

# Intro to Strategic Media

STRM 3200-001/350

SPRING 2026

Monday/Wednesday 2:20PM-3:45PM

Meeman Room 112

## Prof. Joel M. Nichols

**Office:** 312 Meeman Journalism Building

**Office Hours:** Mondays & Wednesdays 10am – 1pm or by appointment

**Email:** [joel.nichols@memphis.edu](mailto:joel.nichols@memphis.edu)

**Number:** 901.277.3105 (cell)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Catalog description

Overview of professional advertising and public relations practices and their modern roles in society. Explores the history and evolution of advertising and public relations and the nexus of these disciplines and how they relate to overall strategic communication efforts in both agency and corporate settings. Unique aspects of public relations in government, nonprofit, entertainment, sports and other industries are examined and career opportunities in both PR and advertising are discussed.

### Prerequisites

None

### Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

*Public Relations: Competencies and Practice* (1st Edition) by Carolyn Mae Kim. (2019) Routledge. 9781315148106

*M: Advertising* (4th Edition) by William Arens, Michael Weigold, Christian Arens & David Schaefer. (2022) McGraw Hill. 9781351374491

### Classroom Format

This class will be presented through lectures, discussions, multimedia, independent reading and case studies both in class and utilizing online platforms including Canvas and social media sites. This class will meet in person twice a week in room 100. Regular attendance and participation in class is expected and will affect your grade. Part of being successful in this class is contributing to class discussions and activities. There will be many opportunities to contribute, engage or explore topics that may be confusing or unclear during class time, and I encourage each and every one of you to speak up when appropriate.

Class discussions taking place both online and in person should remain respectful and professional, and show respect to all people regardless of background, sex, race, or any other factor. Hate speech will not be tolerated in my classroom and I reserve the right to ask any student to leave if they violate this

boundary. Remember: Public relations is all about creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships and our classroom should be no different.

This class is meant to serve as an introduction to strategic communication fundamentals, public relations and advertising. Our classroom discussions will include the pillars of advertising and public relations as well strategies for putting together integrated campaigns and succeeding in the field.

Students will upload all required assignments to Canvas, and feedback will be given to encourage student improvement. Access to a computer or an electronic device will be required. Please be sure to read the instructions for each assignment carefully, as requirements for each assignment will vary. Assignments being turned in will all need to be submitted as a .doc, .pdf or .pptx file unless otherwise noted. Reach out in class or via email if anything is unclear to you. All individual assignments will be due Sunday nights at 11:59 p.m. central time unless otherwise noted. To allow time for response and clarification, please reach out with any assignment questions at least 48 hours prior to the deadline.

In class activities will take place during regularly scheduled class time and will not be able to be made up outside of class, regardless of the reason for missing. Students will have a few opportunities to make up any points they may miss from such in class activities through extra credit assignments.

In order to succeed in this course, it's imperative to stay engaged in all coursework. If at any point you are concerned about your grade or struggling to grasp course concepts, I encourage you to make an appointment during my office hours so we can work together to find a good solution. Remember that in order for me to help you, communication is key. Also remember that much more can be done if you reach out early on in the semester - if you wait until the middle of November, there likely isn't much we can do to turn things around.

### Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis Canvas home page: <https://memphis.instructure.com/>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for STRM 3200 001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

### Course and Assignment Expectations

Course work will be accomplished every week, including readings, assignments and quizzes to check your learning and comprehension. Each assignment must be completed by its due date and time (Central Time), which may vary by assignment, so make sure to check each individual due date and time to ensure that you post by the deadline.

### Quality of Work

All work in this course should follow AP Style, including proper spelling, grammar, and language. A large part of strategic media is having a polished written concept of what you are communicating. This includes all class work and presentations. Problems in these or other areas will result in the deduction of points.

I expect your work to be good and original, meaning it's yours. If you quote anything or get information from any other source, it should be fully cited. If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources.

### **Chat GPT / AI**

You must obtain permission from the instructor before using ChatGPT or other AI tools to assist with assignments in this course. Once permission is granted, AI may only be used as directed. Assignment submissions may run through AI detection software. Unauthorized use may result in a failing grade or a request to resubmit an assignment. Be prepared to submit any prompts you used for assistance with your assignment as well as the original ChatGPT output and to be able to explain/show how you fact-checked and improved upon the AI's work.

### **Repetition of Courses and Coursework**

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the resume and logo).

### **Questions about Grades**

If you would like to ask about a grade, please make an appointment to meet with me outside of class time, as I will not discuss grades via email or during class.

Additionally, you are responsible for tracking your grade and meeting with me early in the semester if you are concerned about your overall grade. Meeting early and often can help both parties involved find ways to improve student-instructor understanding and quality of work.

### **Plagiarism policy**

*First offense:* Redo for 50%, warning

*Second offense:* Automatic 0, no redo

*Third offense:* Automatic class fail

*Final assignment, regardless of which offense:* Automatic 0 on assignment

**\*\*Any instances of plagiarism may result in a note being added to your department file.**

### **Late work**

**\*\*\*Please note that the below late policy applies only to weekly assignments and projects. In class work, discussions, surveys, quizzes and exams will not be accepted late.**

<24 hours late: -5%

24-48 hours late: -10%

1 Week late: -20%

2-3 Weeks late: -30%

I will not accept late work after three weeks, as at that point the work is no longer helpful to current course concepts. Waiting until the end of the semester and submitting everything at once is not an option.

If at any point you feel yourself falling behind, please reach out to me as soon as possible so we can work together to make a plan for you to get caught up. I'm happy to help each and every student catch up and not fall behind, but that help requires you to take on the responsibility of communication. If I don't know, I can't help you.

## Grading

There are 1,000 possible points in this class. At the end of the semester, your class points will be calculated and rounded up to the nearest whole number. Letter grades will be determined according to the scale below. If additional points are added or subtracted from this possible point total, students will be provided with an updated point to letter grade scale.

**A+** = 967 – 1,000 points, **A** = 934 – 966, **A-** = 900 – 933 points  
**B+** = 867 – 899 points, **B** = 834 – 866 points, **B-** = 800 – 833 points  
**C+** = 767 – 799 points, **C** = 734 – 766 points, **C-** = 700 – 733 points  
**D** = 667 – 600 points  
**F** = 600 and fewer points

### Grading Philosophy.

A=Professional quality work that could be use with little or no modification

B=Good to excellent work and exceeds requirement, but would require revision to be used professionally

C=Satisfactory work and adequately meets requirement, but would need significant revision

D=Barely satisfies minimum requirement and below average quality

F=Unsatisfactory work and does not meet minimum requirements

For larger assignments, rubrics have been provided in Canvas. Use these rubrics to help guide you to success!

### Individual Assignments

Weekly Assignments	<b>200 points</b>
In Class Activities & Discussions	<b>150 points</b>
Quizzes	<b>100 points</b>
Projects	<b>400 points</b>
Midterm & Final	<b>150 points</b>

**Total: 1,000 points**

**Attendance:** You will be the most successful in this class if you attend regularly, participate in class discussions, and stay engaged with lectures and activities. I understand that life happens, so I will give you four “no questions asked” absences that will not count against you. However, in class activities done in your absence cannot be made up. After you have missed four classes, absences will begin to count against your weekly assignments grade at five points per absence.

Attending class on Zoom, unless specifically scheduled by the professor for the entire class, will not be allowable.

## Honors Component

If you are taking this class as an honors class, you will need to fulfill the honors project requirement. For the honors project requirement, you will be able to choose from one of the following options:

1. Research paper explaining an issue or specific topic in PR; topic to be approved with instructor
2. Presentation covering a specific skillset in PR with actionable items on how to be successful; topic must be approved with instructor
3. Feature story that includes 3-5 interview sources based on what people think PR is/where the field is headed
4. Podcast about a specific topic in PR, can be completed with another student\*
5. Historical background about public relations that outlines major accomplishments, changes, and key players in the field or public relations
6. Organization Media Audit

\*\*Regardless of choice of requirement, specific assignment must be approved with instructor for each student at least three weeks prior to the deadline. More specific expectations and details for each option will be provided upon approval. I recommend meeting with me during office hours to flesh out the details of the honors requirement. The honors component is completely separate from any other class requirements, and a different class assignment cannot be used to fulfill the honors component.

## Assignment Breakdown

More in-depth guidelines posted to Canvas.

**In Class Assignments:** In class activities will be completed to build on course concepts through experiential learning and discussion. Students must be present in class to complete the in class assignment.

**Weekly Assignments:** Weekly assignments will vary in nature as well as points and be used to build on the concepts we are learning each week in class, as well as gauge your progress in the course.

**Quizzes:** A total of five quizzes will be given throughout the semester to test your understanding of course concepts and make sure you are staying current with the material. Quizzes will be given on Canvas with a time limit.. You will have two attempts for each quiz with the highest grade taken. You are welcome to use your notes or book to help assist you on the quiz, but working with another student is prohibited.

**Projects:** Three large projects will be completed throughout the semester to introduce students to three of the major components of strategic media: Advertising, public relations and social media. These projects will require research, strategic thinking and application of course concepts. Students are encouraged to turn in polished, well-thought out projects as they are a significant part of the final grade. Rubrics will be provided for the projects to guide your efforts.

**Midterm and Final:** Both a midterm and final will be given to assess comprehension of major course topics. The midterm and final will be comprehensive.

**Formatting:** All assignments should be turned in as a .DOC or .PDF file unless otherwise stated. If a file is submitted in a format that is not accessible to the professor, the student will have one warning to turn in the correct file within 48 hours of contact. If the file is not turned in within this time frame, faculty is not responsible for grading the assignment. The student will only receive the warning on one assignment; subsequent file issues will count towards a late grade.

When assignments ask a specific question, student is encouraged to write out the question before answering in their turned in document.

## COURSE SCHEDULE.

This is a basic weekly schedule for topics and major assignments over the course of the semester. Although every effort will be made to stick with this schedule, please understand that changes to the schedule may occur. All changes will be announced as soon as possible. All assignments are due on Sunday at 11:59 p.m. C.T. unless otherwise noted.

### *Week 1, Introductions, Primer to Strategic Media*

Readings: Make sure you order your textbook this week!

### *Week 2, Deeper Dive into Strategic Integrated Media, PESO, RPIE*

Readings: Chapters 1 & 7 (M Advertising), Canvas Articles

Assignments: Identifying PESO (A2)

In Class Activity: Working through the RPIE Model

### *Week 3, Welcome to Paid Media! Advertising Introduction*

Readings: Chapters 3, 4 & 5 (M Advertising)

Assignments: Advertising Environment (A3)

### *Week 4, Ad Targeting, Strategy & Process*

Readings: Chapters 7 & 8 (M Advertising)

### *Week 5, Creative Execution, Media Planning and Buying*

Readings: Chapters 9 & 14 (M Advertising)

In Class Discussion/Activity

### *Week 6, Wrapping up Advertising; Intro to Public Relations*

Readings: Canvas Articles

Midterm

### *Week 7, Stewardship & Corporate Social Responsibility; Crisis Communications*

Readings: Chapter 1, 10, 11 (PR Competencies & Practice), Canvas Articles

Assignments: In Class Discussion/Activity

Proving You Know PR (A4)

*Week 8, SPRING BREAK*

**SPRING BREAK**

*Week 9, Earned Media & Media Relations*

Readings: Chapters 22 (PR Competencies & Practice), Canvas Articles

Assignments: In Class Discussion/Activity

*Week 10, Owned Media, Internal Communications*

Readings: Chapter 14 (PR Competencies & Practice), Canvas Articles

Assignments: Project | In Class Discussion/Activity

*Week 11, Hit the Share Button - Let's Talk Socials*

Readings: Chapter 12 (PR Competencies & Practice), Canvas Articles

Assignments: Highlighting Digital Storytelling (A5)

*Week 12, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*

Readings: Chapter 3 (PR Competencies & Practice), Canvas Articles

Assignments: Social Media Project Due

In Class: Discussion/Activity

*Week 13, Wrap Up*

Readings: Canvas Articles

*Week 14, Ethics & Law*

Readings: Chapter 2 (M Advertising), Chapter 5 (PR Competencies & Practice)

Assignments: Reflection Essay (A6)

*Week 15, Review!*

Readings: None

Assignments: In Class Discussion/Activity

End of Semester Survey

Final: Taken on Canvas

## **ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES**

### **Professional Values and Competencies in STRM 3200**

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and in the United States.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

### **How professional values and competencies will be met**

#### *Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)*

- Describe the activities of advertising—what advertising people do.
- Identify target audiences—including under-represented audiences.
- Describe and apply the advertising process—research, planning, message development, communication and evaluation.
- Identify the four-step public relations process and what activities exist within each step.
- Explain the variety of relationships between organizations, media and publics.
- Understand how new technology affects the media and communication.
- Understand what's involved in preparing for and advancing a career in public relations.
- Understand mass communication theories and their application to media professions.

#### *Performance Standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)*

- Demonstrate understanding of class concepts by earning passing scores on exams
- Write a series of response papers to various contemporary issues in the field
- Practice intellectual exchange of ideas in class discussions concerning target audience identification, changing creative strategies and legal issues
- Identify target audiences—including under-represented audiences.
- Describe and apply the advertising process—research, planning, message development, communication and evaluation.
- Read and critically reflect on assigned readings, podcasts, videos, etc.
- Research, interpret and present findings to the class
- Analyze the impact of digital footprints on personal brands
- Produce content for class utilizing appropriate technology

### **How assessment of student learning will be met**

#### *Awareness*

- Identify significant principles and applications in the development of advertising through quizzes and exams
- Identify the historical and theoretical foundations of public relations.
- Recognize the importance of ethics.
- Examine the need for diversity in all areas of mass communication.

#### *Understanding*

- Select audience segments for appropriate strategies within the advertising practice
- Recall the historical and theoretical foundations of public relations during class discussions, exercises and on tests.
- Differentiate between ethical and unethical behavior through examination of PR ethical codes of conduct, situational exercises, and class discussions.
- Express the skills needed to excel in the public relations field.



### *Application*

- Demonstrate within the response papers the practical use of advertising theories and methods
- Discuss course concepts with class demonstrating reflection and critical thinking
- Complete assignments sharpening understanding of public relations, such as researching a public relations firm and presenting findings and interpretation of agency portfolio and website; analyzing personal digital media usage and reporting findings, including where and how changes could improve personal digital brand; and/or creating personal videography for use on YouTube
- Complete several tests and exercises earning passing scores

## JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

### **Portfolio requirement**

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or SquareSpace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

### **Email**

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

### **Electronic devices**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

## AI/Chat GPT

The use of artificial intelligence software, such as Chat GPT, is prohibited in some courses and required in others in Journalism & Strategic Media. Please refer to specific guidelines for this course in the course-specific part of the syllabus.

## Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

## Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C-) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

## Academic integrity

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

## Online SETEs

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the

bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

### **Deadlines**

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

### **AP Style and grammar**

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. You are responsible for learning these rules and checking your work for errors.

### **Disability and accommodations**

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

### **Diversity and inclusivity**

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

### **Weather policy**

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website and the LiveSafe App regarding inclement weather.

### **Student support**

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.