

[COMM 386-202](#)
[\(2457\) HRITCHELL](#)
COMM 386 Advertising/PR Capstone
Fall 2020
Zoom Online Tuesdays 5:30 – 8:00 PM

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Capstone is a course designed to let AD/PR students explore an area in the communication 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 the 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 white paper (research 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 industry/practice area. Your white paper is limited to 12 pages double spaced 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, PR 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 PowerPoint 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 email me a pdf of your white paper, interview summaries and final communication product on Tuesday, December 1.

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 class Zoom sessions and meet with the instructor twice (via Zoom or maybe on campus) during the semester to share progress on their projects. Your instructor is happy to help you with other issues as well: selecting a career path, 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 you stay on track, students have requested that capstone meet as a Zoom class periodically. Each class session will examine a phase of the project. It is a time to review your project and raise questions. Each student is expected to attend the Zoom class sessions.

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.

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 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 in your grade.

Office Hours – I will be available if you need to discuss something. Email me to set up a time. Time after class will occasionally be available for 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 attendance 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% White Paper Outline (sections I-IV)	92-90% = A-	72-70% = C-
15% White Paper TIGHT Draft	89-88% = B+	
5% Two Individual Meetings (2.5% each)	87-83% = B	
5% Participation at Full Group/Class Meetings	82-80% = B-	
	79-78% = C+	
55% Final Project (15% Final White Paper; 5% Professional Associations & Final Bibliography; 10% Personal Interview Summary; 25% Creative Product & Resume)		Note: as this course is an AD/PR requirement, a grade below C- will require the course be retaken.
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.

Syllabus Statement

In this class software will be used to record live class discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions will be recorded. These recordings will be made available only to students enrolled in the class, to assist those who cannot attend the live session or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. All recordings will become unavailable to students in the class when the Sakai course is unpublished (i.e. shortly after the course ends, per the [Sakai administrative schedule](#)). Students who prefer to participate via audio only will be allowed to disable their video camera so only audio will be captured. Please discuss this option with your instructor.

The use of all video recordings will be in keeping with the University Privacy Statement shown below:

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.