an illness. Please feel able to contact the course instructor as soon as you perceive any warning signs of things that might adversely affect your class performance or final grade.

DIVERSITY

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2017-2018 UNC Bulletin at <http://catalog.unc.edu/about/introduction/>. In addition, the School of Media and Journalism has a policy that can be found here: <http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

In this course, you are encouraged to represent diverse populations, diverse viewpoints, and diversity of perspective in your own work. You are also asked to be sensitive to the various backgrounds, perspectives, origins, and situations represented by the students in the course, the students, faculty, and staff at this university, and the residents of this state.

SPECIAL NEEDS

The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) Office. In the first instance please visit their website at <http://accessibility.unc.edu>, call the office at 919-962-8300, or email accessibility@unc.edu. A student is welcome to initiate the registration process at any time. However, the process can take time. ARS is particularly busy in the run-up to finals and during finals. Students submitting self-ID forms at that time are unlikely to have accommodations set until the following semester. Please contact ARS as early in the semester as possible.

A NOTE OF THANKS

My thanks to Josh Carlton for his work in creating prior versions of this course.