BGS 373 STRATEGIC CORPORATE COMMUNICATION
Instructor: Jeffery R. Patterson, Ph.D./ jefferypatterson@utexas.edu
Date: T TH 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm Classroom UTC 1.118
Office Hours: By Appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW
The capacity of modern corporations to develop and communicate integrated messaging strategies is essential in a world of non-stop information and split-second decisionmaking. Corporations can no longer constrain themselves to market factors, but have become essential social and political actors on the world stage. Executives must possess sophisticated understanding and skill to manage “nonmarket” arenas to inform, motivate, and persuade various clients, markets, and constituencies within the global public sphere and social/political networks.

Strategic communication positions firms to a competitive advantage in business/industrial sectors, in capital markets, and legislative and governmental regulatory environments. As such, corporate communication has many different uses and roles, whether it is a tool of organizational management (to inform, engage, listen, and lead individuals within an organization); to attract clients; to encourage investors, or to influence legislative or regulatory environments. The old saying “Knowledge is Power” is only half right; Knowledge is useless if it is not deployed and communicated clearly and effectively.

This class will survey different arenas and practices of corporate communication—not only in the world of business, but also the effect on all of global society—to motivate, persuade and inform its various constituencies (i.e., investors, employees, governments, consumers, and clients). The course encompasses basic precepts of public affairs, investor relations, community engagement, and governmental relations to integrate the insights of practicing corporate communication professionals with the concepts and academic approaches of communication theory. Ultimately, students will have a broad understanding of the different roles and functions involved in strategic corporate communications within contemporary global society.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES
Media Writing Project (25 percent of class grade)
Students will participate in a media writing exercise that will provide students the practical experience of visualizing, framing, and writing a public communications product (i.e., press release, speech, marketing materials, etc.). Projects will be no longer than 3-4 pages, 1.5-spaced, 11-point Times New Roman. The assignment is due Friday, February 13.

Strategic Planning Project (25 percent of class grade)
Students will undertake a critical analysis of a unique strategic issue or objective discussed in class. It will require that each student research the goals and/or needs of a particular corporation or industry of his/her choice and then propose an integrated communications strategy to achieve those goals/needs. Students are cautioned in not setting too broad a topic (i.e., reducing trade barriers with China) and focus on something that allows for a discretely detailed strategy. Students will be required to submit a prospectus on April 10 that provides a concise overview of the topic, describes the corporation’s/industry’s unique circumstances, and the main frameworks to address the issues involved. The Instructor will provide feedback on the prospectus and help conceptualize the project. Two days (April 28 and April 30) have been set aside for consultation on the projects. The final project is due by 11:50 pm, Friday, May 8. The project will be discussed in more detail in class.
Mid-Term Exam (25 percent of grade)
The midterm exam will consist of a series of multiple choice, short answer questions, and a short essay covering the lectures up to that date.

Final Exam (25 percent of grade)
The final exam will consist of a series of multiple choice, short answer questions, and a short essay covering the lectures up to that date.

COURSE TEXTS/READINGS
This course will not rely upon a pre-determined text, but will use a combination of academic articles, book chapters, and professional materials that are accessible to all students. The materials will be distributed through Canvas and via email throughout the classes. If students are having trouble accessing the materials, please notify me.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers.

DOCUMENTED DISABILITY STATEMENT
Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty is not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.
TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE
This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

January 20  Introduction and Overview of Course

January 22  Strategic Communications Imperative
Readings:

January 27  Corporate Communications/Structures and History
Readings:


January 29:  Organizational Imperatives and Obstacles
Readings:


February 3:  Theories of Strategic Communication
Readings:

February 5:  Corporate Identity, Image, and Branding

February 10:  Messages and Messaging Strategies /Persuasion, Influence, and Argument
We will discuss the process of persuasive writing, in anticipation of your writing a press release, speech, or marketing piece (3-4 pages) that will simulate a new product roll-out, a change in corporate strategy, or new programmatic initiative, etc. **You will want to write on a topic on which you are moderately well versed, since you will be judged on how well you understand/communicate the issues involved.**

Readings:

February 12: Tactics and Campaigns
Readings:

February 17: Audiences
Readings:

February 19: Media Relations
Readings:

February 24: Media Relations/ Crisis Management
Readings:

Links and Resources:
Crise Communication Plan: A PR Blue Print
http://www3.niu.edu/newsplace/crisis.html
www.instituteforpr.org/topics/crisis-management-and-communications/

********** ASSIGNMENT ONE DUE 11:59 p.m. February 13**********

February 26: Media Relations/Guest Speaker

March 3: Corporate Social Responsibility
Readings:

Corporate Social Responsibility, Encyclopedia for Business (2nd ed.) 2014
March 5: Corporate Community Relations
Readings:

March 10: Mid-Term Review
This class will be dedicated to a review of the first half of the semester lectures, readings, and discussions in preparation of the mid-term exam.

March 12: * * * MID-TERM EXAM * * *

March 17 & 19: * * * SPRING BREAK * * *

March 24: Digital Media and Networking
Readings:

Links and Resources:
Jeff Boothby, Francesca, “Social Media Best Practice Guide”
http://usefulsocialmedia.com/assets/pdf/USMBriefing.pdf

“10 Must Haves for Your Social Media Policy,”
http://mashable.com/2009/06/02/social-media-policy-musts/

March 26: Guest Speaker/Social Media

March 31: Stakeholder Relations
Readings:

April 2: Human Resources/Employee Relations Communication
Readings:
Berger, Bruce K, Employee/Organizational Communications, Institute of Public Relations, 2008
http://www.instituteforpr.org/topics/employee-organizational-communications/
April 7: Wall Street/Investor Relations
Readings:

April 9: Guest Speaker/ Investor Relations & Shareholder Management

******* STRATEGIC PROPOSAL PROJECT PROSPECTUS DUE *******

A one-two paragraph description of the topic that your final project will be about, the format you are taking (media plan, stakeholder outreach, congressional lobbying plan, etc.) and what outcomes you hope to achieve. The prospectus should be emailed to me no later than 11:59 p.m. on April 10.

April 14: Public Sphere/Issues Management
Readings:

April 16: Governmental Relations/Political Activity
Readings:
Links and Resources:
www.fec.gov/pdf/colagui.pdf [PDF]

OpenSecrets.org is a project of the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics in tracking money in U.S. politics and its effect on elections and public policy www.opensecrets.org/about/board.php

April 21: Guest Speaker/ Governmental Relations and Lobbying
April 23: Ethical Issues
Readings:


April 28: ********INDIVIDUAL PROJECT CONSULTATIONS********
We will schedule time during class to have 5-8 minute individual discussions about the Student Project Final in anticipation of your presentations and final project.

April 30: ********INDIVIDUAL PROJECT CONSULTATIONS********
We will schedule time during class to have 5-8 minute individual discussions about the Student Project Final in anticipation of your presentations and final project.

May 5: Global Communications
Readings:


May 7: Final Exam Review

******** FINAL PROJECT DUE MAY 8 *******
A one-two paragraph description of the topic that your final project will be about, the format you are taking (media plan, stakeholder outreach, congressional lobbying plan, etc.) and what outcomes you hope to achieve. The prospectus should be emailed to me no later than 11:59 p.m. on May 8, 2015.

May 12: * * * FINAL EXAM * * *