

MC 4002: Public Relations & Social Media Strategies

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Course Description: This course is designed to help students understand the intersections of strategic communication and social media including the use of additional digital online platforms (e.g., website, podcasts). During the semester, students will learn key principles and techniques for social media content creation and promotion. Students will also be asked to brainstorm, conceptualize, and develop campaigns dedicated to certain demographics and among various digital outlets. Through various projects and assignments, students will demonstrate an understanding of social media via public relations techniques and apply their research, planning, and writing skills across varied platforms/outlets.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand the concepts and theories that apply to the effective use of social media in mass communication in general, and PR specifically.
2. Learn how various traditional and social media strategies and tools can contribute to organizational goals.
3. Evaluate what social media content will resonate with an audience.
4. Examine ways to measure and report success via social media.
5. Develop user-centered social media content and promotion.
6. Demonstrate mastery of oral and visual presentation skills.
7. Create a strategic communication plan that recommends the selection of social media tactics and tools for a company or organization to use in achieving its objectives.
8. Understand the legal implications of online publishing and the ethical decisions organizations must make when engaging with diverse audiences using social media.

Required Materials:

Sterenberg, M. Write Like a PR Pro. The Ohio State University Press. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International License. Download for free:
<https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/writelikeapro/>

Additional reading material will be available via Moodle. You are responsible for checking Moodle the Monday of each week for resources.

Access to Moodle and Email - Moodle is an extension of the class syllabus. Check Moodle and your LSU email daily for class updates and class information. I will email students and publish course readings, assignment materials, and class changes on Moodle.



Campus Resources

Your success in this class (and in others) is my priority. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to ask. Additionally, our campus offers many services to support you in your academic efforts, including, but not limited to the following:

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities that require some accommodation on the part of the instructor should discuss this with the instructor as soon as possible. The student should also contact the Office of Disabilities Services to obtain the necessary documentation to present to the instructor in the first week of class.

Academic Support: The success and wellness of students is a priority for me and LSU. Resources and services are available to support your cognitive, personal, professional, and academic development. These services include the Center for Academic Success and Student Advocacy and Accountability. To learn more, please visit: <https://www.lsu.edu/saa/>

LSU Code of Student Conduct and Other Requirements

Academic integrity

This course follows the LSU Code of Student Conduct. Knowing the code is your responsibility. All students are expected to act with civility and personal integrity; respect other students' dignity, rights and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through their own efforts. An environment of academic integrity is requisite to respect for self and others and a civil community.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records and any act designed to give an unfair advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructors, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act.

As students studying mass communication, you should understand and avoid plagiarism, which is defined as the **unacknowledged inclusion of someone else's words, structure, ideas or data**. When a student submits work as their own that includes the words, structure, ideas or data of others, the source of this information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate and specific references, and, if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks as well.

Failure to identify any source (including interviews, surveys, etc.), published in any medium (including on the Internet) or unpublished, from which words, structure, ideas or data have been taken, constitutes plagiarism.

One tool available to assist you in correct citations is the "References" function in Microsoft Word. This program automatically formats the information you input according to the citation method you select for the document. The version of Microsoft Word with the "References" function is available in most University computer labs. A demonstration of how to use this tool is available online at www.lsu.edu/saa.

Any student with a question is strongly encouraged to discuss it with the professor. Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the office of Student Advocacy and Accountability. For undergraduate students, a first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU.

LSU Diversity Statement

Diversity is fundamental to LSU's mission and the University is committed to creating and maintaining a living and learning environment that embraces individual difference. Cultural inclusion is of highest priority. LSU recognizes that achieving national prominence depends on the human spirit, participation, and dedicated work of the entire University community. Flagship: 2020 (www.lsu.edu/flagshipagenda) will be realized by bringing together diverse ideas, perspectives, skills, and talents of the nation's preeminent scholars, brightest students, and leading higher education professionals.

Through its Commitment to Community, LSU strives to create an inclusive, respectful, intellectually challenging climate that embraces individual difference in race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age, spirituality, socio-economic status, disability, family status, experiences, opinions, and ideas. LSU proactively cultivates and sustains a campus environment that values open dialogue, cooperation, shared responsibility, mutual respect, and cultural competence the driving forces that enrich and enhance cutting edge research, first-rate teaching, and engaging community outreach activities.

Manship School Diversity Statement

The pledge of the Manship School of Mass Communication is to establish an intellectually-diverse environment and an educational experience designed to cope with and improve an interconnected, modern world. Through its students, faculty, curriculum and culture, the school will create, maintain and support a supportive climate for learning and working among faculty, students and staff who are diverse with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age, spirituality, socio-economic status, disability, family status, experiences, opinions, and ideas.

Professor's Academic Freedom Policy

Some of the material in this class may be perceived as controversial or offensive to some students. While students are encouraged to respond to the material and to freely offer their opinions, if any student becomes uncomfortable with any of the topics or finds any of the material questionable, that student is urged to contact the professor about an alternative assignment. PLEASE NOTE, the purpose of learning is to be stretched and to have your worldview enhanced, I welcome the challenge and I hope you do too!

COVID-19 Statement

We remain under pandemic conditions and expect to be in this state for the entire semester. In order to consistently provide the highest quality LSU education, all students should follow current LSU guidelines. These include the following:

1. If you have any signs of illness, do not come to class.
2. In order to protect all campus community members, the University requires everyone to wear facemasks/cloths on campus. Failure to do so is a violation of the code of student conduct.
3. Wash hands with soap and water or clean with sanitizer frequently, and refrain from touching your face.
4. If you have to cough or sneeze unexpectedly, please be mindful of others nearby and cough or sneeze into your elbow or shield yourself the best you can.
5. If you have been exposed to others who have tested positive for COVID-19, self-quarantine consistent with current CDC guidelines.

MC 4002 Course Policies

Email & Communication Policy: The best way to reach me is via email and during student hours. I will check e-mail every day during weekdays and make every effort to respond to communication in a prompt manner. Students can expect to get a response to an email within 24 hours of sending it, often much sooner. If you do not hear from me within 24 hours, send a polite reminder. Students should not expect immediate responses on weekends or after 7 p.m., although I made reply during those time frames. Email subject lines should include the Class Title (PR & Social Media). In case of emergency needing immediate response, add “[emergency]” to subject line.

Online Etiquette Guide

It is important to recognize that the digital space is an extension of the classroom and certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with both your peers and your instructors. These guidelines for online behavior and interaction are known as netiquette.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

When communicating online, you should always:

- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in email or any other form of communication
- Always use your professors’ proper title: Dr. or Prof., or if in doubt use Mr. or Ms.
- Unless specifically invited, do not refer to your instructor by first name
- Use clear and concise language
- All college level communication should have correct spelling and grammar (this includes discussion boards)
- Avoid slang terms such as “wassup?” and texting abbreviations such as “u” instead of “you”
- Use standard fonts such as Ariel, Calibri or Times new Roman and use a size 10 or 12 pt. font
- Avoid using the caps lock feature AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETTED AS YELLING.
- Avoid the use of exclamation points!!!! AS IT IS CONSIDERED DEMANDING AND RUDE
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is sometimes lost in an email or discussion post and your message might be taken seriously or sound offensive.
- Be careful with personal information (both yours and that of another)
- Do not send or request confidential information via e-mail

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

When you send an email to your instructor, teaching assistant, or classmates, you should:

- Use a descriptive subject line
- Be brief, but include necessary information
- Avoid attachments unless you are sure your recipients can open them
- Avoid HTML in favor of plain text
- Sign your message with your name and return e-mail address
- Think before you send the email to more than one person—does everyone really need to see your message?
- Be sure you REALLY want everyone to receive your response when choosing to “reply all”
- Be sure the message author intended for the information to be shared before choosing to “forward” the message

Email Etiquette in 4002 – include a subject in the subject line of your email, address me appropriately – “Hi Dr. Stamps,” reference your question in a manner that speaks to our relationship, and end the communication with an appropriate closing, “Best, [first and last name].”

In this class we will use correct gender pronouns, nicknames, and pronunciations for every student. To ensure we all follow this, please provide this information and do not hesitate to correct anyone and everyone so we all address each other in ways that match our identities.

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is expected. Students are expected to participate in every class meeting and engage in all discussions/activities, if you leave class early– it is an absence. We will have in-class activities that are (a) intended to engage and assess comprehension of course materials and (b) fulfill the attendance obligation of the course.

Coming to Class Prepared: In addition to showing up, please come to class prepared. This means that you bring the necessary materials, **LAPTOPS ARE A MUST**, and that you complete any assigned readings or homework **before** class. In-class assignments are due during class, no exceptions.

The goal of our class discussions is to bridge the gap between abstract concepts and practical experience – and to ultimately, develop and strengthen essential skills that will be useful in additional academic/professional contexts. With that said, please check the course schedule regularly; and be prepared to make the most out of each class period.

Absence Policy: MC 4002 will operate as a "typical" in-person course. This means that there will not be a live Zoom presentation, recorded lecture, or asynchronous option, if you miss class you will need to retrieve lecture notes from a peer.

Class Cancellation: If class is cancelled for any reason (e.g., inclement weather, professor illness) you will be notified via email and/or Moodle. Make sure to get into the habit of checking your LSU email and Moodle accounts before coming to class.

Questions? If you have a question, please be resourceful do any and all of the following – **1. Check the syllabus; 2. Check Moodle; 3. Contact a classmate (if applicable/appropriate); 4. Contact me.**

Grading: All assignments will be graded in accordance with departmental expectations. You have five days to dispute or discuss grading discrepancies – following a 24-hour period of receiving a graded assignment. Individual grades for each assignment/activity will be posted in Moodle. I will **NOT** discuss grades after the five day period, I will not barter for points, and do not ask to “make-up” work at the end of the semester.

Grades & Moodle: Moodle should only be a reference for feedback (if applicable) and for individual grades for each assignment/activity. Moodle will **NOT** offer your current percentage or letter grade for the course at any point during the semester. If you would like to calculate your current standing in the class you will need to add your total number of points earned and divide by the total number of points possible (see grade calculation for points). I will post mid-term grades and of course, final grades, in the LSU system. Otherwise, following these steps are the best way to determine your current class standing regarding course percentage and letter grade. Please do not email me asking your letter grade or percentage.

Withdrawal: Students are responsible for officially withdrawing from courses that they do not intend to complete. If you simply stop showing up to class, you will be assigned a grade that reflects your assignments/participation (or lack thereof) in the class.

Audio or video recording is prohibited unless permission of the instructor is obtained.

Classroom Expectations

Outlined below is a list of responsibilities for all of us – to promote a friendly, safe, and productive learning environment.

1. **The platinum rule:** treat others as **they** would like to be treated. Also, please do not speak when someone else is speaking; give them your undivided attention and respect. If someone else is talking, sharing their thoughts, answer a question, etc. SHUT UP. Period.
2. Texting in class, scrolling through IG/FB/Snapchat/other things I haven't heard of yet, or any other disruptive behavior during class will: 1. Prevent you from being an active participant, 2. Probably distract other students, and 3. Most certainly will distract me. Please be courteous and considerate while in class.
3. If you take notes with a tablet or laptop, you may do so, under the discretion that you are using technology solely for this purpose.
4. Keep yourself accountable! I will provide you with all of the information and resources necessary to succeed in this class. However, your grade and your level of success are determined by your individual effort and accountability.
5. It is our responsibility, as a class, to maintain a safe, productive and friendly classroom space. All communication must maintain an appropriate balance between the responsibility to think critically about the ideas of others and the need to be respectful of the ideas of others. With this said, I value your feelings, BUT they may not be facts. Sharing how you feel about a subject, incident, etc. is fine, BUT arguing your point-of-view based on your feelings is problematic and counter to our environment. Come prepared to be challenged and to challenge others...with facts. **In our class, there is a zero-tolerance policy of, but not limited to: racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, or otherwise offensive language.** The diversity of our class members (age, gender identity, sexual orientation, culture, religion, background, etc.) is reflective of society – and is reflective of the real-world. Please be respectful.

MC 4002 Course Assignments

The minimum course requirements are described below. ****Please read all assignments carefully and thoroughly; I recommend using assignment directions as “check-lists” to ensure that you receive maximum credit. For consistency purposes, all graded documents submitted should adhere to the following format:** Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double-spaced, in black ink. EVERYTHING YOU TURN IN IS TYPED AND HAS YOUR NAME ON IT.

Please note – points will be deducted if you do NOT include your name on your assignment.

Course Assessments (825 points total):

Resume/Cover Letter Assignment (50 POINTS): We will discuss best practices for drafting your professional resume and cover letter. Afterwards, you will create/revise your professional resume and cover letter to be graded. You will also need to locate a job posting, using Glass Door, Linked In, or any other database/job site to create your cover letter, you will turn in a copy of this job posting. This activity is designed to help you acquire fundamental skills in preparation for the job market including internships NOW and jobs, post-graduation.

In-class Assignments (TOTAL 100 POINTS): During class, and only during class, we will have “random” in-class assignments including short essay assignments (>150 words) and quizzes, which will consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions, timed, open book/notes, and administered online via Moodle. You must be present to participate in the in-class assignments AND assignments must be performed and submitted during class. No exceptions.

Client Creative Promotions (4 assignments, 50 points each; totaling 200 POINTS): You will create social media/PR campaign elements (e.g., blogger based promotion, digital press day event, podcast promotion, and social media promotion) based on a specific sector/industry (e.g., entertainment, fitness, food/beverage, fashion). You will discuss these assignments at length in your Friday sections, and you will work on these promotions and present each during Friday meetings.

Social Media Campaign & Presentation – (100 POINTS): You will create a social media campaign for your chosen non-profit organization, including a strategic plan (SWOT) and five social media focused assets. Your campaign will include a presentation that includes a minimum of 8 power point slides, highlighting a brief history of your client, your goal(s) for the client, elements you are introducing that support your goal(s), and lastly measured success of your campaign. We will discuss this more throughout the semester.

In-class Exams (3 exams, 50 questions X 2 points each = 100 points, IN TOTAL 300 POINTS): All of the exams will consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions, will be timed, and administered in-class, using Moodle.

Grade Calculation

Resume/Cover Letter Assignment	50 points
In-class Assignments	100 points
Client Creative Promotions	200 points
Social Media Campaign & Presentation	100 points
In-class Exams	300 points
Discussion Section Attendance	75 points

CLASS POINT TOTAL **825 points**

The grading distribution is as follows, based on points earned divided by points possible:

A+	100%	C+	76.50%-79.99%
A	93.50%-99.99%	C	73.50%-76.49%
A-	90.00%-93.49%	C-	70.00%-73.49%
B+	86.50%-89.99%	D+	66.50%-69.99%
B	83.50%-86.49%	D	63.50%-66.49%
B-	80.00%-83.49%	D-	60.00%-63.49%
		F	59.99% and below

Course Calendar (subject to change) –

Class	Topic	Readings	Assessments
Week One: 1/11-1/15	Introduction to Course/Syllabus Professionalism: Resumes, Cover Letter & Etiquette	Article(s): Business Insider; Writing Great Cover Letters	
Week Two: 1/18-1/22	Inclusion & Representation in Social Media and Among Brands Ethics/Legal Framework	Article(s): Brands Supporting Racial Justice; Social Media Preferences By Race; Is PR ethical? Only when its practitioners are	Resume(s) Uploaded to Moodle by 1/19 at 12 Noon
Week Three: 1/25-1/29	PR Research Understanding Clients' Needs and Audiences	Ch. 9 – The Public Relations Process: RACE	
Week Four: 2/1-2/5	Social Media: Content Creation & Social Media Campaigns	PR Pro - Ch. 5 & 7 PR Pro - Ch. 8 “How the Pros Do It”	
Week Five: 2/8-2/12	Social Media: Visuals & Emotional Appeal	Article: 7 Questions to ask when developing a Visual Strategy for your Marketing Campaign PR Pro Ch. 11	Social Media Promotional Campaign Due
Week Six: 2/15-2/19	Classes canceled due to ice storms		
Week Seven: 2/22-2/26	<u>Exam One – Tuesday, 2/23</u> Social Media (cont.)		EXAM ONE
Week Eight: 3/1-3/5	Blogs & Blogging Writing	PR Pro Ch. 4	Blogger Promotional Campaign Due (3/8)
Week Nine: 3/8-3/12	Media Buys/Ad Placement & Partnerships	Article: What is Media Buying and Planning?	
Week Ten: 3/15-3/19	Podcasts & Booking clients	Article: How to Write a Persuasive Podcast	
Week Eleven: 3/22-3/26	<u>Exam Two – Tuesday, 3/23</u>		EXAM TWO Podcast Promotional Campaign Due
Week Twelve: 3/29-4/2	Emotions Measuring Success	PR Pro - Ch. 9; Creative Campaign Examples	
Week Thirteen: 4/5-4/9	Digital Press Days / Special Events & Event Planning Crisis Communication	Article: Hot tips for planning your press day – Alice Parfremment Article: 7 Crisis Communication Tips – Lauren Landry	
Week Fourteen: 4/12-4/16	Branding	Article(s): Dunkin; Uber; Slate	Digital Press Day Event Due
Week Fifteen: 4/19-4/23	The Digital Divide / Activism <u>Exam Three – Thursday, 4/22</u>	Article(s): What is the Impact of the Digital Divide & Americans and Digital Knowledge; #Hashtag Activism, Ch. 6	EXAM THREE
Finals Week: 4/26-4/30	<u>Final Presentations</u>		NPO Social Media Campaign