Program: CET Shanghai
Course Code / Title: (SH/BUSN 310) Corporate Communication
Total Hours: 45
Recommended Credits: 3
Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Business Administration and Management / Communication and Media Studies, Public Relations
Language of Instruction: English
Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description
To match today’s world of highly digitized, “always on” information exchange, the field of corporate communication has undergone a dramatic transformation, emerging with increased impact on the image, business model, and profitability of companies. This course aims to increase awareness of the importance of strategic communication in the business and management contexts. The course demonstrates how companies and other organizations generate favorable points of view among all stakeholders through explaining organizational mission, vision, and values, and through disseminating messages, images, and actions designed for specific audiences.

Students develop an in-depth understanding of both external communication systems, including public relations, marketing, political communication, media relations, and social media management, as well as internal communication systems such as interpersonal and cross-cultural communication. The course also explores the importance of integrated communication and trust, the theory of stakeholder management, and other key theoretical frameworks from the studies of core communication and sociolinguistics to the business environment.

Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

• articulate and discuss the importance of corporate communication in terms of corporate identity, image, and reputation.
• understand and apply the Stakeholder Management Theory to corporate communication campaigns.
• identify the key drivers of corporate communication and their potential influence on internal and external communication strategies.
• conceptualize the role of “trust” and the incorporation of “sense of purpose” into corporate communication.
• analyze and critique past and current corporate communication campaigns against a range of diverse measurement criterion.
• prepare and deliver an oral and written report for a corporate communication campaign.

Course Requirements
Students are expected to attend each class as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Active participation is essential. Students are to read all assigned materials before each class session and
come prepared to participate thoughtfully in class discussions. Reading assignments may average 50-80 pages per class. Graded assignments include:

- **Group Written Report:** Students work in small groups to analyze a corporate communication campaign and prepare a detailed report of 3,000 words offering thoughtful, creative, and feasible suggestions for further improvement. Students select a company that has recently faced a serious internal or external issue and analyze the company's ability to resolve the issue and improve public perception via corporate communication. Thinking as consultants, they offer suggestions for how the company could have achieved greater success with its communication campaign. Finally, the group report offers a roadmap of communication strategies to be implemented in the next 6-12 months.

- **Group Oral Presentation:** Students work in small groups to prepare a 12-16 minute oral presentation plus Q&A based on the same content as the written report. The presentation format emphasizes the three components of Big Idea, Support Arguments, and Call to Action. Students receive coaching in effective presentation skills. Teams are evaluated for presentation content, structure, and research rigor; individual marks will be given for individual presentation performance.

- **Final exam:** Students choose from a selection of essay topics for the final exam.

### Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Participation: 20%
- Oral Presentation: 25%
- Written Report: 25%
- Final exam: 30%

### Readings


Outline of Course Content

Topic 1 – Introduction to the Course and Field
- Why corporate communication matters
- What success and failure mean for companies
- How corporate communication fluctuates over time
- Introduction to the concept of trust

Topic 2 – History of Corporate Communication
- Before regulation; the era of muckraking
- The birth of corporate communications
- The merging of public relations and corporate communications
- Fluctuations in public trust for corporate messaging

Topic 3 – Corporate Communication Fundamentals
- Integrated framework for managing communication
- Communication drivers: market, environment, communication channels, organizational
- Consolidated Corporate Communication Strategy Framework
- Convergence of marketing and public relations
- From tactical to strategic communication
- Organizational positioning
- The AIM framework for strategic communication

Topic 4 – Stakeholder Management Theory and Corporate Identity
- Introduction to Milton Friedman and Douglas Freeman
- Corporate identity, image, and reputation
- Corporate identity model
- Corporate rebranding

Topic 5 – Media Relations
- Identity management model
- Corporate media relations management

Topic 6 – Social Media
- Impact of social media on traditional media
- Comparative consumer behavior; social media in the US and China
Syllabus of Record

Topic 7 – Internal Communication
• Evolution; the rise of employee engagement and employee experience
• New ways of working (NWOW) and flat organizations
• Drivers of sustainable employee engagement

Topic 8 – Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
• UN Sustainable Development Goals
• Science-based targets
• Evolution of CSR reporting and the rise of reputation tracking
• Introduction to fair trade

Topic 10 – Government Relations
• Corporate communication and government regulation

Topic 11 – Crisis Communication
• Crisis management processes and norms
• How and why crisis communication differs from standard corporate communication
• Crisis holding statements, press releases, and live briefings
• Social media and crisis communication

Topic 12 – Future trends in Corporate Communication
• Impact of digital tribes and coopting of KOLs
• Native advertising and product placement controversies
• Convergence of online-to-offline