

Strategic Communication Ethics and Law [COM 411-201 (2511)]

Spring 2023

Tu. 7:00-9:30 p.m.

Instructor: Bastiaan Vanacker, Ph.D.

In-person office hours: Tu. 5:00-6:30 p.m. or by appointment

Online office hours: By appointment

Email: bvanacker@luc.edu I will get back to you asap. Do not hesitate to resend your email if you do not get a reply within 24 hours.

Course objectives: Professional ethics and basic knowledge play a crucial role in effective strategic communication. By the end of the term, students will:

1. Recognize the tensions inherent in serving as an advocate for an organization while also having duties to the public.
2. Be able to recognize and critically assess ethical strategic communication issues.
3. Apply classical ethical theories using ethical decision-making processes to evaluate potential courses of action in response to contemporary strategic communication ethics case studies.
4. Summarize the ethical issues specific to the use of “big data” in designing and implementing strategic communication campaigns.
5. Develop a workshop to introduce an ethical decision-making process that you recommend for adoption in an organization or profession.
6. Demonstrate a broad understanding of the history and scope of the First Amendment as well as a thorough knowledge of the laws and regulations that uniquely affect media industries and media professionals.
7. Identify legal problems in real and hypothetical situations and to resolve those problems by applying legal principles.

8. Reflect on the meaning of freedom of speech in society and the rights and duties of media professionals.

Readings:

Duffy, M., & Thorson, E. (Eds.). (2015). *Persuasion ethics today*. Routledge.

Additional readings are listed under each weekly module and are available for download (or links are provided)

Course requirements:

Article post : 5%

Online discussion : 10%

Class participation : 10%

In-class assignments/quizzes : 20%

Midterm : 20%

Final : 10%

Group project : 15%

Ethics case study : 5%

Law case study : 5%

Class Structure

This class will be taught seminar style, meaning that student input and presentation are a big part of this class. The final month of the course will therefore be devoted to student presentations.

Class Policies

Check the lessons tab on Sakai to know what to prepare for each class.

Deadlines are clearly communicated, and no late work is accepted. Therefore, do not wait until the last minute to submit work.

Attendance and participation: Two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. Attendance is mandatory. Generally, excused absences are limited to documented family emergencies and illnesses and participation in certain official Loyola activities (e.g., student-athletes). Though I may excuse a student for other reasons, I will only do so if you communicate with me as soon as

you become aware of your inability to attend a class. If you miss class and only inform me later about the reason when you could have done so earlier, your absence will not be excused.

I expect frequent contributions from all of you. In order to get an A for participation, you need to contribute frequently in a way that reflects familiarity with the readings. You will get a B if you participate infrequently and a C if you only participate when called upon. You will receive a D or lower if your contributions are low quality and infrequent. I will keep you apprised of your score throughout the semester.

I expect you to do the readings before each class as they will be the basis for our lecture. At times, you will be asked to prepare something or take a quiz before coming to class. This will be due by noon on the day of class.

You will not get credit for material turned in late.

Privacy statement

Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Students will be informed of such recordings by a statement in the syllabus for the course in which they will be recorded. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so only with informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording. Recordings including student activity that have been initiated by the instructor may be retained by the instructor only for individual use.

Use of technology

This course will require the use of technology. While students are not expected to own any specific technology for this course, they will be required to use technology to access course content, to finish and submit course work and to communicate with the instructor and other students outside of designated class times.

- The University has provided each student with a Loyola network ID to access University resources. It is expected that electronic communication with the student will be via the Loyola ID and Loyola's e-mail system, which can be accessed at: <https://outlook.luc.edu>.
 - If you choose to use another e-mail address you must re-route your Loyola e-mail to that address.
 - To do this, please visit <https://lpss.luc.edu/SelfService/> and follow the instructions to reroute your e-mail.
 - Your Loyola ID and password is your main resource for accessing Loyola systems. The Password Self-Service system allows students, faculty, and staff on

the University network to reset their own network passwords quickly and independently.

- Go to: <http://www.luc.edu/its/services/password-self-service.shtml> to learn more and to manage your password.
- Course materials will be provided via the learning management system Sakai, which can be accessed at: <https://sakai.luc.edu/>. It is expected that the student will access and send projects and other course work via the Sakai system using their Loyola ID and password.
 - Student instructional guides and video tutorials for using Sakai are available at: <http://www.luc.edu/its/sakai/sakai-student-tutorials.shtml>
 - This course includes online activities including live (synchronous) and outside of designated class time (asynchronous) activities.
 - For online synchronous activities the instructor requires the use of computers with microphones. For these types of activities it is expected that students have access to and setup the necessary equipment before the online class.
 - To check your equipment (browser, webcam, microphone) prior to an online class, use the “Tech Check” utility provided at: <http://luc.edu/digitalmedia/trainingandsupport/techcheck/>.
 - To learn more about technology support for online course activities go to: <http://luc.edu/online/resources/technology/>.
 - Digital Media Services (DMS) manages and maintains several multimedia and digital media computer labs and services across the Lake Shore and Water Tower campuses. Student can visit the labs to; access and checkout various technologies, receive consultation, and access various types of training for coursework. More information and hours of operation can be found at: <http://www.luc.edu/digitalmedia/>.
 - While the instructor will provide access to certain technologies and course materials within the Sakai learning management system, students may need additional technology support. The Information Technology Services Help Desk provides general technology support.
 - Please note that while the ITS Help Desk provides extended hours of support, it is not a 24-hour service.
 - To learn more about the Help Desk Services and the hours of operation please go to: <http://luc.edu/helpdesk/>.
- More information about Information Technology policies and guidelines can be found at: <http://www.luc.edu/its/itspoliciesguidelines/index.shtml>
 - Students new to Loyola University Chicago should consider working through the “Technology Roadmap” for students located at: <http://www.luc.edu/technologyroadmap/newstudents/> .

Academic integrity

Below you will find Loyola’s policy on academic dishonesty. I am reasonable and understand that people can make a mistake in citation. These mistakes will cost you points and you may even get an F for the assignment. You are also to complete all class activities individually unless instructed otherwise.

While I understand that mistakes can be made from time to time, I do not accept that students copy and paste content from the Internet or any other source and pass it off as their own. These outrageous forms of deceptive plagiarism will result in an F for the course at the first infraction.

I ASSUME THAT YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH WHAT CONSTITUTES PLAGIARISM. IF YOU ARE NOT, I SUGGEST YOU GO HERE AND EDUCATE YOURSELF:
<https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/definition.html>

Loyola's policy on academic dishonesty

The basic commitment of a university is to search for and to communicate the truth as it is honestly perceived. The university could not accomplish its purpose in the absence of this demanding standard. To the extent that this standard is respected, a genuine learning community can exist. Students of this university are called upon to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Plagiarism is a serious form of violation of this standard. Plagiarism is the appropriation for gain of ideas, language, or work of another without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the deliberate taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources.

The faculty and administration of Loyola University Chicago wish to make it clear that the following acts are regarded as serious violations of personal honesty and the academic ideal that binds the university into a learning community:

Submitting as one's own:

1. Material copied from a published source: print, internet, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.
2. Another person's unpublished work or examination material.
3. Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit.
4. Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The critical issue is to give proper recognition to other sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty.

Plagiarism on the part of a student in academic work or dishonest examination behavior will result minimally in the instructor assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. In addition, all instances of academic dishonesty must be reported to the chairperson of the department involved. The chairperson may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition

of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct.

Academic cheating is another serious act that violates academic integrity. Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher; providing information to or obtaining information from another student during the examination; attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted; and falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences all are violations of the integrity and honesty standards of the examination process.

In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty across departments, the academic dean of the student's college may convene a hearing board. Students retain the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the academic dean of the college in which they are registered. The decision of the dean is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean.

Grading Scale

A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, F, WF are assigned the following credit points for purposes of grade point average (GPA) calculations: A = 4.0; A- = 3.67; B+ = 3.33; B = 3.00; B- = 2.67; C+ = 2.33; C = 2.00; C- = 1.67; D+ = 1.33; D = 1.00; F = 0; WF = 0.

100 - 93%	A
93 - 90%	A-
90 - 88%	B+
88 - 83%	B
83 - 80%	B-
80 - 78%	C+
78 - 73%	C
73 - 70%	C-
70 - 68%	D+
68 - 63%	D
63 - 60%	D-

below 60% F

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course contents and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 17: Introduction (a-synchronously)

January 24: Ethics and Persuasion

January 31: Codes of Ethics and Ethical Decision-Making Tools

February 7: The First Amendment and Strategic Communication

February 14: Truth, an Ethical and Moral Imperative

February 21: Going Negative: Ethical and Moral Considerations

February 28: Does The End Justify the Means? Controversial Strategic Communications Strategies.

March 7: Spring Break

March 14: Privacy and Behavioral Advertising

March 21: Intellectual Property

March 28: Online midterm

April 4: Prepping group presentation

April 11: Presentations group one, two, and three.

April 18: Presentations group four, five, and six

April 25: Presentations group seven and eight.

Finals' week: Final exam (optional)

Article Post Assignment

Each student will be responsible once during the term for selecting an article for the class to discuss. See below when it's your turn to post. These posts need to be up by noon on the Friday preceding the class they pertain to, so other students have a chance to react.

For the article share (worth 5%), here are the expectations:

- Find a recent (since 2016) article from a credible source. The article should be substantial, not just a few paragraphs. **It should connect in some way to the content of the module's topic(s).**
- You will share this article in the forum along with a 2-3 paragraph thoughtful reaction to it. Look at my article as an example. Do not summarize the article, but provide a connection to other course content, to current events, or to policy debates. Explain why you think this is important for your colleagues to read and jumpstart the discussion.
- Share a link to the article with your classmates by starting a new thread in the forum no later than noon on Friday. By noon on Tuesday, everyone should have posted one or two substantial reactions to the post or to other students' reaction to the post. These reactions are worth 10% of the grade. So each week, each student should have three or four reactions. These reactions should be about 200 words each. Avoid "I agree with you 100%" reactions.
- For the class of January 23, I posted an article. React to it.

Possible sources for news stories:

- Page Center blog <https://bellisario.psu.edu/page-center/blog/>
- Public Relations Today <https://www.publicrelationstoday.com/ethics/examples/>
- Facebook page for Media Ethics Initiative - UT Austin: <https://www.facebook.com/mediaethicsinitiative/>
- Spin Sucks blog by Gini Dietrich <https://spinsucks.com/>
- Council of Public Relations Firms <http://prfirms.org/>
- Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management www.globalalliancepr.org
- Institute for Public Relations <https://instituteforpr.org/>
- International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication <http://amecorg.com/>
- Public Relations Society of America <https://prsay.prsa.org/>

Schedule

January 31: Codes of Ethics and Ethical Decision Making Tools- Cia and Kathryn (post by noon 1/27)

February 7: The First Amendment and Strategic Communication -Trinity and Jocelyn (post by noon 2/3)

February 14: Truth, an Ethical and Moral Imperative - Isa and Eva (post by noon 2/10)

February 21: Going Negative, Ethical and Moral Considerations -- Samuel and Jayla (post by noon 2/17)

February 28: Does The End Justify the Means? Controversial Strategic Communications Strategies -- Mary and Chandler (post by noon 2/24)

March 15: Privacy and Behavioral Advertising-- Yesenia and Neve (post by noon 3/10)

March 22: Intellectual Property -- Mariana and Tatum (post by noon 3/17)

April 5: Topic of choice: Annelise and Kristopher (post by noon March 31)