



COMM 3345 | Strategic Media Planning

Spring 2026, 3 Credits

School of Communication, the OSU

Tue. & Thur.: 2:20-3:40pm | Journalism Building 371

Instructor: Dr. Joyce Wang, Professor

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Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:00am-12:00pm; or by appointment

Course Description

We are living in a world of integrated communication, where public relations, strategic communication, marketing, and advertising increasingly intersect and overlap. This course introduces the fundamental concepts, methods, strategies, and procedures of media planning, which is an essential component of integrated communication. Students will learn how to evaluate, select, and time media placements to effectively reach target audiences and achieve specific market and communication objectives.

Three Basic Objectives

- (1) Acquaint you with basic concepts, measures, and information sources involved in media planning decisions.
- (2) Provide you with first-hand experiences in media planning.
- (3) Enhance your ability to strategically analyze market, use media, and influence targeted audiences and consumers.

Course Texts and Readings

The following textbooks, especially Sissors & Baron (2010), provide *essential foundational frameworks* for understanding media planning in a rigorous way. While the media marketplace and technologies evolve rapidly, these works remain valuable for building core concepts, terminology, and strategic thinking that we will apply throughout the course (and in your career).

- Sissors, J. Z., & Baron, R. B. (2010). *Advertising Media Planning* (7th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Egan, B. D. (2021). *Media Planning Essentials*. Online publication of Stukent.

Media planning operates in an industry that changes quickly due to shifts in technology, consumer behavior, platforms, data availability, industry practices, and regulation. While these textbooks provide a strong conceptual and strategic foundation, some industry examples and data are necessarily dated. They are still valuable for learning the foundational knowledge. In addition, to ensure the course reflects the current media environment, I will regularly incorporate up-to-date data, industry reports, case examples, and applied materials drawn from recent research and professional sources.

Foundational concepts from the textbooks will be integrated directly into lectures, discussions, and group projects, allowing students to *connect enduring principles with real-world, contemporary media planning practice*.

Readings and supplemental content will be posted on Carmen or distributed as class handouts.

Assignments & Grading

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Percent/Points of Grade</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Unit Exam 1	10%	
Unit Exam 2	10%	
Group Media Planning Project		
Step 1: market situation & competitive analysis	15%	
Step 2: media objectives & target audience analysis	10%	
Step 3: media selection and strategy	15%	
Step 4: flowchart and budget	10%	
Step 5: project presentation (including Steps 1-4)	10%	
In-Class/Reading Responses	20%	selected weeks
Total	100% (100 pts)	
Extra credit for class or research participation	up to 3%	TBA

- **Exams** are useful ways to help student to systematically organize learned concepts, methods, and knowledge. A review sheet will be disseminated in class one week before each exam. Exams comprise of multiple-choice questions, true/false judgments, and/or short answer questions. Exams can be administrated in person or online depending on the pandemic situation of the week.

- **The group media planning project** is the most important component of learning and practicing with what is learned in this course. It will be conducted step by step throughout the semester. This project is designed to stimulate your creativity, to improve your understanding of concepts and procedures learned in lectures and from readings, and to practice your skills of collecting information, strategically making media planning decisions, and effectively crafting the report. Detailed instructions for each step will be provided in class. Individuals' grades are based on (a) peer evaluation, (b) the written report for each step, (c) oral presentation, and (d) the final written report.

Please note: Almost all media industry positions require working in a collaborative environment. Similarly, **being a responsible and effective team player** is one of the keys to achieve a productive and pleasant learning experience in this course.

- **In-class and reading responses** are short answers to questions, or group activities, which I will administrate at the beginning, middle, or end of a lecture beginning Week 2. The questions or activities will be related to our lecture topics. In addition, they are a way to track attendance sometimes. Each daily response/attendance counts 2% (i.e., 2 pts) of the final grade.

I will select 12 times to do in-class/reading responses. **My attendance policy** is to give each student two excused (i.e., documented) absence and correspondingly, two excused in-class responses. So, you will earn $2\% \times 10 = 20\%$ of the final grade (i.e., the full credit of in-class responses) if you do not miss more than twice of the 12 in-class/reading responses and if your responses are decent.

- **Extra credit:** To promote class and research participation, there will be opportunities during or after classes to earn extra credit. They will be announced in classes.

The final grading scale will be as follows:

A 94-100; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83;
C+ 77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73; D+ 65-69; D 60-64; E 59 & lower.

Note: Please use the Carmen's "Grades**" page as a documentation of your grades for each graded item. Please use our final grading policy described above as the way to calculate your final grade.

Late Assignments & Assignment Submission

Late assignments will *lose one point for each day they are late*, including weekends. No late work will be accepted after *one week* from the due date. Exceptions may be made for serious illness or other well-documented emergencies. Depending on instructions for each assignment, students should submit their work in class or through Carmen Dropbox. *Email submissions will not be accepted.*

Generally, make-up exams are not permitted. Exams can only be rescheduled with well-documented emergencies.

Revisions of Assignments

I will be happy to give you feedback on your work *at least two business days before* the assignment is due. Once the assignment is due, no revision is allowed.

Office Hours & E-Mail

Office hours are the best place to ask in-depth questions about course readings or lectures, as well as any question about grades. E-mails should be used to schedule an appointment outside of office hours or for *short* questions clarifying class assignments or specific items from lectures.

University Policies and Statements

Intellectual Diversity Statement

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

Academic Misconduct Statement

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-48.7 (B)). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct.

Disability Services Statement

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. 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.

If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of a viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

Religious Accommodations Statement

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination

or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office. (Policy: Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances)

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a community to reflect diversity and to improve opportunities for all. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office: Online reporting form at <http://civilrights.osu.edu/>, Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605, Or Email civilrights@osu.edu

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Civil Rights Compliance Office to ensure the university can take appropriate action: All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately. The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Additional Disclaimer

This syllabus represents a contract “in the works.” Events that transpire over the semester may require modifications to the course. In the event of a change, we will announce the change and update the syllabus on Carmen. It is your responsibility to keep up with any such modifications and to be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc. We reserve the right to modify course policies throughout the semester.

Schedule

Please note:

- The schedule is subject to change based on class progress or other circumstances. Exams and assignments are underlined. There are three “***professional development series***” to cultivate skills and experience for this course and your career.
- The assigned readings are recommended for each week; however, it is most beneficial to engage with the content multiple times over time, as many chapters are interconnected. We will discuss the readings in detail during class. *Please use the lecture slides as the primary framework for organizing key concepts and integrating ideas across all readings.*
- **SB** = Sissors & Baron (2010); **E**=Egan (2021) and we only use Chapters 7-9; **Carmen readings** = updated supplemental data and sources on Carmen for the week.

Part 1: Overview, Market Situation, & Competitive Analysis

<i>Week 1</i>	<i>Introduction & Planning for the Group Project</i>
Jan. 13, 15	Hello, the syllabus, & an introduction Media preplanning and planning (SB-Chap.1-2)
<i>Week 2</i>	<i>Overview & Marketing Strategy Plan</i>
Jan. 20, 22	Market situation and competitive analysis (SB-Chap.6) <u>Project Step 1 assigned; groups created</u>

Part 2: Media Objectives & Target Audience

<i>Week 3</i>	<i>Skills on Data Collection & Presentation</i>
Jan. 27, 29	Professional Development Series: databases and data visualization skills Group work on Step 1
<i>Week 4</i>	<i>Measuring Audience</i>
Feb. 3, 5	Measuring audience (SB-Chap.4-5; Carmen readings) <u>Project Step 1 due @ 10pm on Thursday</u>
<i>Weeks 5-7</i>	<i>Setting Objectives & Defining Target(s)</i>
Feb. 10, 12	Strategy Planning I: Who, where, and when (SB-Chap.7; Carmen readings) <u>Project Step 2 assigned</u>
Feb. 17, 19	Strategy Planning II: Resources and index; weighting and scheduling, etc. (SB-Chap. 8; Carmen readings) <u>Review for Unit Exam 1</u>
Feb. 24	<u>Unit Exam 1</u>
Feb. 26	Review Step 2 relevant content & questions; group work on Step 2

Part 3: Media Selection & Media Strategy

Week 8

March 3, 5

Selecting Media

Media comparisons (E-Chap. 7-9)
Social media, word of mouth, and other emerging markets
Project Step 2 due @ 10pm on Thursday

Weeks 9-11

March 10, 12

Deciding Media Strategy

Principles of media strategy (SB-Chap. 10)
Project Step 3 assigned

March 17, 19

No class. Enjoy your spring break!

March 24, 26

Campaign architecture (Carmen readings)
Effective frequency and scheduling

March 31, April 2

Professional Development Series: Media Industry Guest Speaker
Review Step 3 relevant content; Group work on Step 3

Part 4: Flowchart & Budget

Weeks 12

April 7, 9

Buying Media, Creating Flowchart, & Making Budget

Media costs and buying (SB-Chap. 12; Carmen readings)

Setting and allocating the budget (SB-Chap. 13)

Project Step 3 due @ 10:00pm on Thursday

Project Step 4 assigned; Determine your presentation order

Part 5: Put It All Together

Week 13

April 14, 16

Integrating Your Media Plan

Professional Development Series: Media Industry Guest Speaker

Review Steps 1-4 relevant content; Group work on integrating all four Steps

Week 14

April 21, 23

Presenting Your Media Plan (to Your Client)

Project presentations

The final project report due (including Steps 1-4) @ presentations

Review for Unit Exam 2

Last day of class

Unit Exam 2

April 27

Unit Exam 2

All of us who professionally use the mass media are the shapers of society. We can vulgarize that society. We can brutalize it. Or we can help lift it onto a higher level.

—William (Bill) Bernbach

The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.

— Bertrand Russell

Be the change you want to see in the world.

— Mahatma Gandhi

