CMM 391G
Capstone – Communication Studies

Number of ECTS credits: 6

Course Prerequisite
Third year standing

Course Description
The course requires students to integrate knowledge and exercise the skills acquired throughout their work in their major and provides them with an opportunity to work on an extended research project while advising a ‘client’. The client sets the main task for the students, in order for them to apply their acquired skills to a complex and ‘real-life’ problem related to Communication Science. As such, the Capstone is designed to contribute to preparing students for the job market and support their transition from academia to the professional world. Furthermore, by calling for sophisticated understanding of theoretical issues as well as an appreciation of ways to construct empirical policy solutions, it also prepares students for independent policy writing.

This course is designed as a final course in your bachelor’s programming. This is a project-based course. It is not a lecture-based course, it is rather an interactive course and a student-led course, and you should have a working knowledge of communication theories. There are multiple presentations in this course. Due to the nature of the course, attendance is required and mandatory. Students would also have weekly 15-20 min meetings with the professor in addition to the normal class time.

Course Learning Objectives
Overall, the course objectives aim to encourage students:

In terms of knowledge
- To apply in an integrative and summative fashion their key knowledge in the fields of Communication Studies as a science (human, mass, organisational, intercultural, political and business communication, journalism studies, strategic communication, and media production, research and development).
- To gain insight into the functioning and be able to critically analyse data of companies, as well as governments, and other organisations.
To learn the principles of entrepreneurship for the advocacy industry.
To understand the international aspects of the advocacy industry.

Skills/Attitudes
- To organise effective team-work (including division of tasks, a realistic and efficient timeline division of work and clear deadlines and intermediate goals).
- To design appropriate presentation and analytical tools (with the help of websites, graphic tools, etc.).
- To improve presentation skills (both in terms of speaking and visual presentation skills).
- To write a coherent, concise and policy-oriented advice paper.
- To perform effectively under situations of intense stress.
- To address and resolve effectively inner-group tensions and conflicts.
- To engage critically and confidently in various professional and academic settings in and beyond Brussels.
- To conduct a confident and open dialogue with senior professionals.

Teaching Method
The teaching method of the Capstone is based on the presumption of a maximum level of independence of thought and work. Throughout, the course instructor will function as a background facilitator – providing students with guest lectures by external experts, and broad guidelines as well as oral feedback during the Thursday sessions. A main aim of the course is to avoid ‘ex cathedra’ teaching and leave as much freedom for independent work. Students are encouraged to apply their knowledge of their 3-year Communication Studies programme in a “summative and integrative” fashion to the discovery of new processes and facts related to a new and largely unexplored topic and real-life problem.

Course Assessment
The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance as follows:

- Mid Term Exam 20%
- Research and Policy Recommendation Paper 30%
- In-class Group presentations of Research and Policy Papers 20%
- Performance During the Evaluation Process 30%

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Scale of 20</th>
<th>Scale of 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>17.0-20.0</td>
<td>85-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>16.1-16.9</td>
<td>81-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>15.3-16.0</td>
<td>77-80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 (including self-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 for Students and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

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

Course Schedule

Part 1: Preparatory Work, Background Knowledge on the client and the issue
Week 1-4

Part 2: Acquiring Key Skills in order to Assist the client with the Specific Issue and Meetings with the Client
Week 5-10

Part 3: Delivery. A Series of presentations when students pitch their ideas to the client through oral presentations as well as strategy papers
Week 10-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>14.5-15.2</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>13.7-14.4</td>
<td>69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>13.1-13.6</td>
<td>66-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>12.3-13.0</td>
<td>62-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>11.5-12.2</td>
<td>58-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>10.7-11.4</td>
<td>54-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>10.0-10.6</td>
<td>50-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-9.9</td>
<td>0-49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>