



PPPM 407/507 (CRN 25837/ 25841)
Strategic Communications
Winter 2023 -- 4 credits

Instructor: Laura McGinnis (she/her), MPA, GCNM
lauramcg@uoregon.edu

Meeting: Tuesday/Thursday 4:00 pm to 5:20 pm | ED117

Course materials found on Canvas.uoregon.edu

Office hours: Monday 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm, Tuesday after class, and by
appointment

Office Hours:

[https://uoregon.zoom.us/j/98675397159?pwd=VlZwelYxR
FdoUHpqQUVwMjJPUjNwUT09](https://uoregon.zoom.us/j/98675397159?pwd=VlZwelYxRFdoUHpqQUVwMjJPUjNwUT09)

Appointments: [https://calendly.com/lkmcginnis/student-
meeting](https://calendly.com/lkmcginnis/student-meeting)

Course Description

There are more than 40 years of data pointing to the value of strategic marketing and communications for nonprofits and the public sector. Yet, it is still common for communicators to be called for a meeting to announce an initiative or “make it ‘go viral’” a few days before intended launch. This practice affects the whole organization, leaving money, awareness, and opportunity on the table. This course is designed to help you—future nonprofit and government managers—understand and learn the tools to implement intentional strategic communications that propel an organization forward in its quest to achieve its mission. Through this course, you will develop skills needed to oversee the communications of an organization.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

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

1. Evaluate and design a strategic communications plan with an understanding of how to reach different audience types utilizing the appropriate message and media channels for each.
2. Articulate the importance of and develop a crisis communications plan.

3. Identify key stakeholders of an organization and demonstrate how to effectively communicate with them.
4. Discern between propaganda and strategic communications techniques, and articulate the impacts the tactics of each have on expected outcomes.
5. Recognize the importance of relationship management and demonstrate techniques for processes and communications to affect desired outcomes.

Course Modality

This is an in-person course. We will meet during scheduled class meeting times in ED117. I will accommodate absences as described in the Absences policy below. If you need additional flexibility, UO encourages you to consider ASYNC WEB courses. If you need accommodation related to a medical or other disability, you can request those by working with the Accessible Education Center.

Technical Requirements

During class, you should have a way to take notes, access the internet for in-class work, and writing utensils (e.g., pencil, pen, etc.). Canvas is the place to go for course information and engagement outside of class time, (and sometimes during).

To access our course Canvas site, log into canvas.uoregon.edu using your DuckID. If you have questions about using Canvas, visit the [Canvas support page](#). Canvas and Technology Support also is available by phone (541-346-4357) or by [live chat on the Live Help webpage](#).

Course Policies

Communicating with Me: How and Why

I will conduct course communication through Canvas and repeat information at the beginning of every class. Make sure to adjust your settings under Account > Notifications to ensure you get course information in a timely way.

- When I need to get in touch with individual students, I will email you.
- Questions you bring to my attention that are useful for the whole class will be shared either anonymously or with attribution, (your call), through Canvas announcements.

Class Communication

Each week's plan—readings, assignments, discussions, slides, etc.—are posted in the module for that week. Assignment feedback will be through

Canvas, and turnaround time is generally one week. The calendar lists the key dates for the course, and the Absences module names additional key dates for the university.

How should you be in touch with me?

Email and office hours are the best way to reach me for questions about the class.

Office hours are unstructured times to get clarity about a subject, seek feedback, ask a mentoring question, talk about your family—it's your time.

- Mondays, I have Zoom open and you can join any time. If you are in the waiting room, I will message you if I'm with another student.
- Appointments are in 15-minute blocks (booked via Calendly), or
- Catch me after Tuesday's class. I'll stick around if you stick, too!

Why should you be in touch with me?

My personal hope is that you will one day soon be a colleague in nonprofit or government communications. Yes! Please reach out with questions. Ask for help. Let me know what is working, where there are obstacles, and invite me in to strategize solutions with you.

Classroom Community Expectations

Equity, Inclusion and Respect Statement

This course requires and expects critical thinking about and sensitivity to the impact of diversity—of culture, religion/faith and none, genders, ethnicity, race, socioeconomics, physical and cognitive ability, sexual orientation, and other considerations—both in relation to the populations we serve, and in the classroom. I ask that we all commit to recognizing the importance of different experiences and perspectives in understanding the topics we cover and the populations we all serve.

I will stop and examine statements that may be considered controversial. I encourage you to do the same.

Help Everyone Learn

Part of how we learn together is by learning from one another. To do this effectively, we need to be patient with each other, identify ways we can assist others, and be open-minded to receiving help and feedback from others. Don't hesitate to contact me to ask for assistance or offer suggestions that might help us learn better.

The College of Design promotes the strengths of our multicultural community through the Equity and Inclusion Committee. For more information about the Equity and Inclusion Committee and other student resources, please see <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/design/deans-office/committees/equity-inclusion-committee/>.

Pronouns

If you are comfortable sharing your pronouns, please do. To learn more about why I share mine, visit:

<https://StraightForEquality.org/PersonalPronouns>.

Course Materials

Let's face it. How people get and share information and major communications channels are significantly disrupted in 2023. Some of these changes may be permanent. I have chosen course materials that mix that recognition with standard practices that can help build a solid foundation in nonprofit and public sector strategic communications.

Primary course media are:

- Landreth Grau, Stacy, Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations: Insights and Innovations, 2nd Edition, (Oxford University Press, 2021). *This book is available as an e-book through the UO Knight Library.*
- Leroux Miller, Kivi, Content Marketing for Nonprofits: a communications map for engaging your community, becoming a favorite cause, and raising more money, (Jossey-Bass, 2013). *Available as an ebook through the UO Knight Library*
- Wilson, L & Ogden, J., Strategic Communications: Planning for Public Relations and Marketing 7th Edition, (Kendall, 2019). *This book is available as a digital version for half the cost of print.*
- Additional readings, media, etc. will be supplied through Canvas or will be available as online resources through the Knight Library.

If affordability is an issue for you, I recommend applying for a [Textbook Subsidy](#) through UO's Basic Needs program.

Weekly Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Date	Topic	Readings Due	Assignment Due
1/10 & 1/12 (week 1)	Class Overview, Introduction to Strategic Marketing & Communications	Marketing for Nonprofits ch. 1 -2 (pp 1 – 38) Strat Com ch 1 (pp 18- 19)	Pitch & Press Release
1/17 and 1/19 (week 2)	Research, Persuasion, and Bias	Strat Com ch 2-4 (pp 23-85), ch 15 (pp. 255- 267) Readings on Canvas	Nonprofit Communications Mix
1/24 and 1/26 (week 3)	Goals & Objectives	Marketing for Nonprofits ch. 3 (pp 58-83) Strat Com ch 5 (pp 77 – 89)	Blog Discussion 1.
1/31 and 2/2 (week 4)	Brand, Innovation, and Storytelling	Marketing for Nonprofits ch 2 (pp 39-55) Marketing for Nonprofits ch 6 (pp 136-155) Strat Com ch 6 (pp 101- 122) Readings on Canvas	Creative Brief
2/7 and 2/9 (week 5)	Target Audiences and Personas	Marketing for Nonprofits ch 4 (pp 85-107) Readings on Canvas	Blog Discussion 2.
2/14 and 2/16 (week 6)	Content, Messages, Strategies & Tactics	Strat Com ch 8 (pp 139–168) Content Marketing Ch. 13 (pp 235 – 303)	Branding or Messaging Guide (choose one)
2/21 and 2/23 (week 7)	Crisis Communication	Readings on Canvas	Crisis Plan
2/28 and 3/2 (week 8)	Channels & Social Media	Strat Com ch 9 (pp 171–186) Readings on Canvas	Blog Discussion 3

3/7 and 3/9 (week 9)	Relationship Management	Content Marketing ch 6 (pp 117 – 137) Readings on Canvas	Draft Comms Plan (Optional)
3/14 and 3/16 (week 10)	Implementation and Evaluation	Strat Com ch 12 (pp 217-227) Marketing for Nonprofits ch 8 (pp 189-206)	Presentations
3/23 at 12:30pm			Final Strategic Comms Plan Due

Assignments & Course Grades

This course is participatory and writing-heavy. Assignments must be submitted in Canvas. No emailed copies will be accepted. Follow directions explicitly. You will have an assignment due every week.

Blog Posts & Discussion

Blog posts will be assigned in class and will require applying the readings and class learnings to critically assess the topic or case study. Blog posts (approx. 300-500 words) are due in Canvas by Friday at 11:59 p.m. (before Friday becomes Saturday), and students must comment on at least 2 other blogs by Sunday at 11:59 a.m. (before noon on Sunday).

Practical Assignments

Practical assignments are due by Sunday at 11:59 a.m. (before noon on Sunday). Typically, these assignments will not fall on the same weekend as a blog discussion.

Participation	Includes attendance and engagement in class	10%
Blogs and Discussion	Three at 10% each	30%
Practical Assignments	Six for Grad Students, 5 for Undergrads (5% each)	
	Pitch and Press Release (Everyone)	5%
	Nonprofit Communications Mix (Grad Only)	5%
	Creative Brief (UG – Groups; G – Individual)	5%
	Branding or Messaging Guide (choose one) (Groups, both UG and G)	5%

	Social Brief (UG – Groups; G – Individual)	5%
	Crisis Plan (UG – Groups; G – Individual)	5%
Final Project	Presentation (15%) Paper (20%) – Undergrad	35%
	Presentation (15%) Paper (15%) – Grad	30%
Total		100%

Grade Distribution

A	94-100%
A-	90-93.99%
B+	86-89.99%
B	84-85.99%
B-	80-83.99%
C+	76-79.99%
C	74-75.99%

Note on grading for Graduate (507) and Undergraduate (407)
 The quality of work for 507 students is expected to be at professional or emerging professional. This includes quality of writing, depth of exploration, and professionalism in presentation. Students registered for 407 will be expected to be perform at the quality of a senior in college. Although deadlines are firm, I have built flexibility into the course.

- Undergrads can earn extra credit (up to 50 points worth 2.5%) by completing the Nonprofit Communications Mix assignment or to drop your lowest assignment score.
- Graduate students can work with me to identify an extra credit assignment that fits your goals (up to 50 points worth 2.5%) or to drop your lowest assignment score.
- All students can re-submit one individual assignment or discussion post for regrading, excluding the final presentation and paper.

Attendance & Participation

Your overall grade in the course will reflect participation, attendance, and engagement. All members of the class (both students and instructor) can expect to:

- *Participate and Contribute:* All students are expected to participate by sharing ideas and contributing to the learning environment. This entails preparing, following instructions, and engaging respectfully and thoughtfully with others.
 - Participation is a range of activities to support learning, from speaking aloud in the full class and in small groups, to submitting questions prior to class, to proactively working with your groups.
- *Obtain, Read, and Retain the Readings:* Do this in advance for each class and come prepared to discuss their content and implications.
- [Report Absences Here](#): Just like you would have to alert your supervisor if you will miss work, please alert me. On Canvas, you'll find an ungraded weekly quiz to record your absences, ideally in advance of a missed class. This is a way to help you and me be accountable for your success in the class, even if life gets in the way.
 - If you expect to miss a class, please complete the arrange to get class notes from a classmate.
 - You are responsible for assignments, discussions, group work, readings, etc. The Absences Quiz will help identify an appropriate workplan to make that possible.
- *Late Assignments will receive partial credit.* This can be avoided in part by making a plan for a known/anticipated delay. Complete the "[Report Absences Here](#)" survey for the relevant week, or discuss with me during office hours or other advance success planning.

Incomplete Policy

[Effective Fall 2022 - General Process for Incompletes](#)

This policy applies to all undergraduate and graduate courses.

- Incompletes are initiated by the student.
- Students must contact the instructor and request Incomplete by 5pm on the last day of finals week (March 25).
- If the instructor agrees that the student meets the criteria, the instructor and the student complete a contract outlining how the Incomplete can be resolved, the deadline for resolving the incomplete, and the default grade should the student not complete the agreed upon work. The default grade is the grade the student would receive according to the syllabus grade guidelines with no credit for the missing work.

- This form is filed.
- The missing work indicated on the form must be completed by the earlier of:
 - grading deadline of the term the student applied to graduate, or
 - deadline stated on the Incomplete Request Form (can be extended at the discretion of the instructor), or
 - the day grades are due one academic year later.

Student Experience Surveys

The midway and end-of-term Student Experience Surveys will be conducted in class during week four, then week 10. These are important opportunities to provide feedback about your learning experiences. I value this feedback and am continually improving the course with students' responses in mind. The key parts of the survey are the open-ended questions where you share concrete, actionable feedback and about the teaching practices that stand out to you. Thank you for your thoughtful reflections!

University Policies

Welcome and Inclusion

You, your classmates, and your instructor belong in and contribute to this class and this discipline through the many racial identities, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, citizenship statuses, ability and other visible and non-visible differences we each represent. All students are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class, inclusive of guests and visitors.

Accessibility

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Religious Observances

The University of Oregon respects the right of all students to observe their religious holidays, and will make reasonable accommodations, upon request, for these observances. If you need to be absent from a class period this term because of a religious obligation or observance, please fill out the [Student Religious Accommodation Request fillable PDF form](#) and

send it to me within the first weeks of the course so we can make arrangements in advance.

Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support. This [UO Basic Needs Resource Guide webpage](#) includes resources for food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, finances, and legal support.

Discrimination, Harassment and Mandatory Reporting

I am an Assisting Employee under the University's Prohibited Discrimination and Retaliation Policy. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see [Employee Reporting Obligations](#) on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website. I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

Students experiencing sex or gender-based discrimination, harassment or violence should call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE [7244] or visit safe.uoregon.edu for help. Students experiencing all forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment may contact the Dean of Students Office at 541-346-3216 or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator/OICRC at 541-346-3123. Additional resources are available at [UO's How to Get Support webpage](#).

Academic Misconduct & Plagiarism

The University Student Conduct Code (available at Conduct.UOOregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor.

Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form

of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at <https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>.

Academic Disruption Due to Campus Emergency

In the event of a campus emergency that disrupts academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about changes in this course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also expected to continue coursework as outlined in this syllabus or other instructions on Canvas. In the event that the instructor of this course has to quarantine, this course may be taught online during that time.

Inclement Weather

It is generally expected that class will meet unless the University is officially closed for inclement weather. If it becomes necessary to cancel class while the University remains open, this will be announced on Canvas and by email.

Support

The following resources are available to you as a student.

- University Health Services or call (541) 346-2770
- University Counseling Center or call (541) 346-3277 or (541) 346-3227 (after hrs.)
- [Covid-19 Testing](#)
 - [Additional Covid-19 information](#)
- Academic Advising or call (541) 346-3211
- Dean of Students or call (541)-346-3216