Syllabus – BA Global Communication Studies

Course Syllabus

CMM 242G

GLOBAL PRACTICE OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Number of ECTS credits: 6

Time and Place: Tuesday (16:30 – 18:00)

Thursday (16:30 – 18:00)

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Contact Details for Professor

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Office hours: Tuesday (14:30 – 16:30) and Thursday (15:00 – 16:30)

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Course Prerequisites (if any):
CMM 101

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Course Description
This course provides a comprehensive introduction to corporate communications and public relations: it is for anyone with an interest in corporate communication, or anyone seeking to understand the growing importance of communication for corporations. Corporations increasingly need communication to survive, as they need to entertain relations with a variety of stakeholders to prosper. This includes actors external to the organization – customers, governments and civil society organizations, but also stakeholders within corporations themselves, such as employees, managers and investors.

Corporate communication is characterized by being both a field of academic inquiry and a practice: practitioners engage in corporate communication, whereas academics study it. In turn, this course offers a mix of theory and practice: it discusses theories, but also aims to show their practical application.

The first weeks of the course focus on the basics of corporate communication: what is it, and what are its historical roots? This is important, as it demonstrates how the position of communication is increasingly considered to be managerial function – and as such should be involved in the key decision-making processes. After these introductory weeks, we turn to two core theories of corporate communication: stakeholder theory and corporate identity. These form the basis for much of the more specific and applied topics covered in the following weeks. In the last two weeks before the midterm exam, we discuss how corporations can construct communication campaigns – which will be useful as you will be tasked with creating your own communication campaign during the course. After the midterm exam, we tackle specific topics of corporate communication, such as employee communications, how corporations interact with media and journalists, and how corporations should communicate in times of crisis.

Further Detail on Course Content (if needed):

Via a number of practical exercises and workshops, the course will allow students to acquire the skills to write, *inter alia*, professional press releases, newsletters as well as conceptualize, defend and implement PR actions

Course Learning Objectives (CLO)

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

In terms of knowledge:

➢ Have a basic understanding of what corporate communication is, what its role in corporations is, and the different perspectives on corporate communication (DLO 1, 2, 3, 6)
➢ Understand key theories of corporate communication and public relations (e.g. stakeholder theory)   (DLO 1)

In terms of skills

➢ Use theories and concepts of corporate communication and public relations to develop corporate communication strategies, taking into account of the corporate identity, vision and values (DLO 2, 3, 4)
➢ Present their findings verbally and in writing (DLO 5)
➢ Apply theories and concepts of corporate communication to real-life corporations (DLO 2)
➢ Demonstrate effective oral presentation skills
➢ Demonstrate effective and integrative team-work

In terms of attitudes:

➢ Develop a critical attitude towards the way corporations and organizations communicate, externally and internally, based on their understanding of theories regarding corporate communication (DLO 2, 6)
➢ Develop an attitude of open-mindedness and self-critical reflection with a view to self-improvement
➢ Develop a heightened sensibility towards the ethical dimensions of different aspects of the content of this course
➢ Develop an open attitude towards inter-cultural team-work

LINK BETWEEN MAJOR OBJECTIVES, COURSE OBJECTIVES, TEACHING METHODS, ASSIGNMENTS AND FEEDBACK

(BA Global Communication Studies)

Summary: Corporate CMM and PR in Global Context
Number of assignments used in this course: 3 (+mid-term)
Number of Feedback occasions in this course (either written or oral): 5
Number and Types of Teaching Methods: 5 (dialogical lectures, videos, simulations, role plays, and workshops)

Major Learning Objectives	Course Learning objectives addressing the Major Objectives (testable learning objectives)	Methods used to Teach Course Objectives	Methods (and numbers/types of assignments) used to test these learning objectives	Type, Timing and Instances of Feedback given to Student
Have a thorough knowledge of scientific levels, types and components of (technologically mediated and not mediated) communication.				
Distinguish various media critically and thoughtfully, based on characteristics, audience, users, effects and applicability.	Demonstrate an ability to strategically select media and adapt one's writing style in order to enhance communication effectiveness	Lectures, in-class workshops , simulations	Organizational Plan (OP) Final Exam CMM & PR report (CR)	Written and oral feedback from instructor during workshops and as a result of the 2 main assignments
Describing and comparing theories, concepts, authors and paradigms of the domains within the communication science.	Demonstrate ability to understand and put to good use the theoretical models discussed in class and in the textbook	Lectures	Mid-term exam Organizational Plan Communication Report	Feedback from mid-term exam. Feedback from instructor when evaluating the theoretical models included in the OP and the CR
Knowing and applying the most common qualitative and quantitative methods research in communication science.				
Contribute to the initiating, planning and executing basic and applied research around communicators, channels, messages or recipients, starting from a defined mission and report back to colleagues and laymen.				

Major Learning Objectives	Course Learning objectives addressing the Major Objectives (testable learning objectives)	Methods used to Teach Course Objectives	Methods (and numbers/types of assignments) used to test these learning objectives	Type, Timing and Instances of Feedback given to Student
Detecting and analyzing organizational and social communication processes to support troubleshooting.				
Know the structure, organization, operation and development of the media landscape and identify and assess their implications, in a communication strategy and policy context.				
Reflect critically on the role of media and communication in social, cultural, economic, psychological, technological, political, legal and other contexts.				
Assessing the impact of social, cultural, economic, psycho-logical, technological, political, legal and other factors on communication processes.				
Apply and transfer of models, methods and theories from auxiliary sciences.				
Identify the ethical dimension of a comm. problem and to acknowledge different point of view.				
Communicate effectively and convincingly in oral and written form	Demonstrate an ability to conduct interviews Ability to complete a professionally written Communication Report	Lectures, Workshops and in-class exercises (including simulations)	Formal presentation of the OP	Feedback during workshops and simulations. Feedback of the OP and the CR
Demonstrate and develop effective intercultural competences and teamwork	Develop an appreciation for team work. Ability to take into account cultural-driven differences within members of small group.	Various combinations of students working during formal assignments and workshops/ exercises	Elaboration of the Organizational Plan Inclusion of the cultural dimension within the Communication Report	Feedback from students themselves regarding the small group experience. Oral and written feedback from instructor (OP/CR)

Main Course Materials (please note that you can find the readings for each week and session in the Course Schedule section below):

The course is dialogical in nature which implies that students need to listen and take copious note. The course material consists of lectures and presentations, lecture notes and readings from the textbook as well as material, articles and case studies distributed in class. Powerpoint presentations will be made available after the respective classes have taken place. A week-by-week overview of the course readings can be found in the section below.

The syllabus is also available online in the Course syllabus section of the official Vesalius College website. Other material, presentations and important messages will be uploaded to the Vesalius portal 'Pointcarré'. Students are expected to visit this site regularly to keep abreast of course evolutions. The professor is expected to upload relevant material in a timely manner.

Course material marked as 'suggested readings' and 'additional sources' is helpful for research and to gain an increased understanding, but is not mandatory. This material can be found online or will be made available upon individual request.

Textbook:

J.P. Cornelissen; (2014); Corporate Communication – A Guide to Theory and Practice (Publisher Sage)

Any additional readings can either be found online through Web of Science or will be distributed during the course.

Recommended Reference books:

- Planning and Managing Public Relations Campaigns: A Strategic Approach (2015); Anne Gregory (Kogan Page)

- Exploring Public Relations (2013) by Ralph Tench and Liz Yeomans (Pearson Publisher)

- The PR Masterclass (2014) by Alex Singleton (John Wiley and Sons Publishers)

Active Learning and Intensive 'Reading around the Subject': Additional Sources, Recommended Journals and Websites:

Learning should be an active and self-motivated experience. Students who passively listen to lectures, copy someone else's notes, and limit their readings to required chapters are unlikely to develop their critical thinking and expand their personal knowledge system. At the exam, these students often fail to demonstrate a critical

approach. Students are strongly recommended to have an updated understanding of developments related to this course and related to their wider Major. Active and engaged learning will turn out to be enriching to the overall course and class discussions. Students are invited to deepen their understanding of both theoretical and current issues from a variety of sources. Please find a list of suggestions encompassing the entire course below. You are encouraged to read and browse in the leading journals of your discipline.

Leading Journals in Communication Sciences: Communication Research; Communication Review; Communication Theory; European Journal of Communication; Human Communication Research; Info; Information Communication & Society; International Journal of Communication; Journal of Advertising; Journal of Communication; Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication; Journalism Studies; Mass Communication and Society; Media, Culture & Society; New Media & Society; Political Communication; Telecommunications Policy; Telematics & Informatics

For a complete list of top-ranked communication journals:
http://science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jlresults.cgi

Further Journals Relevant for this Course:

The following journals all deal with corporate communications and public relations and are highly recommended sources of additional (and recent!) scholarly work.
- *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*
- *Public Relations Review*
- *Journal of Marketing*
- *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*

In addition to these, more general purposes journals, such as *Journal of Communication*, also publish articles relevant to Corporate Communication.

Websites of Interest:

www.insituteforpr.org
www. apps.prsa.org (create an account to view articles)
https.//hbr.org (Corporate Communication – HBR/ Harvard Business review)
https.//network.bepress.com (Business and Corporate Communications – open access section)

Workload Calculation for this Course:

This course counts for 6 ECTS, which translates into 150 – 180 hours for the entire semester for this course. This means that you are expected to spend roughly 10 hours per week on this course. This includes 3 hours of lectures or seminars per week and 7 hours 'out of class' time spent on preparatory readings, studying time for exams as well as time spent on preparing your assignments. Please see below the estimated breakdown of your work-load for this course.

Time spent in class: **3 hours per week / 45 hours per semester**

Time allocated for course readings: 2.5 hours per week / 38 hours per semester
Time allocated for preparing the Organizational Communication Plan Assignment: 35 hours in total
Time allocated for preparing the PR cases Assignment : 15 hours in total
Time allocated for preparing/revising for written Mid-term Exam: 15 hours
Time allocated preparing/revising for Individual Communication/ PR Report: 25 hours in total

Total hours for this Course: 173 hours

Course Assessment: Assignments Overview

The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance in the following assignments:

Mid-term exam: 25%

Organizational CMM Plan: 30% (25% written report + oral presentation)

PR Case Studies: 15 %

Final Individual Report: 30%

TOTAL: 100%

Grading Scale of Vesalius College

Vesalius College grading policy follows the American system of letter grades, which correspond to a point scale from 0 – 100. **All assignments (including exams) must be graded on the scale of 0-100.** To comply with the Flemish Educational norms, professors should on request also provide the conversion of the grade on the Flemish scale of 0-20. The conversion table below outlines the grade equivalents.

Letter grade	Scale of 100 (VeCo Grading Scale)	Scale of 20 (Flemish System)
A	85-100	17.0-20.0
A-	81-84	16.1-16.9
B+	77-80	15.3-16.0
B	73-76	14.5-15.2
B-	69-72	13.7-14.4
C+	66-68	13.1-13.6
C	62-65	12.3-13.0
C-	58-61	11.5-12.2

D+	**54-57**	10.7-11.4
D	**50-53**	10.0-10.6
F	**0-49**	0-9.9

Description of Activities, Grading Criteria and Deadlines:

ORGANIZATIONAL CMM & PR PLAN/ OP (30% of final grade - written 25% + 5% oral presentation)
(small group project)
Students working within a small group setting of maximum 4 students will be tasked with creating a brand new organization from the ground up and propose/elaborate a comprehensive CMM/PR plan that will target both internal and external stakeholders. In the process they will learn how to give full importance to the communication aspect from an organizational perspective, they will learn how to maximize internal communication in order to enhance corporate cohesion and they will also be involved in a series of practical workshops that will help them hone the writing skills necessary to write professional press releases, create newsletters, corporate magazines etc.
The Plan should be 15 /4500 words minimum long (+ annexes). A stringent mechanism is put into place wherewith students who do not complete their allotted portion of the Plan will be assessed on an individual basis thus ensuring that the whole group is not penalized on account of the below par input provided by one or more students in the group.
It is expected that the group meet a number of times outside of the regular class hours to discuss the various aspects of the Plan and monitor progress. The minutes of these meetings should be included in the annexes (3 separate minutes will suffice).
A formal presentation of the Plan is scheduled for week 12. The dynamic of the presentation should reflect the fact that you will be addressing potential investors interested in your new venture and/or the media during a press conference.
Given the nature of the assignment which requires the integration of various criteria and factors, no unifying rubric can be readily elaborated (with the exception of the oral presentation assignment which has its own evaluation grid)).
Hence, a special grade sheet will be distributed to help students better understand and appreciate how the final grade for the Plan will be awarded.

PR CASE STUDIES (15% of final grade)

Around week 10, students will be asked to complete during one of the regular 85 minute class sessions a series of case studies. The cases will reflect real-life/ current situations and students will be asked to react as if in a crisis management scenario. Students need to prove that they can strategically make use of the various tools at their disposal when confronted with a major crisis and will respond and act as if they were in fact the senior spokesperson for the organization.

Mid-term Exam:
The mid-term exam essentially covers all the material discussed and covered from week 1 to 6, namely the assigned chapters in the textbook as indicated in the syllabus, the class lectures and presentations as well as the articles and material distributed in class. Students are also expected to have become familiar with the terminology/ specialized vocabulary as well as the concepts and theories relating specifically to both Corporate Communication and Public Relations.
Students are also expected to develop an ability to apply concepts and theories to unfamiliar cases with the help of case studies or analytical essays. They should display a level of professionalism in terms of their writing abilities (press releases, articles, newsletters etc.) The also need to prove their ability to conceptualize and defend a strategy when dealing with a major PR crisis situation.

FINAL: Individual Communication & PR Report/CR (30% of final grade)
(the report needs to be handed in by week 15 – exam week - at the latest)

Students will be tasked with completing an individual minimum 12 page/3600 maximum 14 page/ 4000 words Communication Report (CR) for an existing organization of their choosing preferably located in Brussels (the selection of the organization needs to be approved by the professor).
The template and structure to be followed will closely mirror the one used for the Organizational CMM & PR Plan (OP) which will have been completed by the students in a small group setting and eventually presented and defended by week 12 at the latest. Students are expected to make full use of the knowledge they have acquired by completing the aforementioned OP Plan and rely on the knowledge they have acquired throughout the entire semester to critically assess the quality of the Communication strategy implemented in the organization or company selected. In order to qualify for the final report, the organization/ company in question will need to have at least 15 people on their payroll.
The 12 page report will be discussed in more detail in class but should broadly be structured as follows:
1) A 3 to 4 page maximum description of the organization as well as its stated goals and objectives and how these in turn affect the internal and external communication strategy (20%)
2) A formal 2 to 3 page detailed assessment focussing on the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy currently implemented followed by a general set of recommendations with regards to how things could be improved and indications of where there is "room for improvement" (20%)
3) Concrete examples and samples of corrected/amended/suggested written material (30%)
4) In-depth interviews (minimum 3) conducted within the premises of the organization (20%)
5) Style/flow of the report (10%)

Rubrics: Transparent Grading Criteria For Each Assignment

The following criteria will be applied in assessing your written work:
   A. The ability to make use of the theory and practical knowledge obtained throughout the semester
   B. An ability in the case of the small group assignment (OP) to work and behave in a serious and professional manner by working within a diverse and typically multicultural group
   C. The ability to apply the highest level of quality and clarity in the written assignments, the plan and the report.

Grading form for written assignments

This grading form is used to assess the essay type question on exam.

	A	B	C	D	F
Accuracy	The author pertinently & succinctly addresses the question	Overall, the answer accurately addresses the question. Some minor omissions or imprecisions	Brief description	Major flaws, imprecisions	The answer sheet is left in blank or the answer fails dramatically to address the question
Complete-ness	The answer correctly addresses all aspects & angles of the question & provides an answer with an excellent level of detail	Some minor omissions or imprecisions	The answer sufficiently addresses the question	The answer is incomplete & fails to address the question	The answer is left in blank or fails dramatically to address the question
Evidence of Reading	Excellent reference to & application of major course material	Good reference to & application of major course material	Average reference to & application of major course material	Little reference to & application of major course material	The answer lacks any critical reflection & independent thought
Critical Thinking	The answer demonstrates an excellent level of critical thinking & an original application of independent though	The answer highlights a good level of critical thinking & independence of thought	The answer shows some evidence of critical thinking & independent thought	The answer does engage only to a very limited extent critically with facts & literature & shows little evidence of independent thinking	The answer lacks any critical reflection & independent thought
Structure of the Answer	The essay is well structured, with a clear introduction, detailed main body, with a logical flow of arguments and strong conclusion	The answer has a good structure, with an introduction, main body, good flow and conclusion	The answer is generally structured, but does not include a clear introduction, logical flow in the main body or conclusion	The answer is largely unstructured, but shows some evidence of an intro, main body & conclusion	The answer lacks sufficient structure

Grading Form for Presentation

The following grading form is used to assess that quality of the **oral presentation** of the Organizational CMM and PR plan

	Superior	Proficient	Poor	Unsatisfactory
Factual information	Used many facts to support all arguments	Used some facts to support all arguments	Used few facts to support arguments	Did not present acts to support arguments
Comprehension	Demonstrated thorough understanding of information	Some minor omissions or imprecisions	The answer sufficiently addresses the question	The answer is left in blank or fails dramatically to address the question
Persuasiveness	All arguments were logical & convincing	Most arguments were logical & convincing	Some arguments were logical & convincing	Few arguments were logical & convincing
Informational Value	The information provided is of very high or superior quality	The quality & relevance of the information provided is satisfactory	The quality & relevance of the information provided is poor or insufficient	The quality & relevance of the information provided is decidedly substandard
Delivery	Communicated clearly & confidently; maintained eye contact; excellent voice inflection & delivery rate	Communicated clearly; frequent eye contact; good voice & delivery rate	Seldom communicated clearly; poor eye contact; poor voice & delivery rate	Failed to communicate clearly; no eye contact; monotone delivery
Rebuttal	Addressed all audience's questions	Addressed most of audience's questions	Addressed some of audience's questions	Did not address audience's questions
	100 / 100	**75/ 100**	**50 / 100**	**25 / 100**

Grading Form for final written assignment (Communication & PR Report 30%)

Grading Rubric for Communication and PR Report (Final)

Criterion	Insufficient (0.0 – 9.9)	Adequate (10.0 – 14.9)	Good (15.0 – 17.5)	Excellent (17.6- 20.0)
Corporation and Goal (20%)	The report does not explain the corporation's profile and vision. The presentation does not explain the goal of the communication plan	The report explains the corporation's profile and vision, and the goal of the communication plan	Same as adequate + Presentation clearly explains the connection between corporation's profile and communication plan	Same as good + Presentation of company profile and plan are exceptionally creative and clear
	The report does	The presentation	Same as adequate	Same as good+

Assessment and Recommenda-tions (20%)	not mention one or more of the following: - Objectives - Messages - Message Styles - Media strategy	mentions specific - Objectives - Messages - Message Styles - Media strategy	+ Link between overall and objectives is clear Plan is internally consistent (e.g. messages match objectives	Messages / Message Styles / Media strategy are exceptionally creative and well developed
Sample material (30%)				
Interviews (20%)				
Style and flow (10%)	Structure of the report is unclear. Visuals are poor. Typos & errors in the report	Basic structure present. Visuals are clear, but not overly creative. Almost no errors.	Structure is clear & logical. Visuals are clear and creatively designed. No errors.	Layout & content of the report is compelling. The visuals are excellent.

EXAM RUBRICS

Grading Form for Exams: Long Answers

This grading form is used to assess the quality of a long answer question.

	A	B	C	D	F
Accuracy	The author pertinently and succinctly addresses the question	Overall, the answer accurately addresses the question. Some minor omissions or imprecisions	The answer meets the basic requirements for this assignment. Some imprecisions	Major flaws, imprecisions	The answer sheet is left in blank or the answer fails dramatically to address the question
Completeness	The answer correctly addresses all aspects and angles of the question and provides an answer with an excellent level of detail	Some minor omissions or imprecisions	The answer sufficiently addresses the question	The answer is incomplete and fails to address the question	The answer is left in blank or fails dramatically to address the question
Evidence of reading	Excellent reference to and application of major course material	Good reference to and application of major course material	Average reference to and application of major course material	Little reference to and application of major course material	The answer lacks any reference to any course material
Critical Thinking (*if applicable)*	The answer demonstrates an excellent level of critical thinking and an original application of independent thought	The answer highlights a good level of critical thinking and independence of thought	The answer shows some evidence of critical thinking and independent thought	The answer does engage only to a very limited extent critically with facts and literature, and shows little evidence of independent thinking	The answer lacks any critical reflection and independent thought

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Vesalius College Attendance Policy

As the College is committed to providing students with high-quality classes and ample opportunity for teacher-student interaction, it is imperative that students regularly attend class. As such, Vesalius College has a strict attendance policy. Participation in class meetings is mandatory, except in case of a medical emergency (e.g. sickness). Students will need to provide evidence for missing class (doctor's note). If evidence is provided, the missed class is considered as an excused class. If no evidence is provided immediately before or after the class, the missed class is counted as an absence.

Participation implies that students are on time: as a general rule, the College advises that students should be punctual in this regard, but it is up to the professor to decide whether to count late arrivals as absences, or not.

Course Policies

Late papers will not be accepted unless there are serious legitimate reasons. Provision of a signed medical note is required and notice must be given prior to the deadline.

Academic Honesty Statement

Academic dishonesty is NOT tolerated in this course.

Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity.

Following the College policy, cheating and plagiarism cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

If you refer to someone else's work, appropriate references and citations must be provided. Grammar, spelling and punctuation count, so use the tools necessary to correct before handing in assignments.

Please consult the Section "Avoiding Plagiarism" in the College Catalogue for further guidance.

Turnitin

All written assignments that graded and count for more than 10% towards the final course grade need to be submitted via the anti-plagiarism software Turnitin. You will receive from your professor a unique password and access code for your Class.

COURSE SCHEDULE (OVERVIEW)

Week 1	Tuesday 23 January Session 1	Introduction to the Course and Overview of Course and Requirements (I)
	Thursday 25 January Session 2	Introduction (II)
Week 2	Tuesday 30 January Session 3	Different perspectives on Corporate Communication (I)
	Thursday 1 February Session 4	Different perspectives on Corporate Communication (II)
Week 3	Tuesday 6 February Session 5	Stakeholder Theory (1)
	Thursday 8 February Session 6	Stakeholder Theory (2)
Week 4	Tuesday 13 February Session 7	Corporate Identity (1)
	Thursday 15 February Session 8	Corporate Identity (2)
Week 5	Tuesday 20 February 20 Session 9 Thursday 1 March	Communication Strategy (1)
Week 6	Tuesday 27 February Thursday 1 March	Communication Strategy (2)
Week 7 Mid-term Week		REVISION SESSION
		Mid-Term Exams
Week 8 Week 8	Tuesday 13 March Session 13 Thursday 15 March	Media Relations Media Relations
Week 9	Tuesday 20 March Session 15 Thursday 22 March Session 16	Corporate Social Responsibility

Week 10	Tuesday 27 March Session 17 Thursday 29 March Session 18	Communication in Times of Crisis and Conflict
		SPRING RECESS – 2 to 13 April 2018 (NO CLASSES)
Week 11	Tuesday 17 April Session 19 Thursday 19 April Session 20	New Media, New Communication
Week 12	24 April Session 21 Thursday 26 April Session 22	Formal presentation of the Organizational Plan (OP) Employee Communication
Week 13	Tuesday 1 May Session 23 Thursday 3 May Session 24	**NO CLASSES (LEGAL HOLIDAY)**
Week 14	Tuesday 8 May Session 25 Thursday 10 May Session 26	Revision
Week 15		FINAL EXAMS

DETAILED SESSION-BY-SESSION COURSE OUTLINE

Each week, we have a class on Tuesday (16:30 – 18:00) and Thursday (15:00 – 16:30). In the course schedule below, I describe the content of each week, as well as the assignments and readings for each week. Both Wednesday and Friday meetings take a similar format: each class first covers select aspects of that week's readings. After an initial explanation of the basic material, we apply the material to specific cases to further our understanding. With "we", I mean that sometimes I will present a case, but you might be tasked with applying the material yourself as well through in-class assignments.

Key deadlines for assignments are marked in blue in the schedule below.

Week 1, Session 1 (Tuesday, 23 January 2018)

Introduction to the Course and Overview of Core Requirements.

Reading:

None.

Week 1, Session 2 (Thursday 25 January 2018)

Introduction

The first week serves as an introduction to the course and topic, but especially an introduction to each other. You should read the following text:

* Chapter I (Defining Corporate Communication, p. 4-16) of J.P. Cornelissen, (2014). *Corporate Communication* (4th edition)*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.

Guiding Questions:

1. How does Cornelissen define corporate communication?
2. What is the difference between a corporation's vision, mission and objectives? Try to come up with your own example (do not use Cornelissen's British Airways example).
3. Cornelissen argues that Corporate Communication has evolved from a tactical support tool to a strategic tool. Explain.

Week 2, Session 3 (Tuesday 30 January) / Session 4 (Thursday 1 February)

Different perspectives on Corporate Communication

This week, we discuss the different perspectives on what corporate communication is (or should be), and how this has evolved in tandem with the evolution in the position of communication experts in the organization. You should read the following two texts:

* Chapter 2 (Defining Corporate Communication, p. 17-37) of J.P. Cornelissen (2014). *Corporate Communication* (4th edition)*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.

* J.E. Grunig & L.A. Grunig (2006). Characteristics of Excellent Communication. In T.L. Gillis (Ed.), *The IABC Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 3-18). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

After reading the texts, you should be able to answer the following questions:
- What do Grunig & Grunig name as key characteristics of excellent communication?
- Do Grunig/Grunig & Cornelissen take a similar stance in terms of what position they think communications should have within the corporation? Explain why (not).

- What are the historic differences between PR and Marketing? What is, according to Cornelissen, the most common model of integrating them?

Week 3: Session 5 (Tuesday 6 February 2018) / Week 3, Session 6 (Thursday 8 February 2018)

Stakeholder theory
Corporations increasingly need to entertain relations with a variety of stakeholders: this has resulted in a broadened perspective on communication, called stakeholder theory. This week, you need to read the following texts:

* Chapter 3 (Stakeholder Management & Communication, p. 31-62) of J.P. Cornelissen (2014), *Corporate Communication* (4th edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.

* X. Wu (2007). Stakeholder identifying and positioning (SIP) models: From Google's operation in China to a general case-analysis framework. *Public Relations Review,* 33(4), 415-425. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2007.08.016

After reading this week's texts, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- Give a definition of a stakeholder salience model, and how does it characterize stakeholders? Explain the model by means of a specific example (other than the one used by Cornelissen).
- Cornelissen lists three strategies that corporations can use to deal with stakeholders. Compare this to the various PR strategies described by Grunig & Grunig (week 1).
- Wu distinguishes three types of "stakes" that stakeholders can have in a corporation. Describe each using a specific example.

Week 4: Session 7 (Tuesday 13 February 2018) / Week 4, Session 8 (Thursday 15 February 2018)

Corporate Identity

This week, we consider the importance of a clear corporate identity, and how this can be established and maintained through communicative efforts. You should read the following text:

* Chapter 4 (Corporate Identity, p. 63-86) of J.P. Cornelissen (2014), *Corporate Communication* (4th edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.
* C.W. Park, D.J. MacInnis, J. Priester, A.B. Eisingerich & D. Iacobucci (2010). Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude Strength: Conceptual and Empirical Differentiation of Two Critical Brand Equity Drivers. *Journal of Marketing*, 74 (6), 1-17.

After reading the texts, you should be able to answer the following questions:
- What are the three strategic advantages of having a clear corporate identity?
- What is the difference between social, organisational and corporate identity?

- How do corporate brands differ from corporate identity? Discus the three approaches to branding that Cornelissen discuses.
- What is the difference between Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude Strength? Which one is, according to Park et al., the most influential?
- Compare Park et al.'s discussion of brands, specifically their distinction between brand attachment and brand attitude strength, to Cornelissen's discussion of branding.

Week 5: Session 9 (Tuesday 20 February 2018) / Week 5, Session 10 (Thursday 22 February 2018)

Communication Strategy (1)

Both sessions of this week cover the development and execution of communication strategies. To this end, read both chapters 5 and 6 of Cornelissen.

* Chapter 5 (Communication Strategy, p. 89-108) of J.P. Cornelissen (2014), *Corporate Communication* (4th edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.
* Chapter 6 (Strategic Planning and Campaign Management, p. 109-126) of J.P. Cornelissen (2014), *Corporate Communication* (4th edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.

There are no specific questions for this week's texts: the material is not overly complex, but we will elaborate specific aspects (e.g. how to identify a target audience) in class, to prepare you for the first part of the communication strategy assignment, due next week.

Week 6: Session 11 (Tuesday 27 February 2018) / Week 6, Session 12 (Thursday 1 March 2018)

Communication Strategy (2)

This week, there are no readings: you will need the time for the first part of the communication strategy assessment. I will meet the groups to discuss the feedback on their assignments on Wednesday and Friday.

WEEK 7: MID-TERM EXAMS

No class.

Week 8: Session 13 (Tuesday 13 March 2018) / Week 8, Session 14 (Thursday 15 March 2018)

Media Relations

The media are increasingly important for corporations: many stakeholders get informed about corporations through the media. This week, we discuss how corporations manage their relationships with the media. You should read the following texts:

* Chapter 8 (Communication Strategy, p. 145-162) of J.P. Cornelissen (2014), *Corporate Communication* (4th edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.
* C.E. Carroll & M. McCombs (2003). Agenda-setting Effects of Business News on the Public's Images and Opinions about Major Corporations. *Corporate Reputation Review,* 6(1), 36-46.

After reading the texts, you should be able to answer the following questions:
- Describe the difference between journalists and news routines, and how they both affect the way in which corporate communication makes it into the news.
- "Media may not directly affect a corporation's reputation, but may have an amplifying effect". Explain, and apply to a specific example.
- What is the difference between agenda setting and agenda building?
- Describe the two levels of agenda setting, and how these explain the impact of media coverage on corporate reputations.
- What is frame alignment, and why is it important for communication practitioners to consider prior to releasing, for example, a press release?
- What is the key difference between Carroll & McComb's propositions 1-3 and the fourth one?

Week 9: Session 15 (Tuesday 20 March 2018) / Week 9, Session 16 (Thursday 22 March 2018)

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is increasingly important for corporations. This week, we are discussing CSR, and the role of corporate communications therein. You should read the following texts:

* Chapter 13 (Corporate Social Responsibility, p. 240-256) of J.P. Cornelissen (2014), *Corporate Communication* (4th edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.
* D. Eberle, G. Berens & T. Li (2013). The Impact of Interactive Corporate Social Responsibility Communication on Corporate Reputation. Journal of Business Ethics, 118(4), 731-746. Doi:10.1007/s10551-013-1957-y

After reading the texts, you should be able to answer the following questions:
- What is the link between stakeholder theory and CSR?
- How does corporate citizenship differ from individual citizenship? How is this seen as a drawback for the usability of corporate citizenship?
- Describe the triple bottom line, and given an example of each component.
- What is "Greenwashing", and how does it relate to corporate communications about CSR?
- Cornelissen presents three strategies for discussing CSR. Describe each.

- How does the text by Eberle et al. compare to Cornelissen's strategies for discussing CSR?
- How have companies' approaches to community relations evolved over time?

Week 10: Session 17 (Tuesday 27 March 2018) / Week 10, Session 18 (Thursday 29 March 2018)

Communication In Times of Crisis and Conflict

Week 10 is the week scheduled for the in-class PR case study assignment (15% of the grade)

To a large degree, our perceptions of corporations and organizations are shaped by their behavior when faced with problems, issues and occasionally a crisis: Goldman Sachs, Schell, Microsoft, and other companies have faced challenging situations with mixed success. This week, we examine how corporations deal with issues and crisis, and the role of communication in mitigating their impact on the corporation.

You should read the following texts:

 * Chapter 10 (Issues Management, p. 180-199) of J.P. Cornelissen (2014), *Corporate Communication* (4th edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.
* Chapter 11 (Crisis Communication, p. 200-215) of J.P. Cornelissen (2014), *Corporate Communication* (4th edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.

After reading the texts, you should be able to answer the following questions:
- Explain the difference between an issue and a crisis by comparing their temporal nature
- Describe a DESTEP analysis
- Apply the position-importance matrix to a specific corporation, and outline the different types of publics / stakeholders
- Cornelissen discusses the four stages in the life cycle of an issue. Consider the texts from the Media Relations class: here we discussed "frame alignment". According to you, in which of these four stages would it be easiest to attain frame alignment?
- What are the two competing views on corporations trying to influence public policy? Which of these views do you find more compelling, and why?
- In dealing with a crisis, prior reputations can cause a "halo" or "stigma" effect. Describe both.
- What matters more in how corporations communicate in a crisis? The level of responsibility of an organization, or the internal / external nature of the crisis? Explain using a specific example.

2-13 APRIL 2018: SPRING RECESS / EASTER BREAK

Week 11: Session 19 (Tuesday 17 April 2018) / Week 11, Session 20 (Thursday 19 April 2018)

New Media, New Communication

New media play a critical role in contemporary corporate communication: many corporations have understood the importance of maintaining an online presence to corporate success. This week, we discuss the impact of new media on corporate communications. You should read the following two texts:

* Chapter 14 (Social Media and Corporate Communication, p. 257-272) of J.P. Cornelissen (2014), *Corporate Communication* (4th edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.
* S.H. Dekay (2012). How large companies react to negative Facebook comments. Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 17(3), 289-299. doi:10.1108/13563281211253539

After reading the texts, you should be able to answer the following questions:
- What do we mean when we say that social media have "democratized" corporate communication?
- Describe the classification scheme of social media by Kaplan and Haenlein
- What is "conversational voice", and why does it matter?
- Retail corporations are more likely to respond to negative comments on Facebook compared to Banking corporations: what could explain this difference, according to you?

Week 12: Session 21 (Tuesday 24 April 2018) / Week 12, Session 22 (Thursday 12 March 2018)

Formal presentation of the Organizational Plan (OP)

Employee Communication

Employee communication is critical for any organization or corporation: this week we discuss the role of communication between employees, and some constructive strategies to deal with inter-organizational conflict.

* Chapter 10 (Employee Communication, p. 163-179) of J.P. Cornelissen (2014), *Corporate Communication* (4th edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.
* K. Miller (2012). *Organizational Communication. Approaches and Processes* (6th Edition). Chapter 9. Conflict Management Processes, p. 161-178. Boston, USA: Wadsworth CENGAGE Learning.

After reading the texts, you should be able to answer the following questions:
- Define employee communication, its two subtypes, and how it differs from other types of corporate communication
- What is organizational identification, and what is the role of employee communication in maintaining or developing it?

- Discuss organizational silence: what causes silence to develop, and how does it impact employee participation?
- Discuss "the strength of weak ties" as it relates to employee communication
- Consider how the idea of "weak ties" also matters in terms of stakeholder communication.

WEEK 13:
PRESENTATION

Week 13: Session 23 (Tuesday 1 May 2018): no classes (legal holiday)
Week 13, Session 24 (Thursday 3 May 2018)

In Wednesday's and Friday's class, the groups present their communication strategies, followed by a brief discussion of each.

WEEK 14: Session 25 (Tuesday 8 May 23018)
Session 26 (Thursday 10 May 2018): no classes (legal holiday)

CONCLUSION

This week, we wrap up the course: there are no additional required readings for this week. You will need the time to finish the Communication Strategy assignment instead. I will present a short overview of outstanding issues in corporate communications. You should not prepare anything for this lass.

You do have to prepare for Friday's class: e-mail me any questions or uncertainties about the course material on Thursday, 23:59 at the latest. I will discuss and explain these in our final class, as well as giving pointers and tips for the final examination.

WEEK 15:
FINAL EXAMINATION

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