INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

JOEP CORNELISSEN

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the module, students are expected to have acquired:

1. A general insight and basic knowledge of issues and concepts in the area of corporate communication, and involving both internal and external forms of communication.

2. A broad and critical understanding of frameworks, practices and techniques in corporate communication across different organizational and institutional contexts.

3. Practical skills that allow them to assess and apply theory and concepts to real-world cases, and which prepares them for a future career in corporate communication.

COURSE CONTENTS

This module considers both the theoretical and definitional aspects of corporate communication in a wider strategic and organizational context, as well as the practical applied aspects of the subject area. The module will feature ‘real world’ case examples of practice, and will involve students preparing and presenting on some of the topic material.

The overall purpose of this module is to introduce students to theoretical and academic perspectives on corporate communication (which includes public relations), as well as provide them with more hands-on learning opportunities and skill development as future communication professionals.

PROGRAM

Teaching will be through seminar-based case studies, exercises and break-out sessions. Students are expected to participate actively in each class session, and to have read the prescribed book in advance.
OVERVIEW OF COURSE AND PLANNING

The course consist of fifteen sessions in all, in which the whole range of issues, concepts, theories and research in the area of corporate communication is discussed through lecturing, class discussions, and case exercises.

In the first two sessions, students are introduced to contemporary management issues and challenges and its impact on the role of corporate communication.

Sessions 3-5 then provide students with an overview of current theory and perspectives on corporate communication; including key concepts such as stakeholder, identity, branding and corporate reputation.

Sessions 6-9 focus more specifically on key practical areas of corporate communications: the design and implementation of communications strategies and campaigns, the organisation and day-to-day management of communications, and the roles and activities carried out by communications practitioners.

Sessions 10-14 include further depth and reflections on three specialist areas within corporate communication: internal communication, change communication, and media relations.

In session 15 students will sit a written case-based exam.

Part I: Theoretical Perspectives

The first set of sessions (1-2) aims to increase students’ understanding of the distinction between the concepts and operational domains of corporate communication, and specifically internal and external forms of communication

In the following three sessions, the theoretical cornerstones are presented and discussed – the concepts of stakeholder, identity and reputation – that together provide the groundwork for the theory and practice of corporate communications.

Part II: Corporate Communication in Practice

Sessions 6-9 deal as mentioned with the overall strategic management of the corporation and the role of communications therein. It is concerned with the determination of the strategic direction of the firm, as well as the management of strategy processes within the firm. The primary objective of the seminar is for the student to develop a perspective of the communications manager’s role, responsibilities and contribution to corporate strategy. The seminar deals with developing the capability to understand a firm’s strategic situation in depth, and to develop and plan viable communications strategies for dealing with the key strategic issues facing it.

Part III: Specialist Forms of Internal and External Communication

In each of the sessions (10-14) in this final part of the module, we discuss areas of specialist activity within corporate communications including media relations, internal communication, and change communication. Each session consists of a discussion of key principles and best practices within each of these areas; illustrated through case studies.
Relationship of delivery methods to objectives

The mixture of seminar classes and exercises are intended to provide you with essential information on the topic, to help you structure that information and to be a source of explanation. The classes are a vehicle for you to build on the knowledge gained in the formal presentations by the lecturer, and to develop a methodology for applying your knowledge to practical problems.

Feedback to students (formative feedback)

During the course of the module general feedback will be provided in seminar discussions as appropriate to both the group(s) presenting and the seminar participants as a whole. Groups making individual presentations will receive verbal feedback. Furthermore, there will be plenty of time in between sessions for students to ask questions related to the course content.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The assessment consists of a 2-hour examination at the end of the module. During the module, and particularly before the last session, time has been allocated to the lecturer for feedback and preparation for the exam. Whilst the exam grade will be 70% of the overall grade the remaining 30% can be obtained by active participation in class, including group exercises and presentations. The exam will be taken in the final 1.5 hours of the course.