Padm-GP 4137

Strategic Communications for Nonprofit and Public Managers

Meeting Times

6:45-8:25pm on Oct 22, 29, Nov 5, 12, 19, Dec 3* | 25 West 4th Street, Room: C-20

* Dec 3 session will meet as a double session from 6:45-10:15pm with a break in between

Course Instructor

Farra Trompeter

Contact Information

- Best way to reach me is via email: farra@nyu.edu or work: 718-705-8092
- Emails and calls will be returned within one business day
- Office hours: 5:30-6:30pm before class sessions or by appointment

Course Description

Generating public support through effective communications is as essential to the success of nonprofit and public organizations as it is to for-profit organizations. And since many nonprofits have limited staff and financial resources available for communications activities, it is even more important that these resources be deployed as strategically as possible. Concepts and skills developed in this course will help students approach communications in a way that builds commitment to their organization’s mission, strategic initiatives and fundraising activities. Students will gain familiarity with a variety of communications techniques and vehicles, and complete a basic communications plan for an organization they are familiar with.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Understand the principles of brandraising and effective communications.
2. Define positioning and personality for a nonprofit organization and apply these tools to make decisions around an organization’s brand and communications channels.
3. Explain the elements of a strategic framework and use it make better decisions.
4. Produce a strategic communications plan to guide how a nonprofit communicates its mission and activities to donors, funders, volunteers, program participants, advocates, and other members of its community.

Course Requirements

- There are no prerequisites for this course.
- For your projects, you will need to select a nonprofit organization to serve as your case study. This can be an organization you are already connected to or one you’ve always admired. While you can do the assignments without talking to an actual organization, connecting with a staff person there will make your projects better. If you need help selecting an organization, let me know by our second session.
- We will read selections from the following two books. Other readings outside of these books may be assigned.
Participation and Attendance

Class attendance and preparation are critical. All of us bring different perceptions and ideas to this dialogue about strategic communications. Please prepare for each class by immersing yourself in the assignments, and be ready to provide an open and comfortable atmosphere in which to share comments and participate.

As your instructor, I will happily share my knowledge and experience, but I see myself as a facilitator. Our sessions will be interactive and I expect that you’ll be ready to share your insights from the readings and engage one another in discussion. This course is not for the student who wants to receive information and then simply present it back. This course is for the student who wants to engage with the material and each other. Class participation is therefore vital and will count toward your overall grade. If speaking in public is difficult for you, please let me know early on.

Since we are only meeting for seven sessions, you are required to attend every class and arrive on time. If you are not able to attend a class due to an emergency, you must notify me beforehand. If there is an assignment due on a date you are absent from class, it is still due at the beginning of class unless you are granted an extension. Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency, out of respect for those who abide by deadlines despite hectic schedules. Late submissions without prior permission will be penalized by ½ a letter grade per day (eg B+ to B).

Projects

You will have several writing projects to submit during the course. In crafting these writing projects, drawing from your own experience is fine, however you are expected to synthesize core ideas from all readings, and cite relevant examples. I will grade your papers for clarity and sharpness of the ideas articulated.

Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance and participation:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo:</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worksheets:</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications Recommendations (final paper):</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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I will also grade you in accordance to Wagner’s grading guidelines, available for your review at https://wagner.nyu.edu/files/admissions/GradingGuidelines.pdf.

Grading Rubric

I will evaluate your work on the quality of your insights and your ability to demonstrate that you have processed the readings and reflected on our class discussions. I expect your projects to be organized and thoughtful. Your projects should be well written and reflect professional quality in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and clarity. I will use the following criteria when grading your projects, particularly the memo and plan:

- **WRITING (25%)**: The writing is fluid; sentences/paragraphs are well structured; proper grammar; shows command of graduate level vocabulary and understanding of concepts; polished, not drafty.
- **PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION (10%)**: Correct spelling/no typos; length limits honored (if given); timeliness and other instructions followed.
- **ANALYTICAL THINKING (25%)**: Uses material from class to develop and support ideas; demonstrates effort to integrate materials; paper has a logical flow that presents and develops a clear, unified position/argument; argument is consistent (no contradictions or gaps) and based on critical thinking.
• RECOMMENDATIONS (30%): Reflects realities of nonprofit organization’s resources, mission, and community; applies insights to a practical discussion of strategic communications.

• REFERENCES (10%): Uses and cites references appropriately. You can use ANY reference system of your choice, as long as you are consistent.

I will use this rubric when calculating your participation grade:

23-25%: “A” Level Participation

• Attends all classes. If late, sends email to professor ahead of time.
• Frequently contributes to class conversation (roughly once or twice per class). Note: offering input does not mean you will always be called upon.
• Comments are clear, succinct, and relevant to the current conversation.
• Is prepared for class, as evidenced by: providing substantive responses; applying ideas from the readings to the discussion; challenging or extending ideas in the readings; and integrating or contrasting ideas from current readings with previous readings.

20-22%: “B” Level Participation

• Misses one class. May not send email to professor ahead of time.
• Rarely contributes to class conversation.
• Comments are sometimes unclear, long-winded, or not relevant to discussion.
• Is less prepared for class (see above).

17-19: “C” Level Participation

• Misses two classes. Doesn’t email professor ahead of time.
• Arrives late more than once.
• Rarely contributes to class conversation.
• Is unprepared for class (see above).

Incompletes and Academic Integrity

This course will abide by the Wagner School’s general policy guidelines on incomplete grades, academic honesty, and plagiarism. It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with these policies. All students are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity.

The Wagner School has a strict policy regarding incompletes. The grade of “Incomplete Pass” will only be available in extreme circumstances such as serious medical emergencies. Students may withdraw from the course up until the date set by the Registrar. Students who withdraw will receive a grade of W and will have to pay for the course again when they retake it. http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/incompletes

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating, forgery, plagiarism and collusion in dishonest acts undermine the Wagner School’s educational mission and your own personal and intellectual growth. You are expected to bear individual responsibility for your work and to uphold the ideal of academic integrity. Any student who compromises or devalues the academic process will be reported to the administration and be subject to disciplinary action. http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies and https://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/academic-code.php

Students with disabilities

Any students requiring accommodations should contact me to make proper arrangements. Please be prepared to share your documentation from the NYU disabilities office regarding appropriate accommodations.
Course Website

The course website can be found on NYU’s Classes system, accessible via the Academics tab on NYU Home (http://newclasses.nyu.edu/). Throughout the semester, I will post documents such as lecture slides and supplemental resources. In addition, I will occasionally send emails about course details and logistics to your NYU email account. Please check both the course website and your NYU email account on a regular basis.

Course Schedule

Session 1: October 22  
*Introduction | Defining Brandraising*

Read/watch before class:
- “Marketing and Communications in Nonprofit Organizations” by David Williamson (2009)  
- “Let's simplify legal jargon!” by Alan Siegel (2010)  
  http://www.ted.com/talks/alan_siegel_let_s_simplify_legal_jargon?language=en#
- *Brandraising*, chapters 1-3

Assignment: Submit student bio worksheet (document will be available on NYU Classes)

Session 2: October 29  
*The brand’s big idea and personality – what are we communicating?*

Read/listen before class:
- *Brandraising*, chapters 4-5
  http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_role_of_brand_in_the_nonprofit_sector
  http://csi.gsb.stanford.edu/creating-strong-nonprofit-brands

Assignment: Submit case study organization overview worksheet (document will be available on NYU Classes)

Session 3: November 5  
*The experience of the brand and rolling it out*

Read/watch before class:
- *Brandraising*, chapter 7
  http://www.bigducknyc.com/rebrandeffect
  http://www.bigducknyc.com/webinar-october-30-campaigns-experience-of-your-brand

Assignment: Submit 3-5 page memo assessing your case study organization’s brand and recommending how it might refine it

Session 4: November 12  
*Moving beyond branding and into strategy*

Read/watch before class:
- *Strategic Communications*, chapters 2-4

Guest speaker: Elizabeth Ricca, Director of Strategy, Big Duck, will lead a discussion on setting strategy

Assignment: Submit worksheet 6 “Communications Audit” and worksheet 8 “Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats” using your case study organization
Session 5: November 19  
*Targeting and engaging audiences*

Read before class:
- *Strategic Communications*, chapters 5-6

Assignment: Submit worksheet 12 “Audience Profile" for one audience using your case study organization

Session 6: December 3  
*Framing the message, selecting communications vehicles, and putting the plan together*

Read before class:
- *Strategic Communications*, chapters 7-8, 10
- "Nonprofit Communications: The 4 W's and H of Your Communications Plan" by ConceptLink (2013) [http://www.conceptlink.com/nonprofit-communications-4-ws-h/](http://www.conceptlink.com/nonprofit-communications-4-ws-h/)

Assignment: None

Session 7: December 3 (double session)  
*Managing communications and evaluating the course*

Read before class:
- *Strategic Communications*, appendix 1: Planet 3000 Strategic Communications Worksheets

Guest speaker: Joe Moran, Communications and Technology Director, True Colors Fund

Assignment: Submit 8-10 page final paper: strategic framework and communications recommendations for case study organization – **Due 9am Sunday December 7**