**MEJO 374.1. Communications Consulting: The Art and Craft of the PR Professional**

9:00-11:45 am Fridays Via Zoom.

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**Instructor Information:**

* **Name:** Kelly Williamson, president North America, APCO Worldwide
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* **Twitter:** @KellyW\_NC
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* **Office Hours:** By request

**Zoom information:**

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|  Phone one-tap:  | US: +16465588656,,92586399429# or +16699006833,,92586399429#  |
| Meeting URL:  | <https://apco.zoom.com/j/92586399429?pwd=WGEwalZBR25odSt2RE5VWUNVWWNlUT09>  |
| Meeting ID:  | 925 8639 9429 |
| Password: | 431710 |

**Course Description**:The PR industry is undergoing a process of great transformation. The rise and fall of social and digital platforms, the fragmentation of media, the rise of activism, the globalization of “issues” and an increasingly diverse talent pool – are forces that continue to shape the industry. To succeed in today’s evolving PR agency environment, consultants must understand industry dynamics – how agencies work and how to deliver value; they must understand client dynamics – how to win them, how to keep them and how to cultivate them; they must become experts in the “art of the pitch” – how to present and how to tell a story in ways that connect and inspire your audience and your clients.

This seminar – Communications Consulting: The Art and Craft of the PR Professional is a designed to prepare you for a successful entry into the world of communications and public relations. Taught by seasoned practitioners with APCO Worldwide – a leading corporate and public affairs global communications consultancy -- this course has three areas of focus and exploration: 1) the agency as a professional services firm; 2) the client; and 3) the art of the win. Upon completion of the seminar, you will be better positioned to succeed in an agency environment.

**Course Objectives**:By the end of this course, you will:

* Intimately understand how agencies work – how success is defined and measured; how they are structured; and the politics in play
* Discuss and better understand the issues of the day and how the help companies navigate them
* Put yourself in the shoes of APCO consultants to advise clients on a broad range of challenges – from corporate reputation issues to crises to brand building

**Attendance Policy:** Treat this class as if you already graduated and are in the real-world. You are expected to be on-time, prepared and ready for active engagement. I hope you will be on video so we can engage more fully, although it is not a requirement. We will expect you to ask smart questions, demonstrate active listening and engage in a thoughtful dialogue. Your participation in class will be a portion of your final grade. If you have a medical or personal reason for missing class, please email me ahead of time or provide a doctor’s note. If you have two or more unexcused absences, **each absence will take** **five points off your final grade**. **If you are more than ten minutes late for class** it will be considered an unexcused absence.

**Use of laptops and smartphones:** You are expected to take notes in class — using a laptop or pen and paper is fine. If you are multi-tasking, texting or checking any social media platforms while in class and appear to not be paying attention, you will be called upon and points will be deducted from your grade.

**Course Grading**

* Class participation including pop quizzes: 30%
* Attendance: 30%
* Writing test: 10%
* Final exam: 30%

**Grading Scale**

93-100 = A

90-92.99 = A-

87-89.99 = B+

83-86.99 = B

80-82.99 = B-

77-79.99 = C+

73-76.99 = C

70- 72.99 = C-

67- 69.99 = D+

63- 66.66 = D

60- 62.99 = D-

0- 59.00 = F

**Honor Code:** You areexpected to conduct yourself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://studentconduct.unc.edu/>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. You may retrieve the full document, *The instrument of student judicial governance*, at <https://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/documents/Instrument.pdf>.

**Seeking Help:** If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with 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.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** The School of Media and Journalism adopted diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements in spring 2016 with accompanying goals: <http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>. Additionally, the University’s policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined here: <http://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/>. In summary, 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.

* **Harassment:** UNC does not tolerate harassment based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, disability, or for any other reason. It is also a violation of the Honor Code and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Title IX of the Educational Amendments. If you need assistance with a harassment issue or problem, bring it to my attention or The Office of the Dean of Students, dos@unc.edu or 919/966-4042.
* **Special Accommodations**: If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Resources & Service Office website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>, call 919/962-8300, or use NC Relay 711.

**Professional values and competencies**: The School of Media and Journalism’s accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program.  Learn more about them here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>. No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas.  The values and competencies in bold are most relevant for this course:

* Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
* Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
* Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
* Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
* Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
* Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
* Think critically, creatively and independently;
* Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
* 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;
* Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
* Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

**Semester Schedule**

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| **Week**  | **Date** | **Topic** | **Class Speakers** |
| 1 | January 22 | **Syllabus, Class Introductions** **The Fundamentals:** What is a communication agency?How does it differ from management consulting?How do agencies work? What are some of your perceptions about how agencies work? What would you look for in an agency to determine cultural fit? | **Kelly Williamson,** president of APCO Worldwide, North America |
| 2 | January 29 | **Political Advisory:** let’s talk about all that is changing politically and how that impacts a business’ license to operate. What does it mean for the communication industry? | **Gadi Dechter,** head of political advisory**James Robinson**, head of corporate advisory |
| 3 | February 5 | **Corporate Advocacy:** what is expected of companies, who is doing is right, who is doing is wrong. ESG, brand, etc. What should I know as an entry level employee? | **Julie Jack,** head of ESG **Howard Pulchin,** head of Ideas |
| 4 | February 12 | **Tech Disruption:** tech is an issue and a sector. From competition to data privacy companies are navigating the complexity of a rapidly changing environment. Big tech firms are also figuring out their role in it all. This session is sure to get your wheels turning.  | **Marc Johnson,** vp corporate communications, Facebook**Bob Winslow,** tech disruption lead at APCO**Lauren Cohen,** APCO global client leader on Facebook |
| 5 | February 19 | **Crisis & Issues:**  learn who is doing it right and who is not as companies attempt to navigate the complex world around them. | **Kelly Stepno**, head of North America crisis practice |
| 6 | February 26 | **Equity & Justice:** George Floyd, Breanna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery to name just a few. Enough is enough. How did we get here and what’s the role of business in creating real-lasting change? **Accelerate What’s Right:** our program to address systemic racism and how we created it.  | **Charlene Wheeless**, head of equity & justice **Elle Arloo**k, equity and justice fellow**Jason Meyer**, **Riley Billman**, Accelerate What’s Right leads |
| 7 | March 5 | **Health disruption:** from vaccines to employee health: what things should companies be thinking about. Advice for getting a job in this field? |  **Alex Lazorchak,** health practice leader**Katie Milgrom**, public health and vaccines **Karen Hagens,** pharma  |
| 8 | March 12 | **No Class—Wellness Day**  | n/a   |
| 9 | March 19 | **Client Leadership:** this is backbone of the agency. We’ll learn what is looks like when it’s done right and when it goes crazy wrong. We’ll also talk through skills must you have to excel? | **Caroline Starke,** key client initiative program leader**Leanne High,** key client leader |
| 10 | March 26 | **Writing Workshop:** To work at an agency, you must be able to write. Let’s learn what we expect in this writing 101 workshop.  | **Homework assignment:** Writing test  |
| 11 | April 2 | **No class- HOLIDAY** |  |
| 12 | April 9 | **The business of the business:** Understanding how an agency operates is paramount to success. We’ll talk about everything from how we make money to staffing models and why they matter  | **Edwin Feliciano**, Chief Financial Officer, North America |
| 13 | April 16 | **Jobs! Jobs! Jobs**! What it’s like to be an entry level agency employee? Advice for getting a job at an agency? How much does my social media profile count? | **Kate Spinello**, head of APCO+, our entry level training & development program**Abby Olin**, lead recruiter |
| 14 | April 23 | **No class—holiday** |  |
| 15  | April 30 | TBD—class input |  |
| 16 | May 7 | **Final Exam** |  |

*Note: guest speakers are subject to change*