

PPAI 2150-S01 Strategic Communication

Course Description: Teaches students communication skills for social change, and examines how individuals and organizations frame issues in order to effect change.

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The Purpose of This Course: This course provides students with information and insights about strategic communication and public policy: how effective messages are created and framed, why we respond to messages the way we do, and how to employ communications strategies to advance political and public policy goals.

In addition, the course aims to give students practical experience in developing and executing an advocacy effort to create or change policy. Finally, the course, through guest lecturers, seeks to introduce students to the perspectives of different critical actors in the policymaking process: public officials, media analysts, interest group lobbyists, speechwriters and other professional communicators.

Course Requirements:

Class participation (25% of grade)

Active participation in class discussions is an important component of this seminar course, and as such will be encouraged and will be a significant component of student evaluation. It will be important to come to class having read the assigned material, having stayed at least somewhat on top of the local and national news, and having ideas and opinions to contribute to the discussion.

Writing Assignments (35% of grade)

There will be writing assignments due every other week. These assignments will all be fairly short, and are aimed at increasing familiarity with and aptitude for writing short, persuasive communications pieces, such as:

- Policy papers/issue briefs
- Press releases
- Editorial/commentary pieces
- Letters to lawmakers
- Letters to the editor
- Talking Points
- Fact Sheets

Group Project (40% of grade)

Each student will be expected to work as part of a group on a policy-oriented advocacy project, local or national. Your group will be expected to become conversant in the policy angles of the topic you choose to work on, and to develop clearly defined goals, strategies, and tactics for reaching targeted audiences to impact change.

It is best to have a group formed and a project topic chosen by no later than the third week of class. When you have a topic idea, even if it is not completely gelled, discuss it with the professor for input and refinement. Once a group has an approved project topic, the group will be linked, when possible, to an outside advisor/reviewer.

Required Readings: Read at least one daily paper each day (preferably *The Providence Journal* plus one other) and try to skim the Real Clear Politics website (www.realclearpolitics.com) at least once each week.

Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, Quill William Morrow, 1993.

George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*, Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004.

Frank Luntz, *Words that Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear*, Hyperion, 2007.

Peggy Noonan, *What I Saw at the Revolution: A Political Life in the Reagan Era*, Random House, 2003.

William Safire, *Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History*, W. W. Norton & Company, 2004.

Stephen Waldman, *The Bill – How Legislation Really Becomes Law: A Case Study of the National Service Bill*, Penguin Books, 1996.

Ron Fournier, Douglas B. Sosnik, Matthew J. Dowd, *Appleby's America: How Successful Political, Business, and Religious Leaders Connect with the New American Community*, Simon & Schuster, 2006.

Harry Snyder, *Advocating for Change Volume 1: Understanding How to Impact Health Policy*, Center for Healthy Communities, The California Endowment, 2006 (this advocacy manual will be handed out in class).

Lori Dorfman, S. Herbert, and K Woodruff, *Communicating for Change Volume 1: Making the Case for Health with Media Advocacy*, Center for Healthy Communities, The California Endowment, 2007 (this advocacy manual will be handed out in class).

Recommended Reading:

Drew Westen, *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*, Public Affairs, 2007.

Date	Class Topic
January 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction; course orientation, Q and A
February 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Competition for Attention: An Escalating Battle Frontline program “The Persuaders” – in-class viewing and discussion
February 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fundamentals of Message, and Why it Matters George Lakoff, <i>Don’t Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate</i>, Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004 In class review of: <i>Advocating for Change: Understanding How to Impact Health Policy</i>
February 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class – HOLIDAY
February 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing Powerful Messages: Finding the Words that Work Frank Luntz, <i>Words that Work: It’s Not What You Say, It’s What People Hear</i>, Hyperion, 2007 Lecture on messaging rules and techniques
March 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Psychology of Persuasion Robert B. Cialdini, <i>Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion</i>, Quill William Morrow, 1993 (chapters 1-4) Messaging rules and techniques Part II Guest lecturer: Christine Heenan
March 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Story of a Winning Campaign – Housing Works RI (culminating in passage of \$5 million housing bond in 2006) <i>Advocating for Change: Making the Case for Health With Media Advocacy</i> Guest lecturer: Ari Matusiak, former Director, HousingWorks
March 16 (note: this class may be moved to either March 19 th or 20 th)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalition Building and Ally Development: The Power of Grassroots Advocacy and E-advocacy and Democracy Online Guest Lecturer: Christopher Hunter Article on Blue State Digital, Cialdini, Ch. 5 - 7 • Group Project Reports and Discussion Drafts of project tools due
March 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class – SPRING BREAK
March 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Role of Research: Measuring Public Opinion in Crafting Communications Campaigns Ron Fournier, Douglas B. Sosnik, Matthew J. Dowd, <i>Appleby’s America: How Successful Political, Business, and Religious Leaders Connect with the New American Community</i>, Simon & Schuster, 2006. Guest lecturer: Geoff Garin, President, Hart Research Associates

April 6	<p>• The Tools and Tactics of Lobbying Stephen Waldman, <i>The Bill – How Legislation Really Becomes Law: A Case Study of the National Service Bill</i>, Penguin Books, 1996 Panel: Elected officials discuss their response to lobbying approaches</p>
April 13	<p>• The Role of the Media Sherry Ricchiardi, “Missed Signals: Why Did It Take the News Media So Long to Break the Story of Prisoner Abuse at Abu Gharib?” <i>American Journalism Review</i>, August/September 2004, Additional readings Panel of print and broadcast media discuss what works to gain their attention</p>
April 20	<p>• The Role of Rhetoric Peggy Noonan, <i>What I Saw at the Revolution: A Political Life in the Reagan Era</i>, Random House, 2003 William Safire, <i>Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History</i>, W. W. Norton & Company, 2004 (select 3 speeches to read and discuss) Guest lecturer: Tom LaFauci, speechwriter</p>
April 27	<p>• Group Project Presentations, critique and discussion from outside reviewers</p>
May 4	<p>• Group Project Presentations, critique and discussion from outside reviewers</p>