

CMAT 445: Digital Public Relations

Fall 2017

Dr. Vinita Agarwal

Salisbury University

TEXTBOOK:

There is no required textbook. Selected readings, case study resources, and online lectures as necessary will be made available by the instructor and include:

Selected Readings (on My Classes):

- Atkin, C. K., & Rice, R. R. (2013). Advances in public communication campaigns. In E. Scharrer (Ed.). *The international encyclopedia of media studies: Media effects/media psychology* (Vol. 5, pp.526–551). London, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., Vercic, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining strategic communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 1*, 3-35.
- Patterson, S. J., & Radtke, J. M. (2009). *Strategic communications for nonprofit organizations: Seven steps to creating a successful plan*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Exam Resources (Online):

- Google AdWords Certification
(<https://support.google.com/partners/answer/3154326?hl=en>)
- Google Analytics (<https://analytics.google.com/analytics/academy/>)

Case Study Resources (Online):

- Harvard Business Review (<https://hbr.org/>)
- Content Marketing Institute (<http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/>)
- Clickz (<https://www.clickz.com/>)
- AdWeek (<http://www.adweek.com/digital/>)
- Moz (<https://moz.com/>)
- Fast Company (<https://www.fastcompany.com/>)
- Digitalist Magazine (<http://www.digitalistmag.com/>)
- Digital CRM (<http://www.destinationcrm.com/>)
- Information Age (<http://www.information-age.com/>)
- Institute for PR (<http://www.instituteforpr.org/>)
- PR News Online (<http://www.prnewsonline.com/>)
- PR Newswire (<http://www.prnewswire.com/>)

COURSE PURPOSE AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

CMAT 445-Digital Public Relations. Designed for the advanced student, the course will teach principles of digital communications management and their application to develop strategy, conduct analytic audience research, design messages and drive behavior, and select from a multitude of digital platforms in achieving their goals and objectives as a digital communications

consultant. Students who successfully complete the course will demonstrate a fundamental understanding of leveraging digital communication principles and data-driven audience insight to achieve selected digital engagement goals. CMAT 445 is an enhanced elective course in the Fulton curriculum, requiring intensive study in any one area of speech or communication studies, ideally in the student's track. All enhanced courses are offered as a 4-credit class to engage students more fully in the courses they take and provide students with a deeper and more active encounter with the subject at hand. CMAT 445 is a web-enhanced course. Scheduled in-class meetings are supplemented as required with online and digitally mediated delivery of course content and assignments, as well as required and/or optional digitally engaged activities following a flipped classroom format. These require basic proficiency with word processing software, digital content management platforms (Wordpress), and an ability and willingness to navigate online modalities (e.g., Twitter, social networks) via desktop and mobile media (e.g., YouTube, Wordpress).

The course provides students with advanced knowledge of digital communication principles, persuasion theory and constructs, and advanced analytic inquiry to guide specific strategic planning and digital engagement initiatives connecting theory to practice. Students gain in-depth experience in designing, planning, and implementing an integrated digital strategy utilizing a content management platform with multi-channel messaging tailored toward achieving specific course goals and objectives. The course presumes familiarity with basic digital engagement protocol on major platforms including Wordpress, Twitter, and YouTube. Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- a. critically evaluate digital communication principles of organizations to identify best practices
- b. Articulate meaningful research questions to guide digital engagement goals
- c. Proficiently utilize digital platforms to drive integrated strategy
- d. Manage and coordinate projects in a fast paced digital environment
- e. Develop and implement online strategic communications plans
- f. Utilize data analytics, stakeholder management, messaging, and multichannel tactics
- g. Design and implement digital micro-campaigns
- h. Monitor tracking after campaign launch to ensure campaign implementation
- i. Build strong professional relationships based on ethical principles with key audiences
- j. Cultivate critical thinking, presentation, and organizational skills

Participation

Our course learning is premised on engagement with digital PR principles on digital platforms and in-person in class meetings. Through focused participation processes structured specifically for each class, student participation through the semester is designed to build up expertise and high-level competence with content creation, strategy, message design, channel selection, audience engagement, and integration of evaluation metrics in demonstrating effectiveness and success in your learning outcomes. Successful students will approach each class meeting with a goal to participate in engagement with a community of colleagues/peers sharing a common learning goal. Course learning outcomes are achieved through daily participation and progress in the course via collective feedback and critique.

This course satisfies the following National Communication Association's Learning Outcomes in Communication (LOC):

- *LOC #4: Create Messages Appropriate to the Audience, Purpose, and Context*
- *LOC #6: Demonstrate the Ability to Accomplish Communicative Goals (Self-Efficacy)*
- *LOC #7: Apply Ethical Communication Principles and Practices*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Through each of the following specially designed applications, you will apply the digital communication strategies and principles you will learn through the semester in a range of projects building upon and cultivating a range of digital communication competencies. These are specially designed to provide the student an in-depth and expert-level familiarity with digital public relations through engagement demonstrating successful grasp of digital PR principles. Detailed instructions will be provided at appropriate times in the semester.

1. ***Micro-Campaign (200 points):*** Higher education research identifies several issues that need to be addressed on U.S. college campuses. These include stress and depression, alcohol abuse, drunk driving, bullying, sexual assault, access to academic advisors, hazing in student clubs or organizations, diversity, job placement, among others. Starting week 8, this month-long micro-campaign utilizes (at least) any 2 digital networks appropriate to your target audience and addresses an issue of your choice, tailored toward a very focused target audience segment to increase awareness, utilization of a campus resource, behavior change, or a positive outcome related to the issue. The micro-campaign assessment will emphasize the criteria of audience engagement, formative, process, and outcome evaluation, strategy, message content and channels utilized. Assignment grade assessment will weigh metrics to demonstrate effectiveness/success in engaging audience and achieving campaign goals and objectives. The micro-campaign is worth 20% of the course grade.

2. ***Issue Analysis (100 points):*** The issue analysis will survey the history, scope, current and past programs, target audiences served, and stakeholders, policymakers, and influencers around a social issue of your choice. Submit it as an in-depth website article about a 800–1000 words in length under a tab created for that issue. Format it as an e-Newsletter pdf and Tweet it to the course Twitter hashtag. Students are encouraged to build their final project micro-campaign around the issue they have researched for this assignment. The issue analysis is worth 15% of the course grade.

3. ***Digital Class Participation:*** About four times this semester, we will engage on our Twitter Hashtag meet. Twitter Hashtag MeetUp's will be organized around the topic for the class per the syllabus. In general, students will be provided online lecture/resources/class readings to review before class starts. The Twitter Hashtag class will be organized around a series of thought prompts based on the class online lecture and readings. Students will be guided to post their responses, share their thoughts, build on ideas in the lecture and readings, and provide resources of their own on our Twitter Hashtag. Students will also engage with the ideas of at least 3 other students' Twitter posts for the meet and engage thoughtfully with others' posts on their Tweets. The digital course participation is worth 20% of the course grade.

4. Digital Case Study (75 points): Each student will complete 7 case studies through the semester. The case study will examine one current organization’s digitally-focused strategy for its successes and failures. Utilizing a depth and breadth of online resources like trade magazines (see online resources below), the case study presents the culture, values, goals, strategy, tactics of an organization with a comprehensive analysis of its target audience, messaging, channels, and product launches/issue foci. The case study is presented as a 350-word blog on your Wordpress site home page under a separate tab “Case Studies,” and as a 7–10 minute YouTube video on your YouTube channel set up for the course and integrated with your WordPress website. Your critique should reference concepts from the public relations/persuasion theories in offering recommendations or analyzing failures. These will be presented in class per days marked in the syllabus for class discussion and critique. Toward the end of the semester, your comprehensive YouTube channel presentation style, messaging and content strategy, and engagement will be graded in a class presentation through instructor-and peer-review and feedback. The digital case study is worth 20% of the course grade.

5. Exams (100 points): There are 3 in-class exams during the semester utilizing the online resources of Google Analytics and AdWords Fundamentals. Student completion of the in-class exams will prepare them to complete the Google Analytics and AdWords certifications on their own. Completion of Google Analytics certification and AdWords certification is encouraged and will be accepted in lieu of these exams. The exams are worth 20% of the course grade.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Schedule May be Adjusted Based on Semester Progress (Check In-Class or My Classes Announcements)		
Meeting	Readings	Assignments
	<u>WEEK # 1</u>	
(T) Aug 29	Introductions, Syllabus What is digital strategy	<i>Setting up course Twitter chat & hashtag</i>
(TR) Aug 31	<u>DIGITAL PR</u> What are micro-campaigns Digital campaign principles	Website design: Wordpress
	<u>WEEK # 2</u>	
(T) Sept. 5	<u>DIGITAL PERSUASION</u> Relationship-building approach to communication Overview of key persuasion theories	<i>Google Analytics for Beginners (start), Set up Wordpress Website</i>
(TR) Sept. 7	Strategic Communications Planning	
	<u>WEEK # 3</u>	
(T) Sept. 12	<u>PLANNING IS KING</u> Situation Analysis	Blogging, YouTube channel set up
(TR) Sept. 14	Goals and primary focus Objectives and strategy	
	<u>WEEK # 4</u>	
	<u>KNOW THY AUDIENCE</u>	

(T) Sept. 19	Audience Segmentation: Identifying focal audience segments Stakeholder Analysis: Identifying Influencers and Policy Makers	
(TR) Sept. 21	Strategic Planning Draft meetings with instructor	Issue Analysis Due
	<u>WEEK # 5</u>	
(T) Sept. 26	<u>EVALUATE</u> Exam 1: Google Analytics for Beginners	<i>Advanced Google Academy (start)</i> Case Study 1
(TR) Sept 28	Formative Evaluation Content Marketing	
	<u>WEEK # 6</u>	
(T) Oct. 3	<u>A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME</u> Message Design: Awareness, Instruction, Persuasive Message Dissemination: Volume, Repetition, Scheduling, Pulsing	Case Study 2
(TR) Oct. 5	Message Elements, Sources, Channels	Twitter Hashtag Meet
	<u>WEEK # 7</u>	
(T) Oct. 10	<u>TO GIVE A LITTLE</u> Process Evaluation, Outcome Evaluation	Case Study 3
(TR) Oct. 12	Corporate Social Responsibility	Twitter Hashtag meet
	<u>WEEK # 8</u>	
(T) Oct. 17	<u>REPUTATIONS MATTER</u> Micro Campaigns strategic plan due	Start Campaign Implementation Case Study 4
(TR) Oct. 19	Reputation Management Authenticity	Twitter Hashtag meet
	<u>WEEK # 9</u>	
(T) Oct. 24	<u>FROM THE WATCHTOWER</u> Formative evaluation	
(TR) Oct 26	Exam 2: Advanced Google Academy	
	<u>WEEK # 10</u>	
(T) Oct 31	<u>MESSAGE CONTENT, SOURCE CREDIBILITY</u> <i>Infographs</i>	<i>Start AdWords</i> Case Study 5
(TR) Nov. 2	Digital Crisis Management (Tentative topic)	<i>Guest speaker (Industry-tentative)</i>
	<u>WEEK # 11</u>	
(T) Nov. 7	<u>LET'S TALK</u> Individual Review	Case Study 6

(TR) Nov. 9	YouTube channel: Content, Messaging, and Strategic Communication	In-class peer-critique presentation
	<u>WEEK # 12</u>	
(T) Nov. 14	<u>RELATIONSHIPS</u> Campaign Report Write-Up meetings with instructor	Conclude Campaign Implementation Case Study 3
(TR) Nov. 16	Relationship management	Twitter Hashtag Meet
	<u>WEEK # 13</u>	
(T) Nov. 21	<u>CAN WE COUNT THE LOVE</u> Exam 3: AdWords Fundamentals (Modules 1–3)	
(TR) Nov. 23	No class—Thanksgiving (Nov. 22—Nov. 24)	Happy Thanksgiving!
	<u>WEEK # 14</u>	
(T) Nov. 28	<u>COMMUNITY OF PEERS</u> Individual meetings with instructor: Finalize Micro-Campaign reports	Presentation, discussion, peer- and instructor critique
(TR) Nov. 30	Micro-Campaigns	
	<u>WEEK # 15</u>	
(T) Dec. 5	<u>COMMUNITY OF PEERS</u> Micro-Campaigns	Presentation, discussion, peer- and instructor critique
(TR) Dec. 7	Micro-Campaigns	
<u>Finals Week</u> Dec 13–19	Final Reports	