Course Syllabus CMM242G

Corporate Communication & Public Relations

**Number of ECTS credits:** 6

**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 a 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.

**Course Prerequisites**

None
Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should have gained the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

Knowledge
- Students 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);
- Students understand key theories of corporate communication and public relations (e.g. stakeholder theory) (DLO 1);
- Students know key concepts of corporate communications and public relations (DLO 1).

Skills
- Students can apply theories and concepts of corporate communication to real-life corporations (DLO 2);
- Students can use theories and concepts of corporate communication and public relations to develop a corporate communication strategies, taking account of the corporate identity, vision and values (DLO 2, 3, 4);
- Students can present their findings verbally and in writing (DLO 5);

Attitudes
- Students have 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).

Course schedule

Week 1: Introductions
Week 2: Different perspectives on Corporate Communication
Week 3: Stakeholder Theory
Week 4: Corporate Identity
Week 5: Communication Strategy
Week 6: Communication Strategy
Week 7: Midterm exams
Week 8: Media Relations
Week 9: Corporate Social Responsibility
Week 10: Communication in times of Crisis and Conflict
Week 11: New Media, New Communication
Week 12: Employee Communication

Week 13: Presentation of Communication Strategies

Week 14: Conclusion

Week 15: Final Examination

Course Materials
The course relies heavily on the book by Joep Cornelissen (reference below), which you should buy. Make sure to buy the fourth edition, as this contains additional chapters on CSR and social media which are required for the course.


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

Course Assessment
The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance as follows
- Midterm examination (25%)
- Communication plan (25%)
- Presentation of Communication plan (15%)
- Final examination (35%)
- TOTAL (100%)

Grading Scale of Vesalius College
Vesalius College grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is now as stated follows:

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