The PRactice Experience
COMM 3188
Fall 2022

Meeting Times: Wednesday from 5-6 p.m.
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Office Hours: They will be virtual. The best bet is to schedule a 15-minute block with https://calendly.com/danfarkas614 and I'll set up a 1-1 Zoom session.

Course Description
Successful strategic communicators must understand every part of the communication process. In this course, students will work as team members for the student-run public relations firm, the PRactice (osuthepractice.com). Students will help PRactice accounts meet the needs of paying and pro-bono client needs with professional-quality work.

This course is a variable and repeatable credit course (1-3 credits per term, 6 credits total.) Students will work with the instructor to produce an individual plan for the topic, and work will be accomplished for the number of credits taken, with one credit commensurate with three hours of PRactice academic work per week.

Students will build on fundamental research, writing, editing and planning skills already acquired inside and outside the classroom. As a variable credit course, students will specialize in one of three specific areas of strategic communication as students work with a specific client, with the opportunity to retake the course to focus on other topics in following semesters. The three areas are:

- Research and Analysis
- Social Media Marketing
- Content Creation

Students will obtain first-hand experience as to how a real communication agency works with multiple deadlines and deliverables. From research to creation to delivery to evaluation, the course will produce opportunities to learn more about elements of the account process.

By the end of this course, students will expand upon their learning to:

1. Understand the strategic communication planning process, structure, and workflow in an agency setting.
2. Utilize research, objectives, programming and evaluation of communication campaigns in a real deadline-driven setting.
3. Instill an understanding and appreciation for the personal traits that define success in account services within agencies.
4. Learn how to think through common communication and client management problems.
5. Build skills for working with all members of a communication team, both internally and externally.
6. Write and produce various strategic communication pieces depending on which topic area of specialization (research, social media marketing, content creation) the student selects.

Course Format

For every academic credit hour, students should assume three hours of work per week.

Students will attend the weekly PRactice meeting. The meeting typically includes workshops that engage in key activities of public relations work within an agency setting, team reviews, and occasional guest speakers. The meeting will also review and discuss outside work expectations for the following week.

Outside work beyond the PRactice meeting will typically include client and group discussions (either live or in person), strategic communication content creation, content revision, content dissemination, and analytics. The type of content created is dependent on the student's specialization choice. Students will meet with the professor within the first two weeks of class to mutually agree upon an activity plan outside of class. Based on what area students select, skills could include, but not be limited to:

- **Research and Analysis** Strategic Planning, Focus Groups, Brand Audits, Consumer Research, Focus Group Creation, PESTEL Analysis, Porter's 5 Forces, and Analytics Reports
- **Social Media Marketing** Social Media Content Strategy Organization, Content Calendar Creation A/B Testing, Search Engine Optimization, Ad Copywriting, Media Buying, Social Video Creation, and Livestreaming.
- **Content Creation** Media List Creation, Media Pith Development, Press Release Writing, Op Ed Writing, Backgrounders, Proposal Writing, Press Event Planning, and Crowdsourcing

Texts: Recommended:

- Davis, C. and Dickinson, D. (2016) *The Advertising and PR Account Management Workshop: Learning the Skills, Tools, and Craft of Contemporary Account Management* Irvine: Melvin & Leigh. ISBN-10: 0997308435

Assignments

Every student enrolled will have the following assignments:

- Course Plan: Students and the instructor will arrive at a plan for completing work for the credits taken. For every credit in which a student is enrolled, the student must complete one of the written projects listed in the assignments section.
- Final Portfolio: This document will highlight the work that took place during the semester and how it met listed key performance indicators outlined in the course plan. It will also highlight recommendations for the client moving forward. The project length will be between 5-7 pages per credit hour.

Students will choose among three topic areas and activities, depending upon how many credits taken:

Research and Analytics: Students will work with the faculty to mutually agree upon which of these projects best fits client needs.

Brand Essence: The brand essence explains a company's perception in the marketplace and how it differs from the perception of those working for the brand.

Consumer Profile: The consumer profile dives into target audiences, analyzing the population, segments, psychographics, and media habits.

Social Audit: A social media audit helps clarify a brand's place in highlighted social media channels, identifying potential opportunities and points of emphasis for further content creation

PESTEL: The PESTEL looks at political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal issues that might impact a brand's future.

Porter's Five Forces: This examines brand relationships and dynamics, seeing how the power of buyers, suppliers, and competitors can impact a brand or industry in the future.

Content Creation: Students will work with the faculty to mutually agree upon which of these projects best fits client needs.

Media/Influencer Lists: One of the most common frustrations of journalists, bloggers, and influences is receiving pitches that don't pertain to their work, industry, or beat. The media/influencer list will enable students to use current media monitoring services to identify outlets, journalists, and influencers who can help spread the content message created in the PESO kit.

PESO Kit: This kit will show how someone can take strategic messaging and turn it into paid, earned, shared, and owned media. The PESO kit will give students a chance to create custom content for clients based on the client's specific needs and the student's area of interest.

White Paper: This paper is a chance to highlight industry trends and how they might impact a client. Students will have a chance to showcase elite account planning, putting together research and concise, yet thorough, copy that mixes words and visuals to help clients understand emerging communication trends.

Social Media Marketing: Students will work with the faculty to mutually agree upon which of these projects best fits client needs.

Strategy: This paper highlights content buckets, shared purpose, conversation styles, and collaborative partners to improve the probability that social media content will reach its intended audience.

Content Calendar: This document highlights how to deploy buckets, A/B test best practices, and automate content deployment.

Blog Funnel: This marketing identifies problems, solutions, and why a client might be the best solution available, linking multiple posts together to help clients have an SEO friendly story available online.

Submitted Work Format (MANDATORY)

Unless otherwise noted, assignments will follow this format: Arial font, 12 point, single-spaced, double-spaced between paragraphs, black text color. All assignments should be submitted online through Carmen.

Grading (S/U)

This is S/U course. Students will receive either a satisfactory or unsatisfactory grade. In every assignment you turn in, I will evaluate written materials on their conciseness, thoroughness, thoughtfulness, logic, and persuasion.

This class adheres to AP Style. Misspellings, fact errors, poor sentence construction, grammar, and style mistakes will have the following consequences.

- Proofreading matters. Ideal assignments will have 0-1 grammatical and style errors. Satisfactory work will have 2-4 errors. Unsatisfactory work will have 5 or more errors.
- Structure matters. Ideal assignments will have 0 structural issues. This includes content development, logic flaws, lack of research, or other structural issues. Satisfactory work will have 1 structural issue. Unsatisfactory work will have 2 or more errors.
- Any misspelling of a name will result in an automatic U for the assignment.

Attendance

Attendance is taken every class. Students with three or more unexcused absences will receive an unsatisfactory grade.

As presented in the university's "Academic Policies and Procedures," university-excused absences include "illness, death in the immediate family, religious observance, jury duty, and involvement in University—sponsored activities." Discuss any situation with the instructor, and every effort will be made to assist in this requirement.

Let me stress this again. If there's an issue with health, work or family, please let me know once the problem arises, not after the fact.

Late Work, Missing Work, Make-ups and Extension Requests

Work must be submitted by the assigned deadline. Please contact me in advance regarding an extension for an extreme circumstance like family illness or death. Work two days late (weekends included) will automatically receive an unsatisfactory grade.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Don't. This class is about creating original work. Many of you will work with organizations that have established content. You can't submit that content as your own.

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized

materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentconduct.osu.edu/page.asp?id=1) and with "Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity" (http://oaa.osu.edu/coamtensuggestions.html).

Classroom Etiquette

You're spending thousands of dollars to take this class. Please be responsible with your time and respectful of others. I reserve the right to dismiss you from class if you distract others. Using technology in class for non-class activities is considered a distraction.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know via email immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu ; 614- 292-3307; slds.osu.edu ; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Tentative Schedule

Week	Suggested Topics	Graded Assignments	Suggested Reading
Weeks 1-2: Understanding Role and Responsibilities Within a Strategic Communication Agency Setting	The Goal, Solving Communication Problems Reaching Diverse Audiences	Produce a course plan prior to the start of the semester.	
Weeks 3-6: Understanding How Agencies Work Internally and How To Effectively Work Within a Diverse Department	Managing Time Sheets Profit Management and Optimization How Consumer Profiles Help PR Plans Why Media Relations Is Crucial to PR How to Create Social Media Content Calendars		Davis Entry Level 1-4
Weeks 7-9: Starting the Communication Process Specifically Related To Your Area of Interest	Communication Project Planning Do's and Don'ts The Importance of Influencer Identification and Tools To Create Better Lists Ways To Define a Brand Essence	Status Update	Davis Intermediate 5-7

	How Backgrounders Can Educate Journalists Ways To Test Social Media Content		
Weeks 10-11 Nurturing Strategy Into Content That Aligns with Agency and Client Goals	Integrating paid, earned, owned, and shared media into content creation Reviewing How Global Factors Impact Local PR Work Identifying Social Influencers	Status Update	Davis 12-15
Weeks 12-15 Understanding Evaluation Techniques and Developing Next Steps for Client and Agency Growth	Campaign Evaluation Techniques, Case Studies, and Project Preparation	Final Project	Davis 16-20

School of Communication COVID Info:
Please note that these policies may be updated to reflect changes in the epidemic, changes in our understanding of the disease, and changing University, local, state, and federal recommendations/mandates.

Vaccination
The COVID-19 vaccine is the single best way to protect yourself and others from the disease. Widespread vaccination also offers us our best chance of ending the pandemic and getting back to a pre-pandemic lifestyle. If you haven't already, please get vaccinated. It is safe, effective, and free.

Masks and social distancing
The university requires that everyone on campus wears masks indoors (for more information, see https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu/). Wearing a mask that covers your mouth and nose is important because it can help slow the spread of COVID-19. There are several reasons to do this, even if you are vaccinated. First, the "Delta variant," which is the dominant version of the virus that causes COVID in the U.S. today, is highly contagious, and has caused a huge increase in cases recently. Second, even if you are vaccinated, there have been some cases of "breakthrough" infection, where a vaccinated person becomes ill. These cases are much less severe than cases among unvaccinated individuals, but you still don't want to go through it if you don't have to. Finally, and most importantly, if you get COVID-19 you can spread it to other people, including young children and others who cannot take the vaccine. In short, masks help protect you and they help you protect other people.

Social distancing may also help slow the spread of COVID. Although classrooms are no longer configured to ensure that students can spread out, doing so may still be helpful if you have the opportunity.

Attendance
Given the continued high prevalence of COVID, including breakthrough cases among vaccinated individuals, students should not attend class if they are feeling sick. It is very important that individuals avoid spreading the virus to others. Most students should be able to complete a successful semester despite illness-induced absence. If you are absent due to illness, including but not limited to COVID, I will give you a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work.

Recordings of class sessions
I intend to post recordings of our class sessions on Carmen. These recordings are not a substitute for the in-person learning experience. Instead, they are a tool to help those who are forced to miss class on account of illness to catch up. As such, recordings may fail to capture in-class activities, they may be incomplete in other ways, or they be entirely missing (e.g., in the event of a problem with the recording technology).

Other related resources

COVID-19 Accommodations. The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Food Security (https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org/, 614-688-2508). The Ohio State University is committed to ensuring that all students have access to adequate and healthy food. Any undergraduate or graduate student with a BuckID may confidentially use the Buckeye Food Alliance food pantries. No proof of need is required. The pantry is located in Lincoln Tower, Suite 150 (1800 Cannon Dr., Columbus, OH 43210). Check the website or call for current hours.

COVID-19 emergency financial assistance (https://sfa.osu.edu/contact-us/consumer-disclosure/COVD-19-aid) Ohio State has emergency grants available to aid students who are facing unexpected financial challenges related to the pandemic. Students may use the funds toward any component of the cost of attendance, or for emergency costs that arise as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic such as food, housing, tuition, health care (including mental health care) or child care. Please visit the website for more information.