MASTERS OF ARTS IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

DESCRIPTION OF COURSES

CAS 835:
BRAND & IMAGE COMMUNICATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course you will examine the power and value of branding and using consumer based brand equity to differentiate a product, service or company from its competitors. Related issues include the way brands are created, managed and grown, and extensions under the brand umbrella.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the importance, purpose, and nature of branding.
- Gain an in-depth theoretical and practical understanding of Consumer Based Brand Equity and the factors that influence CBBE.
- Differentiate between products, brands and logos.
- Understand the importance of brands and branding communication efforts.
- Apply the elements of consumer based brand equity to known brands.
- Understand of the relationship of multiple brands held by a single organization, as well as the problems and opportunities associated with co-branding.
- Develop a personal vision of how one can contribute to brand development.

CAS 829:
EVALUATION TECHNIQUES FOR WORKING PROFESSIONALS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to develop your ability to conduct and evaluate social scientific research. As a communication professional, you may need to conduct a research project yourself, or may want to commission research from others (e.g., a consulting firm). To ensure that the research addresses the questions you are interested in and provides the necessary information to answer the questions you have asked, you must understand a number of issues essential to the conduct of sound scientific research and understand how the results are calculated. You must also be able to interpret and evaluate studies once they have been completed. This course focuses on developing your skills and knowledge in these areas. Specifically, the course will examine the philosophy of social science research, fundamental elements of research design, and statistical methods for analyzing data.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate social scientific research in the field of communication.
- Understand issues essential to conducting sound scientific research.
- Ensure that the research conducted effectively addresses the original research questions.
- Gain tools to interpret and evaluate completed research studies.

CAS 827:
DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGIES

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This advanced course in digital media strategies is designed to provide an in-depth overview of new and social media marketing strategies. More importantly, the course applies advertising, consumer psychology, social psychology, and marketing to ensure the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies. From understanding user personas, to assessing the impacts of social media tactics, to measuring overall strategy effectiveness, this course will provide students with the theoretical and practical understanding of how persuasion and engagement work in the new media age. In addition to understanding these phenomena theoretically, students will learn from recent case studies (both successful and unsuccessful), and engage in hands-on practice to develop a social media marketing campaign.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand social media marketing strategies and their latest trends through discussion, design, and application of knowledge.
- Develop an understanding of social media audiences using interdisciplinary perspectives.
- Plan and implement effective social media campaigns using research-based tools.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of social media for achieving marketing goals by using evidence-based tools.
- Understand the ethical issues related to social media marketing.

CAS 831:
## DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION CURATION AND PROMOTION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers the creation of content for a number of digital media including e-mail, social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), and interactive media (e.g., websites). An integrated digital communication strategy requires the consideration of design and communication theories, principles, and best practices for written and visual communication. The use of Adobe products (such as Photoshop) for the achievement of these goals will be included. Additionally, the course explores management and curation issues of such digital content.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Articulate an overarching vision for the creative design, management, and implementation of a variety of online and social media content.
- Apply communication and design principles to content creation.
- Write and edit copy for various digital media, based on an understanding of how new media and digital content differ from traditional media and print material.
- Use, create, or acquire appropriate copyright-free images or other digital assets.
- Manage diverse content using content management systems and aggregation tools.
- Strategically identify when and how to use digital content and measure their impact.

CAS 837:
CATALYST THINKING IN THE C-SUITE
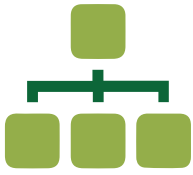
COURSE DESCRIPTION

There is a need for increased knowledge, skills, and abilities related to creative thinking, problem solving, and decision making in the global work environment. To conceptualize, communicate, and affect change as an executive requires continuous learning of new concepts as well as a reinforcement of fundamental communication approaches. This course will provide organizational leaders with cutting edge research so they can continue to meet the needs of their organizations in a fast-paced global environment. A number of constructs like communication, collaboration, community, conflict, change, and other ideas are central to creating organizational change and are crucial skills to C-Suite executives. In this class, students will learn how to be agents of change by mastering and practicing these key principles.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop leadership and communication skills necessary for success in the C-Suite.
- Improve ability to quickly critically assess and address problematic workplace scenarios for productive outcomes.
- Identify successful models of leadership to better champion key organizational priorities and necessary organizational changes.
- Better communicate and instantiate organizational core values to motivate members to reflect those values to both internal and external shareholders.
- Identify, analyze, and solve critical organizational problems by using course material as the basis for organizational solutions.

CAS 840:
AUDIENCE ANALYTICS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Successful strategic marketing requires audience analysis, which can be achieved by using media analytics. This course will cover basic concepts of digital analytics, and employ actual live data to generate consumer insights on major aspects of a website or mobile app, such as user profiles, traffic sources, navigation patterns, conversion ratios, and path to purchase. It will also cover how to interpret analytics and put that information into a strategic plan. This class will complement two other courses in Media Analytics to complete a GRC2 in Media Analytics.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Introduce basic concepts, processes, and uses of media analytics, including the use of data analytics for consumer/reader/user insights.
- Learn about the rise and characteristics of big data, particularly data acquisition about audiences, media consumption, and responses to advertising and news.
- Study and experiment with some of the popular analytics platforms and tools for advertising and news.
- Explore various sources of commercial and news data.
- Overview user policy and ethics issues of media analytics.

CAS 841:
SOCIAL MEDIA STORYTELLING

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The digital revolution is having a profound impact on the way stories are researched, reported, edited, and distributed. As people turn to social media as a place to share ideas and connect to others, it is imperative that communicators know how to use online networking platforms effectively to find, create, and promote their stories. Students will learn major industry trends, so they can master the best principles for social media storytelling. This course focuses on teaching communicators the qualitative skills regarding social media storytelling, including finding, making sense, verifying, assessing, and creating stories for online networking platforms.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Become familiar with the current scholarship on social media, news, and information.
- Identify the challenges brought by each unique social media platform.
- Recognize the ways professional communicators are able to inform and engage the public via social media.
- Master using social media as an awareness system to alert you about trending stories.
- Learn how to cover breaking news via crowdsourcing.
- Reflect on current conversations around issues of verification, misinformation, privacy, and inequality.
- Learn how to verify information from social media, and defuse and debunk misinformation.
- Learn how to control and strategically plan your social media presence.

CAS 839:
MEDIA ANALYTICS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce basic concepts, processes and uses of media analytics. It will explore the rise and characteristics of big data; data acquisition about audiences, media consumption and response to advertising and news; overview and experimentation with some of the popular analytics platforms and tools for advertising and news; data analytics for consumer/reader/user insights; and overview user privacy and ethics issues of media analytics. With the basic overview and understanding of these issues, students should be ready to acquire advanced knowledge and skills in more specialized areas.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Provide students a basic understanding of what media analytics involves and how they are useful to professionals in journalism, advertising, and public relations.
- Review, critique, and understand what scholars and practitioners have said and written about media analytics.
- Sensitize students to ethical and privacy issues involved in the application of media analytics.

CAS 842:
ETHICAL CONCERNS & CONTROVERSIES FOR EMERGENT THINKERS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The main objective of this course is to make informed ethics decisions in your professional life by using a combination of your head, heart, and the ethical philosophies covered in this course. You will learn to identify ethical issues across media communication industries, including those in journalism, public relations, advertising, and convergent media. Lessons in ethical decision making will be drawn from real-life case studies, including major events in U.S. history. Self-examination of one's own ethics and the role of ethics in one's profession is encouraged, and you will learn tools to help articulate and write about ethical issues in communication.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the history, principles, role and consequences of professional communication in a democratic society.
- Develop a taxonomy of approaches to ethical decision-making that apply to professional communication.
- Examine the similarities and differences between ethics codes and standards across industries, such as news media, public relations, advertising and other businesses.
- Choose appropriate approaches, principles and frameworks for thinking through complex ethical issues.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of different ethical approaches.
- Recognize that multiple conclusions are possible when different principles are applied to the same problem.
- Develop an understanding of the role of culture and government in the creation and application of ethical principles, including differing assumptions across countries.

CAS 828:
PERSUASION TECHNIQUES FOR WORKING PROFESSIONALS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers the application of persuasion and compliance principles, from Aristotle through today's state-of-the-art science.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the primary processes that affect how attitudes and behavior are changed, and how to construct messages that induce these processes.
- Identify and analyze examples of persuasive communication in corporate and cultural contexts. Students will be able to identify and analyze examples of persuasive communication in corporate and cultural contexts.
- Learn why audiences resist persuasion techniques and gain techniques to inoculate against resistance.
- Understand the interplay between audience attitudes and message design.

CAS 832:
STRATEGIC MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The effectiveness of corporate messages can be enhanced by careful, research-informed development. This course provides a model for designing effective marketing communication, along with detailed ideas about topics such as conducting effective stakeholder analysis, setting outcome parameters, designing messages, and engaging your audience. The course takes an integrative approach in message design, which brings together critical thinking from marketing, psychology, communication and creative writing.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Create a demographic and psychographic profile of the target audience, along with specific features of the audience that will be important for message design.
- Understand the complex relationships among various stakeholders.
- Incorporate audience data and communication theory to design messages with greater effect.
- Compose compelling messages that leverage strategies from persuasion, narrative, and communication research.
- Create messages that are appropriate for a variety of media and an understanding of how to use these different messages to enhance and complement each other.
- Develop a taxonomy of persuasive appeal strategies and a knowledge of when to deploy each.
- Analyze and identify trends in their market communication environment and implement their conclusions in their communication strategy.

CAS 833:
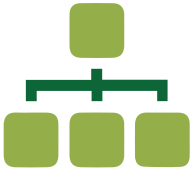## CRISIS COMMUNICATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides skills and strategies to communicate crises experienced by organizations and institutions through optimal media formats. Topics covered in the course include crises caused by natural disasters, accidents, intentionally provoked incidents, human errors, and unforeseen conditions. This course will provide the tools to manage effectively the use and the relationship with the media, which plays a crucial role in crisis situations as the vehicle to pass information to affected communities and people. Students will learn using real-life case studies. These will include crises currently in the news, as well as past national and international incidents like the Orlando and San Bernardino attacks, the Zika virus, and the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the different macro and micro conditions of a crisis and recognize potential impacts of crises on organizations.
- Recognize the models of potential impacts on organizations.
- Define initial and continuing communication plans.
- Develop messages for a variety of media and an understanding of how to use these different messages to enhance and complement each other.
- Understand how journalists and reporters think and work, and how to establish positive relationships with the news media to design messages with greater effect.
- Ability to write compelling messages that leverage strategies from persuasion, narrative, and communication research.
- Analyze and identify trends in their market communication environment and implement findings in communication strategies.

CAS 838:
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces theories, contexts, and processes related to organizational communication issues, including employment interviewing, supervisor-employee communication, role and work group coordination, decision making, and unit climate. This course will also include an overview of research on organizational communication through time, and discuss coordination within and between organizational communication structures.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Provide an overview of theory and research in the field of organizational communication.
- Introduce students to research issues in the field.
- Equip students with the means by which to begin evaluating current theory and research.

CAS 844:
CAPSTONE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is the Capstone in the MA Strategic Communication degree program. It provides practical experience in the planning and management of strategic communication projects involving the use of new and digital media. Using a service-learning format, it requires the application of managerial, communication, and strategic skills to a realistic business project in a virtual team setting.

This course introduces the project management lifecycle for new media in the domain of Strategic Communication. Beginning with project initiation and assembling a team, students have an opportunity to apply project management principles to all aspects of planning and managing a project, including scheduling and budgeting. Major project management topics include managing a team, including setting goals for professionals in strategic communication industries; managing assets; documentation; setting and adhering to deadlines and client expectations; and balancing continuous assessment and improvement against the need to manage the scope of work.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate the importance of project management as it relates to Digital Media.
- Differentiate between planning, executing, monitoring and controlling project work.
- Describe the relevance of and integration of project management knowledge areas and processes.
- Describe organizational and functional structures and their influence on deliverables.
- Identify stakeholders and effectively manage client expectations.
- Apply project management principles and techniques to a real-world project.
- Use strategies from persuasion, narrative, and communication research.
- Craft messages that are appropriate for a variety of media and an understanding of how to use these different messages to enhance and complement each other.
- Develop a taxonomy of persuasive appeal strategies and a knowledge of when to deploy each.
- Analyze and identify trends in their market communication environment and implement their conclusions in their communication strategy.