Date: January 3-21 2011
To: students
From: Sarah Durham (sarah@bigducknyc.com)
Topic: Brandraising: Nonprofit Communications for Social Change course details

About the class

Course description
Nonprofits must communicate effectively with clients, policymakers, and other key audiences in order to ‘move the needle’ and create social change, yet most nonprofit staff have limited experience with marketing or communications. Students in this class will learn how to use research to inform communications strategies, the role and impact of branding, and how to leverage newer online tools and technologies to create social change. We’ll work with NYC-based nonprofits as case studies to explore real-world situations.

How the class will work
Over three intense weeks, we’ll immerse ourselves in a combination of reading, case studies, and practical assignments geared to provide an overview of how communications can help a nonprofit advance its mission and create social change using real situations.

In the first week and a half we’ll focus on theory and reading, while getting to know several nonprofits that students will use as case studies. The second half of the class will be spent putting what we’ve learned into practice, working on groups and individually to study and share communications strategies and tactics that will help nonprofits achieve their missions.

Performance evaluation:
• 45% participation in class discussions (demonstrating familiarity with reading assignments and reflection on assignments)
• 20% individual assignment (campaign case study)
• 20% group assignment (nonprofit communications planning)
• 15% quiz
Week One: January 4, 5, 6

Goals
• Introduce students to principles of nonprofit communications
• Discuss research methodology and options
• Get to know nonprofits we’ll work with and starting research

Readings
• “Brandraising” by Sarah Durham (completed by 1/10- quiz will be based on the book)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome, course outline</td>
<td>Guest nonprofit: Mary</td>
<td>Guest Nonprofit: Bill Newland</td>
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<td>review, group assignment</td>
<td>Crowley from Hastings Center</td>
<td>from Jacob Riis Settlement House (10am)</td>
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<td>discussion</td>
<td>(10am)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonprofits: how they’re different, how they work,</td>
<td>Guest nonprofit: Will Nolan</td>
<td>Assign groups, discuss group</td>
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<td>why it’s hard to achieve the mission</td>
<td>from Parent Project Muscular</td>
<td>assignment expectations</td>
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<td>Dystrophy (11:30am)</td>
<td>(10am)</td>
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<td>Introduction to brandraising</td>
<td>Discussion about audiences:</td>
<td>Organization vs campaign</td>
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<td>who are they? What do we</td>
<td>communications discussion</td>
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<td>want them to do?</td>
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<td>Guest: Ann Duffet, public</td>
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<td>opinion researcher (12-1pm)</td>
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### Week Two: January 10, 11, 12, 13

#### Goals
- Transition from theory to practice with individual and group assignments
- Understand organizational versus campaign communications

#### Readings
- "Networked Nonprofit" by Beth Kanter and Allison Fine (completed by Thursday's class: participation in discussion required)

#### Assignments
- Individual campaign presentations, work on group presentation

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<th>Monday</th>
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<td>Identity level communications discussion: visual identities and messaging for organizations and campaigns (style guides)</td>
<td>Campaigns that created social change: examples and discussion</td>
<td>Experiential communications discussion: creating change online and off, how to plan for it organizationally and with campaigns</td>
<td>What it means to be a 'networked nonprofit'- discussion</td>
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<td>Guests: Sonny Mui and Dan Gunderman (all class)</td>
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<td>Assign individual assignment</td>
<td>Quiz: brandraising terms and concepts</td>
<td>Meetings re: group assignment</td>
<td>Meetings re: group assignment</td>
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**Week Three: January 19, 20, 21**

**Goals**
- Share great campaigns, present group work demonstrating what you’ve learned

**Readings**
- None assigned

**Assignments**
- Group work presentations and discussions

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<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual campaigns presentations</td>
<td>Hastings Center Group Presentation with Mary Crowley (10:00)</td>
<td>Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy Group presentation with Will Nolan (10:30)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jacob Riis Group Presentation with Bill Newland (11:30)</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Wrap up</td>
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Discussion
**Group assignment**

**Goal**

Working in small assigned teams, students will:

- Determine if the organization’s greatest opportunity is to strengthen its fundraising, programs or advocacy communications (pick one), and define the specific audience(s) that must be targeted to do so
- Research the organization’s peer and competitive landscape, show websites, and identify 3-5 opportunities to position them uniquely
- Draft positioning and personality for their assigned nonprofit
- Suggest ways to strengthen the Organizational, Identity and Experiential levels of the nonprofit’s communications
- Make recommendations around types of campaigns, channels or tools that would be most effective for the organization to run once its own communications are strengthened
- Prioritize recommendations so the nonprofit has an action plan it might implement if it adopts your suggestions

**Nonprofits**

Participating nonprofits:

The Hastings Center ([www.thehastingscenter.org](http://www.thehastingscenter.org)), a bioethics ‘think tank’, represented by Mary Crowley, Director of Public Affairs and Communications.

Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy ([www.parentprojectmd.org](http://www.parentprojectmd.org)) a disease-specific nonprofit focused on leading the fight to end Duchenne muscular dystrophy, represented by Will Nolan, Director of Communications.

Jacob Riis Neighborhood Settlement House ([www.riissettlement.org](http://www.riissettlement.org)), a community center serving families in the Bronx, represented by Bill Newlin, Executive Director.

**Expectations**

Each group will prepare and present a PowerPoint that includes the elements outlined in the goals for this exercise. Students are encouraged to analyze each organization using the brandraising model and tools and to present their recommendations using this format. Each student should prepare and present at least one part and offer input on the other student’s work during the development process.

Since each organization’s ability to execute recommendations may vary, students are encouraged to outline options, discussing pros and cons, and not to get too tied to specific tactical execution ideas. For example, a recommendation such as ‘improve overall messaging by formulating a new tagline that distinguishes the org from others in its space’ could be followed.
up with suggestions for new taglines if the group has some. Simply suggesting one tagline (without first explaining why a new tagline is needed or what the new tagline should accomplish) would be a more tactical, execution-based approach (discouraged).

Students are expected to work collaboratively and present collaboratively. Please explain the role of each member of your team when you present and be prepared to answer questions about how you worked together.

**Individual assignment**

Working individually, students will identify nonprofit campaigns that create social change. Students are expected to bring in the campaign that inspires them (website screen grabs or links, video, printed pieces - however it can be shared most effectively) and explain:

- Who the target audience is
- What the call to action is
- What the likely result is
- What the actual results were

Students will each have roughly 10 minutes to present.