

COMMUNICATION 4337: Public Communication Campaigns

School of Communication, Ohio State University
Spring 2026

CLASS TIME & LOCATION:

Tues/Thurs 10:20 a.m. - 12:10 p.m. – Journalism Building 106, Section 17931

INSTRUCTOR:

Mary Sterenberg, MS

MY OFFICE:

JR Bldg 311

PHONE:

614-292-6185

EMAIL:

sterenberg.2@osu.edu

OFFICE HOURS

Monday 9:30-11:30 a.m. (virtually) by appointment, Thursday 12:30-2:30 p.m. (in person or virtual) by appointment. I will find other times to meet if these hours don't work. Email me to schedule.

OFFICE HOURS ZOOM:

<https://osu.zoom.us/j/94162584331?pwd=bE1RQ2k2RFo1S2krcE1Ya3lieFBnUT09>

Meeting ID: 941 6258 4331

Password: 906047

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:

Application of management techniques to public relations; public relations strategy; and campaign development. Prereq: 2331, Journalism or Comm major, grad standing or permission of instructor.

GOALS OF COURSE:

- Demonstrate the planning & development skills needed to create an integrated public relations campaign.
- Show proficiency in conducting secondary and primary research in the development of a campaign.
- Gain an appreciation for the theory and skills learned from other courses and apply it to a real client-based campaign for Columbus.
- Develop the ability to perform a situation analysis, identify objectives, develop strategies and tactics and write a public relations campaign.
- Maximize ability to participate in extensive research, planning, execution and evaluation elements which will culminate with an oral presentation to the class and client.
- Work in a group to accomplish a long-term task, managing and maximizing time and personalities/styles to achieve shared success.
- Develop mastery in preparing and presenting a public relations campaign to a client.

REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS:

Silverman, Deborah A.; Smith, Ronald D., Strategic Planning for Public Relations, 7th Edition. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group: New York and London, 2024. ISBN: 9781003348467 [NOTE: You can access this eBook through the CarmenBooks reader link in the course navigation.]

The textbook and/or courseware for this course is being provided via CarmenBooks. Through CarmenBooks, students obtain publisher materials electronically through CarmenCanvas, saving them up to 80% per title. The fee for this material is included as part of tuition and is listed as *CarmenBooks fee* on your Statement of Account. In addition to cost-savings, materials provided through CarmenBooks are available immediately on or before the first day of class. There is no need to wait for financial aid or scholarship money to purchase your textbook.

Unless you choose to opt-out of the program, you do NOT need to purchase any materials for this course at the bookstore. For more information on the program or information on how to opt out, [please visit the CarmenBooks website](#). You can access the course textbook through the CarmenBooks link in the course navigation.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- This course has high professional and academic standards as a senior capstone course that produces real work for a real client. Students should plan to attend class during all scheduled class periods. Classes will be held in person unless noted in the weekly Carmen module.
- Do not schedule work or other commitments during class periods.
- Have access to reliable Wi-Fi and take responsibility for ensuring you can access online resources such as discussion boards, video/audio materials and quizzes. You have access to course expectations and deadlines in advance, and the Carmen team and I are available to help with technical issues PRIOR to due dates. Refer to <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmencanvas> for answers to many Carmen problems or questions for the Carmen support team.
- Be active in Carmen, which means accessing our course online multiple times per week as I may post updates or announcements. The class includes a group-based project worth a significant portion of your grade, so this also ensures you remain connected to and active within your group. The module for each week will provide assigned readings, needed materials and assignments for that week (i.e., due dates and reminders for upcoming quizzes/exams/assignments).
- Complete all assigned readings BEFORE coming to class each week. This will help ensure you don't lose points in online discussions/reading quizzes and are ready to begin applying concepts during our limited time together in class. Quizzes are due by midnight on Sundays, as noted in Carmen. DO NOT collaborate with classmates on quizzes. Your two lowest quiz scores are dropped, so there are no makeup quizzes. These quizzes are more than reading quizzes – they are in lieu of a midterm or final exam and ensure you come to class ready to apply concepts to our client's campaign, so students should prepare for each thoroughly. The quiz help students be accountable for completing readings and being ready to apply concepts step-by-step during the campaign development process.
- Bring a computer to all classes so you can access online materials, discussions and resources.

COURSE EVALUATION

Assignments	Points
Group Project - Section 1 (15-20 pages)	50 points*
Group Project - Section 2 (15-20 pages)	50 points*

Group Project – FINAL PLAN	100 points*
Group Project – Oral Presentation	25 points
Quizzes	70 points
Client Visit Follow-Up Email	10 points
Participation & In-Class Engagement	95 points

400 points TOTAL

* Group members will all receive the grade earned by the entire group for Sections 1 & 2 and the Final Plan, but each grade will be weighted based on peer evaluation to determine individuals' final scores. See Final Project Assignment or Peer Evaluation Form on Carmen for details. Beyond peer evaluations, students not actively participating in/contributing to their groups will be subject to grade penalties beyond the peer evaluation scores.

COURSE GRADING SCALE:

A	93-100%	B-	80-82%	D+	67-69%
A-	90-92%	C+	77-79%	D	63-66%
B+	87-89%	C	73-76%	D-	60-62%
B	83-86%	C-	70-72%	E	Below 60%

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Group Project/Section 1 (50 points) - A 15-20-page document to include a mission statement, situation analysis, secondary research, primary research outline, problem and goal statements. Peer evaluation scores impact this grade (see note below).

Group Project/Section 2 (50 points) - A 15-20-page document to include primary research findings, target publics, message, objectives, strategies, tactics, evaluation, budget and timetable. Peer evaluation scores impact this grade (see note below).

Group Project/Final Plan (100 points) - A professional hard copy plan that pulls key information from Sections 1 & 2 and transforms it into a research-based campaign that demonstrates a creative path to reaching the client's goal. It will provide examples of other successful campaigns and other documented reasons to believe that the campaign is possible for the client to execute, and if executed properly, that it could truly achieve the client's goal. Peer evaluation scores and attendance at the mandatory run-through and all days of presentations impact this grade.

Group Project/Oral Presentation (25 points) – An oral pitch to the client and accompanying slides. Only two to three group members will present, but this is still very much a team effort. All group members are responsible for giving presenters feedback on content, delivery and slides, and ultimately ensuring the final pitch to the client is polished and professional.

Peer Evaluations – The ability to be an effective team player, work with different personalities and still produce excellent work for a client is crucial for developing communication campaigns. Group members will be evaluated by their peers at each major project milestone (after Section 1, Section 2 and the Final Plan). You will note your

contributions and give each team member a score and feedback on: workload, participation, communication, deadlines, providing feedback and receiving feedback. The peer evaluation is designed to recognize that all students have different strengths, weaknesses and working styles. The best work comes from groups who leverage all group members' strengths in ways that make the process enjoyable and productive. You will kick off the project with a group workshop and I will provide suggestions on best practices throughout the process to help facilitate. Scores on the first and second peer eval give you the opportunity to talk to your group and ensure fair evaluations and even distribution of work moving forward. Failing to submit a peer evaluation or consistent concerns from teammates can result in lower individual scores on Section 1, Section 2 and the Final Plan, so students should be familiar with the peer evaluation and should communicate with their groups to ensure they are fully participating in the group project.

Quizzes – (70 points) – This course uses quizzes in lieu of exams to align more closely with application of the concepts along the campaign development process. Quizzes each include 8-10 multiple-choice questions to ensure students understand key concepts from the textbook and class notes. Chapters can get long, and the goal is for you to truly understand key concepts without getting burnt out from long readings. Use the “Quiz Notes” document under the “Course Resources” module on Carmen as a study guide outline while taking notes in class and doing assigned textbook reading. Quizzes will test your understanding of the terms listed on “Quiz Notes” by applying them to actual situations. **Quizzes are available on Carmen and must be completed by the dates/times listed on the syllabus and on Carmen).** The lowest two quiz grades will be dropped, so there are no makeup quizzes. **NOTE:** Quiz #9 is open all semester and can be completed any time before the due date. Instructions are provided within the quiz.

It is the responsibility of the student to complete assigned readings, take notes in class, prepare for and take quizzes independently. This allows more class time for group progress on the campaign. **STUDENTS MAY NOT WORK TOGETHER OR COLLABORATE IN ANY WAY ON QUIZZES.** Though students are quizzed on the same topics, each student may not receive identical quiz questions. Quizzes use the LockDown Browser feature on Carmen, which limits you to just the quiz browser while taking the quiz to reduce distraction. You will need to download this tool before taking your first quiz. See [university instructions for downloading](#). As long as time permits, I will allow students to review each quiz briefly during the class period after it closes so that I can answer any questions. Students can always request to meet to discuss quiz results in greater detail.

Quiz 1: Introduction/Phase 1 & Step 1

Quiz 2: Step 3

Quiz 3: Step 4

Quiz 4: Step 2

Quiz 5: Phase 2 & Step 5

Quiz 6: Steps 6 & 7

Quiz 7: Phase 3 & Step 8:1-4

Quiz 8: Phase 4 & Steps 9 & 10

Quiz 9: PRSA Professional Values/Code of Ethics & Page Center Module 3 Certificate (2 questions on PRSA Professional Values/Code of Ethics and 7 points for completed ethics certificate) **NOTE: You must complete a Professional Codes of Ethics module online and upload the certificate of completion to earn your quiz points. Complete the certificate by visiting <https://pagecentertraining.psu.edu/> and choosing the Professional Codes of Ethics Module 3. Go through the lessons and score at least 80% on the quiz to receive your certificate of completion. Have this ready to upload when you open the quiz. THIS QUIZ CAN BE COMPLETED ANY TIME IN THE SEMESTER BEFORE THE DUE DATE.**

Client Visit Follow-Up Email (10 points) – After the initial client meeting, each student will prepare a follow-up email that summarizes the goal the client shared and additional key information and action items to show the client you accurately heard what they want and don't want and clearly communicate next steps and timing of deliverables. Complete assignment sheet available on Carmen. Each student submits this assignment independently.

Participation & In-Class Engagement (95 points) – Active participation is essential in this course because we work on a real client campaign that requires collaboration and application of concepts during class time. You will earn 5–10 points per class session, based on attendance and engagement, for a maximum of 95 points. Points are recorded in Carmen so you can track your progress throughout the semester. **Your two lowest scores in this category will be dropped, which allows for two absences without penalty. Additional absences or repeated lack of engagement will significantly impact your grade.**

How Points Are Earned

Full Score:

- Arrives on time and stays for the entire class.
- Actively engages in group work and class activities (contributes ideas, collaborates, listens, and participates in discussions).
- Prepared with required materials (laptop, notes, readings completed).
- Not distracted (e.g., no phone use, unrelated work).

Half Score:

- Arrives late or leaves early **OR**
- Minimal engagement (rarely contributes, off-task behavior, distracted by phone or unrelated work).

Zero:

- Absent **OR**
- Present but not engaged (e.g., sitting silently, not participating, consistently off-task).
- Note: Simply attending class does **not** guarantee points—you must actively participate.

IMPORTANT NOTE

More than **four absences** (including excused) will result in a **full letter grade reduction** for the course. Excessive tardiness or early departures that cumulatively equal two full classes will count as one absence toward this threshold.

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance & Participation

Regular attendance is key to being successful in this class. Poor attendance will adversely affect team and individual performance and grades. The two lowest scores in the Participation/In-Class Engagement category will be dropped, which allows for two absences without penalty. This includes BOTH excused and unexcused absences. **More than four absences (the equivalent of two weeks of class) will result in a full letter grade reduction for the course (i.e., B to C). The final course grade then will be lowered one-third of a letter grade for each additional class missed (i.e., C to C-).** If you require an accommodation due to a documented issue, please contact the instructor right away.

Extra Credit:

- There are 12 extra credit points available in this class. Occasionally I will award extra credit beyond these 10 points to students for in-class activities as discussed in class. Extra credit will be applied to the final grade point total. *Submit all extra credit on Carmen by the final day of class (not counting finals week).*
- **Activities (4 points):** Participate in an on-campus professional development activity during the semester (i.e., PRSSA or BASCA meeting or other events as approved by the course instructor) and submit responses to the questions in the Extra Credit assignment on Carmen as well as proof of attendance.
- **Discussion Board: Campaign Inspiration (2 points):** Post to this class discussion board - meeting all requirements - and comment on another post by the DAY SECTION 2 IS DUE. After that, we're finalizing campaigns and not seeking new ideas.
- **Winning campaign (5 points):** Students in the group chosen by the client as the winning campaign receive 5 extra credit points.
- **SEI/SSLE class response rate (1 point):** If the class hits an 80% response rate on SEIs, I will give the entire class a point.

AI Course Policy

Given that the learning goals of this class are to demonstrate the planning & development skills needed to create an integrated public relations campaign for a real client, in this course, students are welcome to explore innovative tools and technologies for project management, data analysis, brainstorming, presentation design and copyediting, including generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). Students are permitted to use GenAI tools for most course assignments, except for quizzes and for drafting final language for Section 1, Section 2 and your final campaign. The campaign should be your group's own original work and should reflect a strong understanding of the client and its goal, an understanding of the research and strategy that supporting your campaign concepts, and the creativity to create a unique campaign that the client believes could be done and would be effective in reaching its goal.

I am in ongoing conversations with industry professionals to ensure course policies around AI reflect the current industry standard. Communication professionals share that they use AI for idea generation, data analysis, drafting smaller content pieces such as headlines and social media content that then go through a rigorous review process, but that they do NOT allow AI drafting of materials intended to go directly to clients or audiences. If AI can produce a better campaign than your group can produce, why would a client need to hire and pay you? The human element remains vital, but AI allows us to produce better campaigns than ever before. I want you to feel confident in your knowledge and use of AI, as this likely will be an expectation of employers in our industry. I also want you to understand the ethical, legal and professional repercussions of using AI in ways that cross lines in any of these areas.

If I suspect that you have used GenAI on an assignment or in a way for which it is prohibited, I will ask you to explain your process for completing the assignment in question. Submission of GenAI-generated content as your own original work is considered a violation of Ohio State's Academic Integrity policy and [Code of Student Conduct](#) because the work is not your own. The unauthorized use of GenAI tools will result in referral to the [Committee on Academic Misconduct](#).

GenAI is evolving rapidly. If you have questions about this course policy or your use of GenAI, whether in standalone applications like Microsoft Copilot or embedded in other tools, please contact me at Sterenber.2@osu.edu.

Weather or other short-term closing

Should in-person classes be canceled, we will meet virtually via CarmenZoom during our regularly scheduled time. I will share any updates via email/Carmen announcement.

Course Technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

Carmen:

- I will post course information, readings and notes on Carmen. Your grades also will be posted on Carmen. You have one week after grades have been posted to inquire about a missing grade or a grade you believe to be incorrect.
- Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit [Carmen.osu.edu](https://carmen.osu.edu).
- Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen>
- This course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor. [Carmen accessibility](#)

Office Hours & Email

I will hold office hours both in person and via Zoom ([Carmen Zoom](#) help guide). Office hours are the best place to ask in-depth questions about course readings or lectures, as well as any question about grades. I am also happy to give you feedback on your work *at least 48 hours before* the assignment is due during office hours. Email should be used to schedule an appointment during or outside of office hours or for *short* questions clarifying class assignments or specific items from lectures.

Office Hours Zoom:

<https://osu.zoom.us/j/94162584331?pwd=bE1RQ2k2RFo1S2krcE1Ya3lieFBnUT09>

Meeting ID: 941 6258 4331

Password: 906047

Course Communication

I will notify you of any reminders, schedule changes, other updates, etc. by email, so check your email frequently. Email is a professional obligation. The best way to contact me is through email at sterenberg.2@osu.edu. For email, please include COMM 4337 in the subject line to ensure your email receives high priority in my inbox.

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.

This course follows university requirements in the following areas:

- [Religious Accommodations](#)
- [Academic Misconduct](#)
- [Disability Statement \(with Accommodations for Illness\)](#)

- [Intellectual Diversity](#)
- [Grievances and Solving Problems](#)
- [Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct](#)

Food Security

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. (<https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org/>, 614-688-2508).

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF (MENTAL HEALTH STATEMENT):

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 through the 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

DISCLAIMER: I reserve the right to alter the scheduled topics or class format as the semester progresses. These changes will be announced via Carmen announcements or email so please check regularly, especially on class mornings.

DATES	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS (Completed BEFORE class)	TOPIC
Week 1 1/13	Review syllabus and explore Carmen setup	Course Introduction/Preview Syllabus Campaign Process Overview
1/15	- Phase 1 Intro, Step 1 Quiz #1 (Phase 1, Intro, Step 1; Due by 11:59 Sunday 1/18)	Assign Section 1 Step 1: Analyzing the Situation
Week 2 1/20	Step 3	Step 3: Analyzing the Organization Assign Client Memo
1/22	Questions for client prepared Quiz #2 (Step 3; Due by midnight this Sunday)	Group Contract Workshop Preliminary Client Research
Week 3 1/27	Step 4	Step 4: Analyzing the Publics Establishing secondary research questions/making assignments
1/29	Quiz #3 (Step 4; Due by midnight this Sunday)	Meet the Client – (tentative)
Week 4 2/3	Step 2 Client Memo Due by midnight	Step 2: Choosing Research Methods Building primary research plan
2/5	Quiz #4 (Step 2; Due by midnight this Sunday)	Group Meetings: Secondary Research
Week 5 2/10	Step 5	Step 5: Creating Positioning Statements, Goals, and Objectives Campaign Case Study (tentative)

2/12	Quiz #5: (Phase 2, Step 5; Due by midnight this Sunday)	Section 1 Group Work Session
Week 6 2/17	Section 1 Due Wednesday 2/18 by midnight Peer Eval #1 Due Friday, 2/20 by midnight	Section 1 Group Work Session
2/19	Step 6	Step 5: Choosing Proactive & Reactive Strategies Review Section 1/Begin Section 2
Week 7 2/24	Step 7	Step 7: Developing the Message Strategy
2/26	Quiz #6: (Step 6 & 7; Due by midnight this Sunday)	Review Section 1/Begin Section 2
Week 8 3/3	Step 8	Step 8: Selecting Communication Tactics (Parts 1-4)
3/5	Quiz #7: (Phase 3, Step 8)	Client midpoint meeting (tentative)
Week 9 3/10	Step 9 Step 10	Analyzing Data Step 9: Implementing the Strategic Plan Step 10: Evaluating the Strategic Plan
3/12	Section 2 Due Friday, 3/13 by NOON Peer Eval #2 Due Sunday 3/15 by midnight (THIS IS THE FRIDAY GOING IN TO SPRING BREAK SO DON'T FORGET!)	Group meetings Finalizing Section 2
Week 10 3/17	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
3/19	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
Week 11 3/24	Preparing client pitches	Design Workshop Client Pitch Workshop
3/26	Quiz #8: (Phase 4, Steps 9 & 10; Due by midnight this Sunday)	Group meetings (potentially with mentors)

Week 12 3/31		Groups 1-3 meet with instructor: bring presentation storyboard & 3-minute pitch; Groups 4-6 finalize narrative
4/2	Final Narrative Due to Carmen (Sunday 4/5 by midnight)	Groups 4-6 meet with instructor: bring presentation storyboard & 3-minute pitch; Groups 1-3 finalize narrative
Week 13 4/7	Quiz #9: (Ethics Certificate – complete certificate and upload to quiz anytime in the semester before 11:59 p.m. this Sunday)	Run-throughs Round 1 (Groups 1-3)
4/9		Run-throughs Round 1 (Groups 4-6)
Week 14 4/14		Run-throughs Round 2 (Groups 1-3; fully rehearsed)
4/16		Run-throughs Round 2 (Groups 4-6; fully rehearsed)
Week 15 4/21		Final Prep Day
4/23	Group Presentations to Client (TENTATIVE) Final Proposal PDF and Presentation due to Carmen Peer Eval #3 Due (48 hours after client pitch)	Group Presentations to Client TENTATIVE (Mandatory attendance for all)
	Reserve the right to move presentations to the university-scheduled final exam time if there is an emergency	