

AS.480 (COMMUNICATION)

Courses

AS.480.600. Research & Writing Methods. 3 Credits.

Communication professionals take on diverse and multiple roles within and across organizations, but they share one role in common as strategic problem solvers. This course will teach you how to find, read, interpret, evaluate, and apply scientific research studies to solve practical problems encountered by communication practitioners. Topics covered include how to effectively use library resources to find research that can be of strategic value; how different research methods, including focus groups, case studies, surveys, and experiments are used in communication research; how to evaluate the quality of research reports; how to interpret qualitative and quantitative findings, including statistics; and how to distill the information found in research reports down to what is most relevant and usable. In addition to learning how to become a competent and critical research consumer, you will also be exposed to current research across different areas of the communication discipline.

AS.480.601. Foundations of Digital Media. 3 Credits.

The digital age is changing how communication professionals communicate with public groups and how people access, understand, and process information. As a result, digital tools are an increasingly important part of the modern communicator's tool kit. This course examines empirical research that will help communication professionals in the digital age. Topics include creating usable and credible websites and effective internet advertising. The course also examines blogs, social networking, and digital journalism. The digital age is explored through primary research across a range of subjects including public relations, political communication and health communication. Prerequisite: Research and Writing Methods

Prerequisite(s): You must complete AS.480.600 in order to register for this course. You can enroll for this course when registration opens for the next semester.

AS.480.602. Changing Behavior through Communication. 3 Credits.

The goal of many communication initiatives is to encourage some type of behavior change. Communication professionals who understand how people change their behavior can create more successful campaigns. This course surveys major theories used to predict when and under what circumstances individuals are most likely to change their behavior. Behavior change includes a variety of actions, such as voting for a candidate, purchasing a product, joining a social networking group, or adopting a new health habit. Individual-level, interpersonal level, and community-level models of change are covered. By becoming familiar with specific theories and the empirical support for those theories, students learn how to use social science based models to guide their communication strategies effectively. Prerequisite: Research and Writing Methods

Prerequisite(s): You must complete AS.480.600 in order to register for this course. You can enroll for this course when registration opens for the next semester.

AS.480.604. Theory of Mass Communication Practices. 3 Credits.

This course surveys major theories and perspectives on how mass media can influence individuals, organizations and society, with a focus on content areas that have the most strategic relevance for public relations practice. The course covers readings on the role media plays in shaping what issues people attend to, how they think about those issues and potential outcomes; how public relations practitioners attempt to use media strategically to meet their objectives; and the implications that current media systems, technologies, and practices have for their media relations efforts. Prerequisite: Research and Writing Methods
Prerequisite(s): You must complete AS.480.600 in order to register for this course. You can enroll for this course when registration opens for the next semester.

AS.480.605. Organizational Communication. 3 Credits.

This course explores the complexities and strategies of internal and external communications in public, private, and non-profit organizations. As a leadership tool, communications serves a political, informational, symbolic and influential function. Topics covered include a competency-based approach of organizational communication, the interplay between internal and external communications, communicating effectiveness through problem-solving, decision-making, managing conflict and mitigating crises, organizational change management, addressing workforce diversity issues and others. Students gain exposure to various dimensions of organizational communication from different industry leaders and field experts and gain first-hand experience in critiquing, crafting and developing communication strategies, tactics and tools, as communication professionals and leaders in the workplace.

AS.480.606. Persuasion. 3 Credits.

This course addresses two questions of vital importance to communication professionals: what aspects of a message make it persuasive (or not), and what attributes of individual people and audiences make them susceptible or resistant to influence. The course examines all varieties of messaging, from individuals communicating one-on-one, to messages communicated via mass media. We study topics such as how the expertise, trustworthiness, and likeability of a spokesperson can enhance or weaken a message's persuasiveness, and how people's social groups can affect their willingness to believe. The course draws on both theory and empirical evidence to provide students with a well-rounded understanding of influence and persuasive strategies in today's world. Prerequisite: Research and Writing Methods
Prerequisite(s): You must complete AS.480.600 in order to register for this course. You can enroll for this course when registration opens for the next semester.

AS.480.609. Applied Qualitative Research. 3 Credits.

Communication professionals use qualitative methods to craft messages that resonate with audiences. This hands-on class exposes students to qualitative research methods that can be used on the job to guide communication efforts more strategically. Students learn how to design and conduct studies to gain insight into audience perceptions on a variety of issues. Specific techniques covered include in-depth interviews, focus groups, qualitative content analyses, and case studies. Through applied activities, students learn how to collect, analyze, and present qualitative research data. Students should take this course prior to the semester in which they begin their research for Thesis. Prerequisite: 480.600 Research and Writing Methods.

Prerequisite(s): You must complete AS.480.600 in order to register for this course. You can enroll for this course when registration opens for the next semester.

AS.480.613. Communication Ethics in Action. 3 Credits.

Have you ever doubted whether you are doing the right thing as a communication researcher or practitioner? Regardless of whether you realize it, you base your professional decisions and subsequent actions on morals, referring to them in different ways. For example, you may turn to your inner compass, organization's values, or professional codes of conduct. This course will not give you quick and easy solutions; however, it will help you learn how to use an ethics framework with confidence as you move forward in your career. In particular, you will learn how to consider the one or more moral problems related to a situation, facts, options for moving forward, and values to consider throughout the process. Readings will draw from fictional and non-fictional literature, news and popular media, and industry and academic research. Not only the instructor but also other communication professionals will deliver lectures. Throughout the semester, you will work as an individual and in groups to use your critical thinking to complete various activities, including reflection, discussion, presentation, and writing based on current, real-world case studies. Your experience will culminate with a final project.

AS.480.615. Introduction to Storytelling. 3 Credits.

Storytelling is key to how we make sense of the world and is an increasingly important tool for communication professionals in crafting impactful messages to audiences. Stories can be used in a wide variety of contexts that include digital media, health care, branding, PR, politics, organizations, social impact, and entertainment. Stories drive action, create empathy, boost persuasion, encourage brand loyalty, and are more memorable than other forms of communication. This course teaches students about the theory, research, narrative structure, creativity, and neuroscience behind good storytelling. Students will also learn diverse storytelling tools and best practices that allow them to become strategic storytellers and leverage stories to help with the communication efforts of a specific issue, organization, brand, or social cause.

AS.480.620. Becoming a Press Officer. 3 Credits.

Becoming a sought-after press officer takes practice, but it also takes a very specific set of learned skills. This class uses current events and interactive discussions to put into practice skills learned through AAP courses and to focus on what is required to be an effective press officer, press secretary, and communications advisor. It examines the roles, duties and responsibilities of press officers in a variety of settings: on Capitol Hill, in federal agencies, the White House, industry associations, non-profit and advocacy organizations, domestic and international political campaigns, and on the global stage. The course includes engaging guest lectures that share insight from journalists, press officers, and communications professionals in the field about effective techniques and lessons learned. Students will engage in real-time exercises that deal with typical situations that a press officer faces in the course of a day, and participate in discussions on the complex environments in which a press officer works. In addition to gaining valuable skills, students will complete this course with a portfolio of writing samples that mimic what would be expected from a press officer.

AS.480.624. Public Affairs Communication. 3 Credits.

This course is designed to give students an opportunity to learn about strategic online approaches and techniques affecting and influencing public affairs. During this course, students will develop the knowledge to: Distinguish between public affairs and other forms of communication, such as public relations, Describe the different components of digital public affairs communications, Conduct basic outreach and adhere to ethics guidelines, Propose and choose from the most effective public affairs tools and tactics to achieve a client's goals, Describe the role of stakeholders and create a target list of issue stakeholders for an issue-based organization or corporation that practices corporate social responsibility, Create a comprehensive public affairs influence plan.

AS.480.629. Public Relations in the Age of Digital Influence. 3 Credits.

Marketing and communication are changing. The levers that we have pulled for years to sell products and services, change behaviors, and advocate for causes, no longer work the way they did. As trust in media and marketing plummets, trust in our peers, friends, family, and colleagues rises. Today we recognize new influencers in the people sitting next to us. Now, sparking a digital conversation is just as important as crafting messages, forming partnerships, and driving media coverage. Call it influencer marketing or brand stewardship in the network age; it's all public relations. This class covers how to design impactful public relations strategies in the age of digital influence and, ultimately, how to support business imperatives more effectively through public relations.

AS.480.632. Digital Political Strategy. 3 Credits.

No president will ever be elected again without an internet strategy. Mobile phones and Facebook are being used to organize mass protests. Thanks to YouTube, two Senators lost elections, and bloggers took down former CBS anchor Dan Rather and former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. Clearly, the world of political and issue campaigns has changed in the digital age. In this course students explore new strategies possible in a networked world and learn what it takes to be a digital political strategist.

AS.480.634. Journalism & Publishing in the Digital Age. 3 Credits.

From charges of fake news to viral hoaxes that spread on social media after breaking news events, it's crucial to understand and judge the credibility of the news we consume. In what has become a 24-hour news cycle, news consumers need to have the necessary skills to navigate the digital media landscape, assess the credibility of the news organizations that produce stories, determine authenticity on social media, and gain insight into how reporters produce their work. This course aims to provide these skills through a constantly updated guide to a rapidly shifting media landscape. We'll consider current challenges, including journalism's collapsing business model, the role of platforms such as Facebook and Google, and the loss of local news and the impact of the resulting news deserts. We'll also review the guidance of leading media critics, and attempts by news organizations to engage their audiences using newsletters, events, and other methods. And we'll read and assess a wide range of stories and sites, from niche news gatherers like The Information, to upstarts like BuzzFeed and Vox, to legacy sites like The Atlantic and the New York Times.

AS.480.635. Communication.org:Not-for-Profits in the Digital Age. 3 Credits.

Students examine the primary reasons non-profit organizations exist, and the unique communication challenges they face in reaching their audiences and motivating their desired behaviors. They will examine leading trends in 21st century communication, and assess how non-profit communicators can capitalize on these trends for the benefit of their organizations. Finally, they will devise practical solutions to one or more of a non-profit "client's" challenges, using one or more of a wide variety of communication tools offered in the current medialandscape.

AS.480.636. Web Writing and Content Strategy. 3 Credits.

You have 3.5 seconds to capture a web visitor's attention. How do you make sure your website entices them to stick around and learn more? This course examines how compelling web content is essential to engaging visitors and driving their behavior. We'll explore writing styles appropriate for B2B and B2C websites and blogs, and work with a variety of content formats, such as videos, infographics, contests, polls, and more. Using the website as the hub for content, we'll cover techniques for driving web visitors to your site with inbound and outbound content marketing strategies. We'll discuss the intersection of search engine optimization, social media and content marketing and the importance of an integrated approach to content creation and distribution. Lectures and exercises draw on real-world examples from a variety of industries. By the end of the semester, students will be able to create and execute a comprehensive content marketing program.

AS.480.637. Using Social and Digital Media. 3 Credits.

In this class students learn about multiple social and digital media tools, such as blogging, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, along with platforms to manage social media content and understand social media analytics. Students apply what they learn by developing a social media campaign for a company or organization that they choose. Each week, students learn how to use social media tools to effectively tell an organization's story. Students also learn the theories behind why social and digital media shape the ways that customers, advocates, audiences and consumers are interacting with influencers and organizations. By the end of the semester, students will be able to not just answer, but inspire, the inevitable questions: Why should we care about social media? How can we put social and digital media to work for our personal and organizational brands?

AS.480.638. Utilizing Images: Media Literacy In Practice. 3 Credits.

This course will teach you how to critically evaluate media, create effective visual communication by identifying key elements of a visual message, and apply relevant theory as it relates to visual message design. This course provides an overview of the approaches and strategies communication practitioners use to incorporate media literacy in their practices. This course will address the following questions: What is media literacy and how does it relate to visual communication? How can visual media be used effectively to promote strategic messages or positive change? How can we critically evaluate the quality of visual messages and create effective and ethical visual communication?

AS.480.639. Advanced Social Media Management. 3 Credits.

In today's complex digital media environment, companies and organizations expect communication practitioners to possess advanced social media management skills. Students in the Advanced Social Media course will gain in-depth knowledge of social media ecosystems, social business models, and digital media policy and law. In addition, students will have an opportunity to analyze quantitative and qualitative data to extract audience insights, develop and implement strategies, create engaging content and messages, and ultimately become skilled social media practitioners.

AS.480.640. Health Communication. 3 Credits.

This survey course will provide a broad overview of topics relevant to health communication research, theory, practice, and promotion. Students will learn about the history and evolution of health communication, examine multiple levels of communication (including intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and societal), various channels of communication, and the importance of ethics in communicating about health. Class members will examine links between health, communication, culture, health literacy, and health disparities. Students will also evaluate and develop health communication interventions. The primary focus will be on investigating the role of health communication in improving health care delivery and better patient outcomes.

AS.480.642. Corporate Social Responsibility Campaigns. 3 Credits.

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) movement is a world-wide phenomenon, and corporations, trade associations and nonprofits are being asked to step up and be accountable. Public relations and communication professionals need to develop the skills to prepare strategic communication plans that reflect their organization's commitment to CSR in order to protect and enhance their employer's reputation in the marketplace. This course examines the global CSR movement, explores the communication challenges it presents and offers practical suggestions and tactics to respond to this trend. The class features in-class activities, outside research and guest speakers from NGOs, communication firms, and major corporations with practical advice on meeting this challenge in the global marketplace.

AS.480.643. Branding and Advertising. 3 Credits.

Branding and advertising are major components of any business or non-profit organization. Showcasing products and services in creative ways increases visibility and improves sales. This course teaches students how to develop brands, create concepts and develop advertising campaigns. Students also learn practical tips including how to organize a creative department, write a creative brief, create budgets and time-lines, research and purchase visual imagery, and how to determine appropriate media for particular branding and advertising campaigns.

AS.480.645. Health Literacy, Language and Culture. 3 Credits.

This course offers a skills-oriented approach to addressing literacy, language and culture within a health care context. Understanding the relationship between literacy, language and culture will benefit those in health communication, as well as professionals in areas such as public and media relations, digital communication, political communication, and corporate and non-profit communication. Students will explore how low literacy and poor health literacy affect quality and outcomes at the individual and systems level and consider the integration of health literacy, cultural competency and language assistance strategies to reduce disparities in health and well being. Overall, this 13-week course aims to improve the cultural and health literacy competency of professionals and the systems in which they work.

AS.480.646. Managerial Communication. 3 Credits.

Writer and historian James Humes said, "The art of communication is the language of leadership." It is that simple comment that forms the foundation of this course. Here students explore the role of communication with stakeholders including subordinates, superiors, internal and external customers, suppliers and the community. Students examine effective communication in hiring and promoting, in conflict, in community interaction and in the internal communication of an organization. The class is built around three precepts or questions: With whom does one communicate, what does one communicate and how does one communicate effectively?

AS.480.653. Communicating for Social Change. 3 Credits.

How do professionals in the nonprofit/government/issue-oriented world determine what communication strategies will help their cause? Students will be introduced to various critical theoretical frameworks and sets of conditions that describe how social challenges occur. Students in this skills-based course will individually identify a social change challenge, target specific audiences and develop various communication strategies and tactics that will advocate for, and guide their desired social change. Examples are based on global real-world experiences and address some of the challenges involved in working in the nonprofit space.

AS.480.654. Strategic Communication Program Management. 3 Credits.

This course covers strategic leadership and communication program development, management and evaluation. It emphasizes formative communication research, strategic communication objectives and message design, selection of media, development of materials, management of teams and impact evaluation. Crisis and issues management as well as the use of new communication technologies will also be covered. The course will focus on a step-by-step design of a communication program using SCOPE (Strategic Communication Planning and Evaluation) worksheets. The course requires you to develop a strategic communication plan. This course combines reality-based and conceptual approaches to provide you with the intellectual tools needed to assume senior management or outside counsel roles in developing and implementing fully integrated communications programs. You will prepare for program management by asking - and answering - appropriate questions about goals, activities, management, and measurement. There will be core readings as well as use of research and planning exercises.

AS.480.655. Censorship, Freedoms, and Communication Regulation. 3 Credits.

Communication professionals must often grapple with issues of whether and how their fields are regulated. These concerns are magnified for organizations working in global contexts, forcing practitioners to consider issues of censorship and regulation within multiple jurisdictions. Knowing these rights and boundaries allows professional communicators to protect their work as well as to serve their audiences most effectively. Using the United States as a starting point, this course will explore legal trends and issues that affect communicators and their audiences while also comparing to international regulations. Learn more about the course by viewing an overview here: <https://youtu.be/hB5M4bUIViM>

AS.480.657. Introduction to Public Relations. 3 Credits.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics lists public relations as one of the fastest growing professions in the United States. This introductory course, designed for career changers and those new to public relations, details the ideas, skills, and principles that underlie the public relations craft. Students in this class study the role and contributions of public relations practitioners in contemporary society, learn about potential legal and ethical aspects of the practice of public relations, study the communication process and how persuasion is used with various audiences, and learn how to develop a strategic communication plan to achieve specific goals and objectives. The class will also introduce students to specialized practice areas within the public relations field such as business and industry, government, nonprofit and associations, and health care.

AS.480.658. Public Relations Writing. 3 Credits.

The primary goal of this course is for students to develop the professional-level persuasive writing skills expected of the best PR practitioners. Students are given weekly writing assignments outside of class and write on deadline during many class periods. The course covers various forms of public relations writing including press releases, op-ed essays, crisis communications and internal communications. Written work is judged using 10 tenets of good writing: organization, persuasion, clarity, focus, flow, tone, proper usage, timeliness, accuracy and relevance.

AS.480.659. Risk and Crisis Communication. 3 Credits.

This course provides students with a fundamental understanding of crisis management, risk communication, media relations, and public-opinion research techniques in multiple contexts. It introduces students to crisis management principles, strategies, tactics and communication methods. Course participants work as a team to develop a crisis management plan for analysis and discussion. Successful students are able to transfer to the workplace the knowledge and skills developed in this course. Students learn to predict, manage, and control real-world controversies that they may confront as they pursue their careers. Moreover, students are able to manage effectively, participate in, and control volatile situations involving the news media.

AS.480.660. Media Relations. 3 Credits.

Media outreach is a critical piece of any strategic communication effort. This course prepares students to build, implement, and measure earned media programs that achieve policy, business and philanthropic objectives. Class lectures, guest speakers, readings and assignments give students an understanding of the priorities and expectations of various types of contemporary media, and how to successfully engage them through research-based strategies and tactics designed to reach key audiences.

AS.480.662. Opinion Writing. 3 Credits.

In this age of social media, opinions are everywhere, swirling around us like swarms of gnats. That means the art of outstanding opinion writing—producing persuasive, reasoned, sometimes emotional pieces that resonate deep and wide—remains more important than ever. In this course, we'll delve into various forms of opinion writing: op-eds, personal essays, columns, reviews and criticism, blogs, humor and satire, and even social media posts. We'll also examine how to avoid plagiarism, libel, and ethical breaches, how to construct a powerful argument, how to sidestep logical mistakes, and how to make your writing memorable. And we'll discuss how to pitch editors to ensure your opinions find an audience. Above all, we'll become more adept at shaping and conveying our opinions, helping us cut through the chatter and lend our true voices to the conversation.

AS.480.663. Integrated Marketing Communication. 3 Credits.

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) breaks down the traditional advertising, public relations, and marketing silos by challenging practitioners to apply the optimum mix of media and message to motivate target audiences to act. An increasingly complex digital environment supports the need to embrace IMC as a comprehensive approach. In this course, students learn what IMC is, its relevance in an online world, and how to apply the appropriate communication channels and messages based upon audiences' needs and the business realities of marketing campaigns. During the semester, students develop a toolkit of steps to follow to attain marketing success. Through simulation exercises, case study analysis, and self-directed reading, students develop a results-oriented and measurable marketing campaign proposal.

AS.480.665. Speech Writing. 3 Credits.

Speech writing is one of the most important but least instructed skills for communications professionals. Through hands-on practice, students learn to write speeches for diverse audiences and contexts. Throughout the course, students will curate a speaker's narrative and public persona to develop a portfolio of work. The portfolio encompasses speeches for ceremonial occasions, public policy speeches and the keynote address. The course also incorporates practical considerations such as the speech writer's role in analyzing speaking situations and audiences, and collaborative drafting processes typical of large organizations.

AS.480.668. Understanding Markets and Audiences. 3 Credits.

This course demonstrates the important role market research—and the use of existing data to better understand audience and environment—plays in the overall campaign process. This course will focus on the integral steps that facilitate target audience definition and how to extract a keen understanding of this audience and its interactions within its environment to develop effective campaign strategy. The course's structure and various assignments will often mimic a client/consultant relationship to ensure a real-world experience. To that end, the instructors will play the role of "client" in many instances, asking students to articulate how an assignment or deliverable contributes to the overall goals of the campaign.

AS.480.675. Public Policy Management & Advocacy. 3 Credits.

Washington D.C. is home to thousands of organizations attempting to influence public policy. Associations, foundations, think tanks and private lobbying firms are all competing for the attention of policymakers and the public. These groups invariably need competent communicators who can help them cut through jargon, crystallize their messages and strategically communicate with the key audiences imperative to advancing their policy goals. This course introduces students to the deliberate process organizations undertake to speak out on issues and exert influence over the policies that have the potential to impact them and the way they do business. The class will cover how organizations conduct advocacy efforts and how communication is used as a tool to advance policy change. Students will gain a practical understanding of how policy groups and communications professionals operate in the field.

AS.480.680. Nonfiction Filmmaking. 3 Credits.

Today's communication environment calls for a good understanding of the process and methods of nonfiction filmmaking. This course introduces students to nonfiction storytelling in the motion picture medium, from conceptualization to writing to production. Using smartphones, simple production equipment and editing software, students will produce their own videos and be prepared for real-world production with professional crews.

AS.480.682. Health Psychology & Behavior Change. 3 Credits.

This course provides an overview of health psychology: the scientific study of behaviors and cognitive processes related to health states. It addresses the mind/body connection, the influence of social and physical environments on our health, cognitive processing of health information, health belief models, and the link between personality traits and health. Understanding the interactions between these biological, psychological, and social influences on individuals' health states is a key element in developing effective health communication and intervention programs. Students approach all course topics from both theory-driven and applied perspectives.

AS.480.686. Entertainment-Education. 3 Credits.

This course explores the various ways communication professionals can use entertainment to educate people and encourage them to adopt and enjoy improved life styles. Throughout history, stories, drama, poetry, music, dance, and other entertainment formats have been used to enlighten and educate both adults and children. In today's society, the channels of communication are ever increasing. This course investigates ways in which education can be subtly but effectively worked into both new and time-honored genres of entertainment to foster positive behavior change.

AS.480.687. Intercultural Communication. 3 Credits.

This course examines the meaning and importance of intercultural communication as it applies to individuals, groups, organizations and nations. Students examine the meaning of "culture" and how "culture" can affect personal, national and international understanding and communication, beliefs and behaviors. The course examines the difficulties and dangers that can result from cultural misunderstanding. In a modern world with diverse communication methods, there is an ever-increasing need for intercultural understanding and communication. The course investigates the various ways in which cultures differ and the necessity of understanding and respecting other cultures. The course assists communication professionals to be more effective with external communication campaigns in other countries and internal communication within a diverse workplace. The course emphasizes clear and logical spoken and written expression to enhance individual ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures.

AS.480.800. Thesis. 3 Credits.

This is the culminating course of the thesis process. Students enrolled in this course will complete their theses and present their research to a thesis committee. Students must apply for enrollment in the thesis course at least two months before the beginning of the semester in which they would like to participate in the course. The application process requires submitting a formal research proposal to the thesis research committee. If the application is approved, the student may then register for the thesis course. The course will require regular meetings with a thesis advisor, research and writing benchmarks toward completing the project, and a successful thesis defense at the end of the semester. Prerequisites: AS.480.600 Research and Writing Methods, and one research methods course (AS.480.609 Applied Qualitative Research, AS.470.854 Fundamentals of Quantitative Method, AS.470.681 Probability and Statistics, or another approved course).

AS.480.804. Practicum. 3 Credits.

Strategic-planning students complete the Practicum course during their last semester in the MA in Communication program. This optional core course offers a culminating experience that helps students integrate new or enhanced capabilities into a significant evidence-based project relevant to their profession. Each student can identify an organization or individual in need of support for a communication-related project and how to fulfill that need. In addition, the student must prepare (a) a proposal that outlines objectives, scope of work, any deliverables, timeline, and method for evaluating achievement of objectives; and (b) any final deliverables. The student must complete the Practicum course in one semester.

Prerequisite(s): You must complete AS.480.600 in order to register for this course. You can enroll for this course when registration opens for the next semester.