Spring 2018 Seminar

COMM 6910-030 Strategic Communication

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10am-4pm R

Seminar Description and Overview:

Contemporary organizations must strategically communicate to achieve goals under internal and external constraints. Whether commercial, governmental, political, or non-profit in nature, organizations must communicate purposefully and effectively to survive and flourish given increasingly complex information environments. As a field of academic study, strategic communication is intrinsically interdisciplinary, drawing on such diverse domains of inquiry as mass communication, psychology, advertising, public relations, and marketing. The goal of this course is to introduce students to the fascinating and growing body of strategic communication theory and research situated in both local and global contexts. In addition to gaining a thorough and comprehensive grasp of strategic communication components, processes, and outcomes, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate this knowledge by either (a) developing a strategic communication plan for a real-world client or (b) carrying out a theory-driven research project on a strategic communication topic of their choice. In sum, the overall aim of this course, is to leverage knowledge of communication and cognition in the effective design and implementation of strategic communication programs and campaigns.

Key Learning Objectives

1.) To understand social and psychological mechanisms and processes that enable effective strategic communication both within and without an organization.
2.) To learn to apply the lessons drawn from this understanding to research, design, and execution of strategic communication campaigns, and especially, message strategy and tactics.
3.) To enable the generation of novel research ideas and hypotheses that push the burgeoning field of strategic communication forward.
4.) To provide the opportunity for students who do not plan to pursue an academic career, the opportunity to apply these theoretical insights to a strategic communication plan that can finds its home in a professional portfolio.
Overview:

Each class session will begin with Dr. Russell giving an introductory lecture over the assigned readings. This lecture should last roughly 30 minutes. The goal of this lecture is to provide a general framework and direction for the class discussion. Once completed, the class will then gather into a circle to discuss the “Part 1” readings assigned for that week. After a robust discussion of the readings, the class will then participate in an activity relevant to strategic communication. The focus of these activities is to attempt to apply the concepts learned in the reading to a specific strategic communication technique. The second half of the class will mirror the first half with discussion over the “Part 2” readings followed by a subsequent class activity.

Readings:

All reading material will be available in PDF format in separate folders in iCollege.

Assignments:

Group Discussion. (20%). Along with careful reading of the assigned selections each week, you will have the opportunity to engage in thoughtful discussion of the major concepts, theories and perspectives set forth in the readings. In order to increase the likelihood of robust class discussion, at the beginning of each class period you will be required to submit (or upload) five quality questions or statements relevant to the assigned readings. You will then bring a hard copy of your questions to class for the purpose of engaging in discussion. These questions must be typed and in 12 point, Times New Roman font. There are two levels of evaluation with respect to the group discussion; namely the quality of your questions and the quality of your engagement in serious, thought-provoking discussion. As this is a graduate-level seminar, you are expected to come to class motivated to contribute meaningfully to the discussion of the readings.

Discussion Leader. (20%). The purpose of the discussion leader is to assist everyone in the class with understanding the major theories, concepts, ideas, and positions set forth in the assigned readings for the session. Though I will have my own observations and clarifications at the beginning and throughout, it will be the responsibility of the discussion leader to ultimately promote the learning of the material for the week. Dr. Russell will go over the rubric for effective leading of class discussion.

In-Class Activities (25%). Each class period, we will participate in two different activities that are designed to put into practice the strategic communication concepts we have learned about during lecture and in the assigned readings. The activities will often involve innovatively applying cutting edge strategic communication theory to different kinds of strategic communication tactics drawn a variety of different areas including interpersonal communication, organizational media, news media, and advertising and promotion media.

Final Project. (35%). For your final course project, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of strategic communication by either (a) developing a strategic communication plan for a real-world client or (b) carrying out a theory-driven research project on a strategic communication topic of their choice. The research project can employ either
quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods methodologies. The strategic plan will have the following components: analysis of publics, situation analysis, development of big idea and creative concept, hypothetical blog post, hypothetical web writing, infographic, and media kit. More specific information will be presented in class. A proposal for your final project is due on February 2nd. All course projects are due by April 26th at 6pm on iCollege.

Policies:

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Cheating on exams and plagiarism (e.g., copying verbatim, or almost verbatim, from the sources, or presenting someone else’s work as your own without proper acknowledgement) are not tolerated. The GSU “Policy on Academic Dishonesty” (2010) is available on the GSU website and is copied below. Academic dishonesty may result in receiving a zero on the assignment, failure in the course, or more severe action such as suspension or expulsion from the university.

409 Policy on Academic Honesty

Introduction

As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The university assumes as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters that students be honest and that they submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for fairness require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable or unethical conduct related to their academic work.

The university's policy on academic honesty is published in the Faculty Affairs Handbook and the On Campus: The Undergraduate Co-Curricular Affairs Handbook and is available to all members of the university community. The policy represents a core value of the university and all members of the university community are responsible for abiding by its tenets. Lack of knowledge of this policy is not an acceptable defense to any charge of academic dishonesty. All members of the academic community -- students, faculty, and staff -- are expected to report violations of these standards of academic conduct to the appropriate authorities. The procedures for such reporting are on file in the offices of the deans of each college, the office of the dean of students, and the office of the provost.

In an effort to foster an environment of academic integrity and to prevent academic dishonesty, students are expected to discuss with faculty the expectations regarding course assignments and standards of conduct. Students are encouraged to discuss freely with faculty, academic advisors, and other members of the university community any questions pertaining to the provisions of this policy. In addition, students are encouraged to avail themselves of programs in establishing personal standards and ethics offered through the university's Counseling Center.
Definitions and Examples

The examples and definitions given below are intended to clarify the standards by which academic honesty and academically honorable conduct are to be judged. The list is merely illustrative of the kinds of infractions that may occur, and it is not intended to be exhaustive. Moreover, the definitions and examples suggest conditions under which unacceptable behavior of the indicated types normally occurs; however, there may be unusual cases that fall outside these conditions which also will be judged unacceptable by the academic community.

A. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Any work, in whole or in part, taken from the Internet or other computer-based resource without properly referencing the source (for example, the URL) is considered plagiarism. A complete reference is required in order that all parties may locate and view the original source. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

B. Cheating on Examinations: Cheating on examinations involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, computer based resources, texts, or "crib sheets" during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member), or sharing information with another student during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one's own examination and collaboration before or after an examination if such collaboration is specifically forbidden by the faculty member.

C. Unauthorized Collaboration: Submission for academic credit of a work product, or a part thereof, represented as its being one's own effort, which has been developed in substantial collaboration with another person or source, or computer-based resource, is a violation of academic honesty. It is also a violation of academic honesty knowingly to provide such assistance. Collaborative work specifically authorized by a faculty member is allowed.

D. Falsification: It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise, assignment or proceeding (e.g., false or misleading citation of sources, the falsification of the results of experiments or of computer data, false or misleading information in an academic context in order to gain an unfair advantage).
E. Multiple Submissions: It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the faculty member(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however the student is responsible for indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.

For academic or research-based assignments:

It is a form of plagiarism if you fail to directly cite author information (immediately within the body of the paper) for info you got from a source or if you copy a phrase or sentence verbatim without putting it in quotations and including author/year citation info.

An example of a commonly used and appropriate citational system is the American Psychological Association (or, APA) guidelines. An individual professor may require or recommend some other citation system. Here are some common ways APA deals with citation issues:

- If you are paraphrasing an idea you read about from any source, cite the specific author and year of his/her publication in parenthesis at the end of the sentence where you first start using the source…ex: (Garcia & Jackson, 2008).
- If you copy some words verbatim, then put those words/phrases/sentences in quotations. For quoted material, you must add to the in-text citation the page number (for a book) or paragraph number (for web citation), so readers can easily verify the quotation… ex: (Garcia & Jackson, 2008, p. 209) or (Poynter Institute, n.d., para 3).
- Have a reference section at the end of your paper with the full text/book citation for ALL sources used in paper (with the alphabetized author’s name matching the author you cited in the body of the paper). If a source is listed in the reference section, it should be cited somewhere in the body of the paper to pinpoint its exact contribution.

ACCOMODATIONS: Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the GSU Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon the issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed and approved accommodation plan. Students are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all courses in which accommodations are sought.

Percent of Total Grade
97% and above A+
93-96% A
90-92% A-
87-89% B+
83-86% B
80-82% B-
77-79% C+
70-76% C
60-69% D
Below 60% F
Schedule of Readings

Week 1 (01/11/2018)

Introduction of Class and Professor

Week 2 (01/18/2018)

Part 1: Foundations of Strategic Communication

- Aristotle *Rhetoric* Book 1 (Parts 1-2)
- Burke *Rhetoric of Motives* (Part 1: Range of Rhetoric)
- Bernays *Propaganda* (Chapters 1-4)

Part 2: Language as Strategic


Week 3 (01/25/2018)

Part 1: Associative Networks and Strategic Communication

Part 2: Associative Networks and Strategic Communication


Week 4 (02/01/2018)

Part 1: Priming and Strategic Communication


Part 2: Priming and Strategic Communication


Optional

Week 5 (02/08/2018)

Part 1: Fluency and Strategic Communication


Part 2: Fluency and Strategic Communication


Week 6 (02/15/2018)

Part 1: Framing and Strategic Communication


Optional


Part 2: Framing and Strategic Communication


Optional


Week 7 (02/22/2018)

Part 1: Metaphor and Strategic Communication


Optional

**Part 2: Metaphor and Strategic Communication**


**Optional**


**Week 8 (03/01/2018)**

**Part 1: Positioning and Strategic Communication**


Part 2: Positioning and Strategic Communication


**Week 9 (03/08/2018)**

**Part 1: Narrative and Strategic Communication**


**Part 2: Narrative and Strategic Communication**


Week 10 (03/15/2018) SPRING BREAK!!
Week 11 (03/22/2018)

Part 1: Strategic Message Design


Optional


Part 2: Strategic Message Design


Optional

Week 12 (03/29/2018)

Part 1: Threatening Stimuli and Strategic Communication


Optional


Part 2: Self-Relevant Stimuli and Strategic Communication


Week 13 (04/05/2018)

Part 1: Relationships, Being-in-Unity, and Strategic Communication


Optional


**Part 2: Relationships, Being-in-Unity, and Strategic Communication**


Causal linkages between relationship cultivation strategies and relationship quality outcomes. *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 3*(4), 242-263. [https://doi.org/10.1080/15531180903218630](https://doi.org/10.1080/15531180903218630)


**Week 14 (04/12/2018)**

**Part 1: Relationships, Acting-in-Unity, and Strategic Communication**


**Part 2: Relationships, Acting-in-Unity, and Strategic Communication**


Optional


**Week 15 (04/19/2018)**

**Part 1: Strategic Communication and Credibility in Digital Environments**


**Part 2: Strategic Communication and Credibility in Digital Environments**


**Final Project Due on April 26th at 6pm on iCollege.**

**This syllabus will probably change and transform as the course develops. I reserve the right to modify it at any time. I will make the most current copy available for download on the iCollege website in case this occurs.**