

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

PADM-GP 4137 Strategic Communications

6:45-8:25pm on Thursdays, 3/24/16-5/05/16

Bldg:19W4 Room:102

Sarah Durham (adjunct professor)

- Best way to reach me is via email: sarah@bigducknyc.com
- Call office phone: 718-705-8086
- Emails and calls will be returned within two business days
- Office hours: 6:00pm – 6:45 on class days or by appointment
- Please call me Sarah!

Course Description

Nonprofits must communicate effectively with clients, policymakers, and other key audiences in order to ‘move the needle’ and create social change. Students in this class will learn how to apply a strategic framework to all types of communications, understand what a nonprofit brand is, how successful outreach and fundraising campaigns work, and explore how to leverage limited resources and manage communications to help a cause or nonprofit organization achieve its mission.

Readings will be selected from “Brandraising” (Wiley 2010) by Sarah Durham and various resources available online.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course students will

1. Understand how communications can help an organization advance its mission
2. Understand how brand can act as the driver to an organization’s overall communications strategy and campaigns
3. Define an organization, movement, or campaign’s communication strategy
4. Understand best practices for managing communications

Participation and Attendance

Class attendance and preparation are critical. We all bring different and valuable 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 for the student who wants to engage with the material and each other. Class participation is important 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, 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. Late submissions without prior permission will be penalized by ½ a letter grade per day (eg B+ to B).

Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Class attendance and participation:	45%
Paper 1: brandraising	20%
Paper/deck 2: recruiting, advocacy, awareness	20%
Quiz	15%

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 our class discussions. I expect your projects to be well-organized and thoughtful. Your projects should reflect professional-quality in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and clarity. I will use the following criteria when grading your projects:

- **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 (30%):** 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 (5%):** 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:

35-45%: "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

20-35%: "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).

10-20%: "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 Schedule

Session 1: March 24 *Introduction | Overview of strategic communications*

Before class please read:

- “Marketing and Communications in Nonprofit Organizations” by David Williamson (2009)
<http://www.bernuthconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/Georgetown-CPNL-nonprofit-marketing-whitepaper.pdf>

Session 2: March 31 *What’s the big idea? Setting strategy*

Before class please read:

- *Brandraising*, chapters 3-4 (pages 31-70)
- “Positioning: Why you should define your nonprofit’s big idea“ by Dan Gunderman (2014)
<http://www.bigducknyc.com/what-is-your-organizations-big-idea>
- Examples of vision statements: <https://topnonprofits.com/examples/vision-statements/>
- “The Eight-Word Mission Statement” by Kevin Starr (2012)
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/the_eight_word_mission_statement

Homework due at start of Session 2 class:

- Find an example of a vision, mission, and values statement from a nonprofit or movement. If you can’t find all three for one organization bring, at a minimum, a mission statement.

Session 3: April 7 *Creating and expressing a “brand” / Brandraising quiz*

Before class please read:

- *Brandraising*, chapter 5 and 6 (pages 71-148)
- “The Role of Brand in the Nonprofit Sector” by Nathalie Kylander & Christopher Stone (2012)
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_role_of_brand_in_the_nonprofit_sector
- “Is it time to rebrand?” by Big Duck (2015) <http://www.bigducknyc.com/consider-timing-when-branding>

Session 4: April 14 *Peer-to-peer, crowdfunding, and other fundraising campaign communications*

Before class please read and watch:

- Read Beth Kanter, “Ice bucket challenge: can other nonprofits reproduce it?” <http://www.bethkanter.org/icebucket-2/>

Homework due at start of Session 4 class:

- Submit 2-4 page paper assessing a nonprofit’s brand and recommending how it might be refined by applying *Brandraising* principles. (“Brandraising paper”)

Session 5: April 21 *Recruiting and raising awareness; advocacy and movement communications*

Before class please read/watch:

- History of the pink ribbon: <http://thinkbeforeyoupink.org/before-you-buy/history-of-the-pink-ribbon/>
- Watch promo for Jamie Oliver’s Food Revolution:
<http://www.schooltube.com/video/c41269277ba76a720ddf/Jamie-Olivers-Food-Revolution-Episode-1-Part-1>
- Watch Sarah Silverman and the Great Schlep: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgHHX9R4Qtk>
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Session 6: April 28 *Getting creative*

Before class please read and watch:

- Watch “Helvetica” (documentary by Gary Hustwit, 2007)
- Watch “The secret structure of Great Talks” (TED talk, Duarte)
https://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_duarte_the_secret_structure_of_great_talks
- “5 tips for thinking creatively about nonprofit identity” by Rebecca Hume (2012)
http://www.bigducknyc.com/dont_let_your_logo_trip_you_up

Homework due at start of Session 6 class:

- Map out a recruitment, fundraising, or awareness campaign or a movement using the strategic framework (paper or deck ok)
- Come to class with an icon, hashtag, slogan, or other identifier of a campaign or movement
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Session 7: May 5* *Internal communications and best practices*

Read before class:

- “How to Empower Staff to be the Voice for the Organization through Social Media” (webinar/video) by Farra Trompeter (2014), <https://vimeo.com/108941692> (empowerstaff)
- “Get on the same wavelength: Building buy-in for rebranding” by Sarah Durham (2014)
<http://www.bigducknyc.com/build-buyin-for-rebrand-with-evidence-and-assessment-tools>
- “Nice to meet you, audience.” by Elizabeth Ricca (2012) http://www.bigducknyc.com/nice_to_meet_you_audience
- DARCI framework: (PDF) <https://lists.okfn.org/pipermail/okfn-br/attachments/20150526/897aa8c5/attachment-0007.pdf>

* *This class may be led by Farra Trompeter or, if students’ schedules permit, moved to another date/time.*