

COMM 386 Advertising/PR Capstone
Fall 2015
Room 014 SOC
Tuesdays 4:15-6:45 PM

Instructor: Herb Ritchell

Second floor, SOC, 51 E. Pearson Office #216

Office hours: Tues. & Thurs. 2:30 - 4:00 PM, or by appointment

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Capstone is a course designed to let AD/PR students explore an area in the field of their own choosing. It is an opportunity to do a “deep dive” in a specific practice area and explore career opportunities before graduation.

Learning Objectives & Desired Outcomes

1. Allow students to explore in-depth a specific practice area where they have the greatest interest in advertising or public relations and engage in applied research and creative applications to develop specialized knowledge and skills. Goal: demonstrate knowledge in a practice area.
2. Help each student increase understanding of professional practices and significant issues in that chosen field, and establish relationships with professionals currently working in that practice area. Goal: meet professionals in the practice.
3. Provide an opportunity for each student to develop a communication product that applies key learning from the student’s research to address a communication challenge. Goal: demonstrate problem solving skills with a relevant work product.

Overview

Working with your professor each student completes a research project (“white paper”) exploring a specific field of interest. The research project will include a review of recently published articles, studies and books on the topic—classic secondary research—as well as personal interviews with professionals in the practice area. The personal interviews could include professionals working in an advertising agency, public relations firm, corporation, nonprofit, or community organization, or an expert scholar or researcher. The product of your research and interviews will be a research “white paper” on the topic. It is meant to be a state-of-the-art review of the current practice area. Your white paper is limited to 15 pages including charts and graphs.

As an end product, the student will develop a creative communication product. Based on your research focus, your creative communication product could be an IMC plan for a brand, a communications plan, crisis plan, creative portfolio, ad campaign, a research project, a website or even a business plan. It is way to *demonstrate* what you learned from your research and *put it into practice*. Discuss the specifics with your instructor.

Each student will make a final presentation in class to share their white paper and final communication product. Limit your presentation to about 8 minutes. Cover the key points from your research and personal interviews and then present your creative recommendation with enthusiasm. Convince us you have a great recommendation. You will also turn in a hard copy of your white paper, interview summaries and final communication product.

Rather than place the entire weight of the course on your final product, we have broken the project into specific deliverables due throughout the course. See the details in the Project Summary. Students must attend full group class sessions and meet with the instructor at least twice during the semester to share progress on your projects. Your instructor is happy to help you with other issues as well: selecting a career path, transitioning from to the working world, finding a job, or graduate school.

How you will be evaluated

You take responsibility for your learning in this course. The focus of your research, interviews, and communication product is based on your interests and choices.

Students must meet all deadlines and take a professional approach to their project. Performance in Capstone should represent your highest level of professionalism and knowledge, integrating what you have learned and illustrating your current academic and professional competencies.

Classes – To help stay on track, students requested that capstone meet as a full class periodically. Each class session will examine a phase of the project. It is a time to review your understanding and raise questions. Each student is expected to contribute to class discussions.

Attendance – You must show up for class on time. More than three unexcused absences will reduce your final grade by a grade. A pattern of showing up late will also result in a lower grade. If you can't be at a class, be sure to check with a classmate for notes and assignments. The class schedule is only a guide. There may be changes. You may not know about them if you are absent.

Medical or Other Special Needs – Please give your instructor written notice in the first week of class about any medical or other conditions that may interfere with your individual performance. Documentation for absences due to personal or health problems is required.

Grading Policy – All work is due at the beginning of class on assigned dates. No work will be accepted after the due date. Some items are required, but may not be graded. ***Assignments cannot be accepted by email. Hard copies must be submitted.***

Due Dates & Deadlines – Deadlines for all projects are firm. If you have reason to believe you will not be able to deliver your work to me on time, it is your responsibility to contact me at least one day prior to the due date to discuss why your work will be late. Late work is only accepted at my discretion and it will be graded down one or more grades.

Spelling & Grammar – All assignments must be typed (unless otherwise directed) and free of spelling and grammatical errors. Give yourself time for proofreading, editing and revision. Spell check doesn't catch everything. As a communication professional, you have the responsibility to pay close attention to spelling and grammar. If your work contains spelling or grammar errors, expect a deduction from your grade.

Office Hours – I will be available after class and during posted office hours to answer questions to work with you. If you need to discuss something, it is best to email me to set up a time. Class time will occasionally be given to one-on-one appointments to discuss your progress.

Evaluation and Grading

To keep the entire weight of the capstone grade from falling on the final project, 35% of your grade is based on your project progress, class and individual meetings. Project milestones and meetings are designed to help keep your work on track during the course so it doesn't all pile up at the end. The grading policy may be subject to some change during the semester, but it will be based upon these guidelines:

5% Initial Annotated Bibliography	100-93% = A	77-73% = C
5% Research Report Outline (sections I-IV draft)	92-90% = A-	72-70% = C-
15% Research Report VERY TIGHT Draft	89-88% = B+	Note: as this course is an AD/PR requirement, a grade below C- will require the course be retaken.
5% Two Individual Meetings (2.5% each)	87-83% = B	
5% Participation at Full Group/Class Meetings	82-80% = B-	
55% Final Project (15% Final White Paper; 5% Professional Associations & Final Annotated Bibliography; 10% Personal Interview Summary; 25% Creative Product & Resume)	79-78% = C+	
10% In Class Presentation & PowerPoint The last two weeks of class—attendance required		
100% Total		

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g., failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing your sources. Integrity is one of the most important traits for success. You control your own honor and integrity.

It is dishonest to: 1) Turn in the same work for two classes; 2) Turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or 3) Copy from another student. Consult the *School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity* for specific explanations.