

**Fall 2021: COMM 445-001 – Digital Public Relations
Public Relations/Strategic Communication Track
Tues/Thurs, 2:00 PM—3:15PM
Fulton Hall 134**

Course Handles/Hashtags/Websites:
@vinitaagarwal | My Classes Canvas
Course Twitter Hashtag: #VADigitalPR

Instructor Contact Information:

Vinita Agarwal, PhD

Office: FH 272

Office Hours: Monday, noon–3:00 pm; Tuesday/Thursday, 10:00am–11:00am and by appointment

Office Hours over Zoom only: <https://salisbury.zoom.us/my/vinitaagarwal>

Email: vxagarwal@salisbury.edu

Prerequisite

Junior standing and COMM 101 and 102 with a grade of C or better.

Course Description

COMM 445—Digital Public Relations. Designed for the advanced student, the course will teach principles of digital communications management and their application to develop strategy, conduct analytic audience research, design messages and drive behavior, and select from a multitude of digital platforms in achieving their goals and objectives as a digital communications consultant. Students who successfully complete the course will demonstrate a fundamental understanding of leveraging digital communication principles and data-driven audience insight to achieve selected digital engagement goals. COMM 445 is an enhanced elective course in the Fulton curriculum, requiring intensive study in any one area of speech or communication studies, ideally in the student's track. All enhanced courses are offered as a 4-credit class to engage students more fully in the courses they take and provide students with a deeper and more active encounter with the subject at hand.

Learning Objectives

The course provides students with advanced knowledge of digital communication principles, persuasion theory and constructs, and analytic inquiry to guide digital planning and engagement connecting theory to practice. Students gain in-depth experience in designing, planning, and implementing an integrated digital strategy with multi-channel messaging tailored toward achieving specific course goals and objectives. Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- i. Critically evaluate digital communication principles of organizations to identify best practices
- ii. Articulate meaningful research goals to guide digital engagement
- iii. Proficiently utilize digital platforms to drive integrated strategy
- iv. Manage and coordinate a digital content in a fast paced environment
- v. Develop and implement online strategic communications plans
- vi. Utilize data analytics, stakeholder management, messaging, and multichannel tactics
- vii. Design and implement digital micro-campaign
- viii. Monitor tracking after campaign launch to ensure campaign implementation

- ix. Build strong professional relationships based on ethical principles with key audiences
- x. Cultivate critical thinking, presentation, and organizational skills

Required Textbooks

- ◆ Kim, C.M. (2016; newer/older edition okay). *Social media campaigns: Strategies for PR and Marketing*. New York: Routledge

Online Certifications (Tentative—TBD)

- ◆ Google AdWords Certification (<https://support.google.com/partners/answer/3154326?hl=en>)
- ◆ Google Analytics (<https://analytics.google.com/analytics/academy/>)
- ◆ Hootsuite Platform Certification
- ◆ Hootsuite Social Media Management Certification

Recommended: Online Resources:

- Harvard Business Review (<https://hbr.org/>)
- Content Marketing Institute (<http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/>)
- Clickz (<https://www.clickz.com/>)
- AdWeek (<http://www.adweek.com/digital/>)
- Moz (<https://moz.com/>)
- Fast Company (<https://www.fastcompany.com/>)
- Digitalist Magazine (<http://www.digitalistmag.com/>)
- Digital CRM (<http://www.destinationcrm.com/>)
- Information Age (<http://www.information-age.com/>)
- Institute for PR (<http://www.instituteforpr.org/>)
- PR News Online (<http://www.prnewsonline.com/>)
- PR Newswire (<http://www.prnewswire.com/>)

Assignment Description

The practice of PR emphasizes application of sound theoretical principles. Learning outcomes will be assessed in the following three main components of the course (detailed instructions and handouts will be provided at appropriate times in the semester):

1. **Daily application:** Practical, hands-on oriented digital best-practices applying readings
2. **Mini-projects:** Creative accomplishments of mini-goals as assigned during the semester. More in-depth than daily application and focused on digital PR portfolio development.
3. **Applied project:** Application of digital principles toward achieving a strategic communication goal.

Grading

Assignment	Total Points
➤ Daily application	35%
➤ Mini-project	35%
➤ Applied project	30%

Grade Breakdown

A= 90.0% & above; **B**= 80.0%-89.0%; **C**= 70.0%-79.0%; **D**= 60.0%-69.0%; **F**= 59.0% & below

Tentative Syllabus: Meeting Schedule	
Week 1	Aug. 31 & Sept. 2
	<p>(T)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Syllabus, learning goals, class structure, expectations <p>(TR)</p> <p>1-Social Influence—Understanding the development, value, and role of social media for organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Organizational Culture
Week 2	Sept. 7, 9
	<p>(T)</p> <p>1-Social Influence—Understanding the development, value, and role of social media for organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The social principle ▪ Developing and defining online communities ▪ Developing and defining online communities <p>(TR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-project (discuss)
Week 3	Sept. 14, 16
	<p>(T)</p> <p>1-Social Influence—Understanding the development, value, and role of social media for organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing engagement with social media communities • The need for more than just tactics • Developing a social media process <p>(TR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-project (class)
Week 4	Sept. 21, 23
	<p>(T)</p> <p>2-Step 1: Listening—Developing research, discovering data, and applying meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational background • Social landscape <p>(TR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-project (discuss)
Week 5	Sept. 28, Sept. 30
	<p>(T)</p> <p>2-Step 1: Listening—Developing research, discovering data, and applying meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social landscape • Sense making

	<p>(TR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mini-project (class)
Week 6	Oct. 5, 7
	<p>(T)</p> <p>3-Step 2A: Strategic design—Developing a data-informed social media campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media strategic plan <p>(TR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss applied project
Week 7	Oct. 12, 14
	<p>(T)</p> <p>4-Step 2B: Strategic design—Developing a data-informed social media campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media campaign design • Social media ethics <p>(TR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-project (discuss)
Week 8	Oct. 19, 21
	<p>(T)</p> <p>4-Step 2B: Strategic design—Developing a data-informed social media campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media campaign design <p>(TR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied project discussion
Week 9	Oct. 26, 28
	<p>(T)</p> <p>-Step 2B: Strategic design—Developing a data-informed social media campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media ethics <p>(TR)</p> <p><i>Mini-project: Complete and submit Google Analytics—Beginners' certificate</i></p>
Week 10	Nov. 2, 4
	<p>(T)</p> <p>5-Step 3: Implementation and monitoring—Joining conversations and creating purposeful interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Content calendars <p>(TR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied project
Week 11	Nov. 9, 11
	<p>(T)</p> <p>5-Step 3: Implementation and monitoring—Joining conversations and creating purposeful interaction</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engaging during a campaign <p>(TR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-project (discuss)
Week 12	Nov. 16, 18
	<p>(T) 5-Step 3: Implementation and monitoring—Joining conversations and creating purposeful interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social media and crises ▪ Social fatigue <p>(TR) <i>Mini-project: Complete and submit Google Adwords</i></p>
Week 13	Nov. 24, 26 Thanksgiving Break
	Happy Thanksgiving
Week 14	Nov. 30 & Dec. 2
	<p>(T) 6-Step 4: Evaluation—Showcasing success and growth opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data use throughout a social media campaign • Components to evaluation • The future of social media campaigns <p>(TR) Work on your own / instructor feedback <i>*Portfolio preparation</i></p>
Week 15	Dec. 7, 9
	<p>(T) Applied project presentations</p> <p>(TR) Applied project presentations</p> <p><i>*Final Applied Project portfolios due</i></p>
Week 16	Final Week (Dec. 13–17)
	Thursday, December 16, 2021, 1:30pm–4:00pm

Course Policies

Course Modality

Given the pandemic, the University may need to change our modes of course delivery. If this is the case, this syllabus may be modified in terms of types of assignments, assessments, etc. as appropriate.

Office Hours

Office hours will be held over Zoom. Please notify me ahead of time. Please feel welcome to use the office hours to discuss your class work, project ideas, assignment feedback, digital PR-related professional goals, and course progress.

Equipment Policy

Having a smartphone (Android or iOS) is strongly recommended. Your participation in the course indicates your openness to participate in (and thus critique your participation in) various online, technological, mediated forms.

Copyright Statement

Lectures are recorded or delivered from written notes and electronic files to guarantee they are protected under Federal Copyright law. You are permitted to take notes of lectures and to use course materials for your use while enrolled this course. You may not record or take photos of lecture material without the instructor's express consent, and you may not publicly distribute or display - or allow anyone else to publicly display or distribute - course materials, notes or recordings from class in any form without obtaining prior written permission from the instructor. By taking this course you agree to abide by all course policies.

University Course-Related Policies

Salisbury University expects that all students have read and understand all of the Course-Related University Policies and Resources and thereby agree to honor these standards.

Important course-related policies and resources includes, but are not limited to:

- COVID related return to campus information
- Course registration add/drop/withdraw period
- Academic misconduct policy,
- University resources such as the SU Libraries, Disability Resource Center, Center for Student Achievement and University Writing Center.

The Department of Communication considers academic misconduct as a serious offense and ALL incidences are subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, separation from the University.

Attendance and Participation

At any time, but in these challenging times especially, individual work is required by employers to not only be of high quality, but also be professional and respect work ethics (i.e., not show up late for meetings, miss deadlines). The only way to meet deadlines is to work ahead of them.

The following policies reward you for professionalism and great work ethics:

Digital PR | Dr. Agarwal

- Work is due by the due date/time indicated on the assignment on My Classes.
- If you are required to miss class the day an assignment is due, you must schedule a make-up with me in advance. You may be given permission to submit it earlier. Deadlines apply even when you cannot be there. The same is true for work submitted online.
- If you are absent during a group activity or presentation, you may not receive credit for the assignment.
- You may not make up in-class work because of unexcused absence or habitual tardiness. However, I will drop your lowest in-class grade of the semester.
- The only exceptions to these rules occur when a student submits written verification of a death or life-threatening emergency or when you will miss class to represent the university in an official capacity (in which case, work is due per arrangements made in advance with the instructor). See university policies linked in the section above.
- All this being said, if unavoidable circumstances occur in your life during these times that impede your performance in this course at any time, please talk to me!

Attendance is expected. Research shows students who attend and participate actively in class are significantly more likely to perform better and demonstrate a superior understanding of the material. Participation is an important part of our learning weighted accordingly.

Course Ethos

As an upper-level elective, I expect responsible engagement from every student in class. I will strive to provide each of you with the resources and guidance necessary to achieve the course objectives. I am available to provide feedback, resources, and guidance during class and office hours and by appointment. I will expect you to be an equal partner in your learning. As an intensive, immersive course involving deliberation, practice, application, and critique, the course is designed to promote your consistent engagement with course content through the semester. Any personal accommodations made during the semester will be at my discretion weighing individual circumstances.

Deadlines, Late Policy, and Make-Ups

Assignments are due promptly by the due date/time. Assignments will be penalized by a 50% off full credit if turned in within one calendar day past due date and will receive no credit if more than one day past due date. General guidelines include:

- ⇒ Monitor your grades regularly on MyClasses. You have one week from the time grades are posted to bring a concern to my notice. After one week, the grade will be taken as final.
- ⇒ Do not discuss grade-related matters at end of class (these can violate your privacy) or via email. Please make an appointment to discuss grade-related matters during office hours.
- ⇒ You are responsible for making up any missed work or content when permitted.
- ⇒ Tardiness is unprofessional. Habitual tardiness will result in loss of class participation points (tardy more than 4 times in a semester). Tardiness is defined as arriving after attendance.

Grading Policy

I strive to enter your grades within a week of their submission. You are responsible for monitoring your grade on My Classes. All grades are considered final after one week of being returned to class. You have up to one week from the day grades are returned to you to

bring any concern to my notice. Requests that bring up grade-related concerns more than a week old will not be reviewed. The review process assumes you accept the possibility the grades can be revised upward/ or downward upon review. I do not keep records of class assignments more than a week after grades are returned. My grading is based on the following broad rule-of-thumb: “C” work meets the basic outlined criteria, “B” work does an excellent job of meeting the outlined criteria, and “A” work not only does an excellent job of meeting the outlined criteria, but also surpasses expectations to demonstrate innovative applications of the content that go beyond the outlined criteria. “D” work does not meet one of the basic criteria outlined for the assignment at an acceptable level, and “F” work is substandard and does not meet basic expectations on two or more of the outlined criteria.

NCA’s Learning Outcomes in Communication

National Communication Association has put forward a template of LOC’s that answer the question: “What should a communication graduate be able to do with a degree in Communication?” As stated on the website, “A central assumption of these LOCs is that Communication constructs the social world and is relational, collaborative, strategic, symbolic, and adaptive.” In line with this premise, this course seeks to cultivate the following LOCs as outlined by NCA, among others:

- i. LOC #4: Create messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context (locate and use information relevant to the goals, audiences, purposes, and contexts, select creative and appropriate modalities and technologies to accomplish communicative goals, adapt messages to the diverse needs of individuals, groups, and contexts, present, adjust, and critically reflect on one’s own messages and the process of communicating).
- ii. LOC #5: Critically analyze messages (identify meanings in messages)
- iii. LOC #6: Demonstrate ability to accomplish communicative goals (self-efficacy—perform verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors that illustrate self-efficacy and evaluate personal communication strengths and weaknesses)
- iv. LOC #7: Apply ethical communication principles and practices (articulate ethical dimensions of a communication situation, choose to communicate with ethical intention, explain relevance of ethical perspectives)

URL:

https://www.natcom.org/sites/default/files/publications/LOC_1_What_Should_a_Graduate_with_a_Communication_Degree.pdf

Remote Instruction

As part of the University’s commitment to returning to normal operations, more than 85% of courses (including this one) are being delivered as face-to-face or hybrid experiences. Faculty have designed their courses for the indicated modality and are not expected to deliver instruction remotely for courses scheduled to be taught in-person. Should you need to miss class due to illness or other life-event, please let your instructor know and consult the course syllabus for the instructor’s policy on absences. The Student Emergency Absence Policy also describes policies and procedures for unexpected events that interfere with class attendance.

Changes to Syllabi

Given the pandemic, the University may need to change our modes of course delivery. If this is the case, this syllabus may be modified in terms of types of assignments, assessments, etc. as appropriate.