

**COM 3580:  
Strategic Communication & Pandemics**

**Class time:** Online course; lectures posted Monday and Wednesday by 9 pm

**Class location:** Online course

**Professor:**

Jakob (Jake) Jensen, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean for Research, College of Humanities  
Professor, Department of Communication  
Email: [jakob.jensen@utah.edu](mailto:jakob.jensen@utah.edu)  
Website: [www.jakobjensen.com](http://www.jakobjensen.com)  
Office: LNCO 2856  
Office Hours: By appointment only

**Teaching Assistant:**

Helene Thompson  
Doctoral Student  
Department of Communication  
Email: [helene.thompson@utah.edu](mailto:helene.thompson@utah.edu)

Dallin Adams  
Doctoral Student  
Department of Communication  
Email: [dallinradams@gmail.com](mailto:dallinradams@gmail.com)



**Course Description:**

Strategic communication is the foundation of several professional activities (e.g., public relations, advertising, event planning, and health communication). This course will focus on how brands are strategically navigating the pandemic. Each week, Dr. Jensen will identify one or more brands that are making moves during the pandemic, and teach both the strategic thinking and relevant history of those brands. COMM 3580 is an ideal course for students interested in advertising, public relations, campaign design, public health, and event planning.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Understand basic tenets of branding
- Identify strategic challenges during pandemics
- Explicate effective strategic maneuvers
- Cover relevant brand history and positioning for active brands

**Required Text:**

There are **no required texts for COMM 3580**. Exams will be based on in-class lectures. All materials for the course will be posted to the canvas page.

**Requirements and Grading:**

Assignment	% of final grade
Exam #1	10%
Exam #2	20%
Exam #3	35%
Exam #4	35%

**Plus/Minus System:**

COM 3580 uses a plus/minus system with one twist: there is no A+ or A- because the U does not recognize an A+ (thus making the A- problematic). More details concerning the grading scheme are included below.

**Grade Calculation:**

One's course grade will be determined by the (weighted) average of the grades on the exam. Each exam will receive a percentage (and a letter grade to help students interpret their score), with numerical equivalents as follows:

<u>Test Grade</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
90% and up	A
87% and up	B+
83% and up	B
80% and up	B-
77% and up	C+
73% and up	C
70% and up	C-
67% and up	D+
63% and up	D
60% and up	D-
59% and below	F*

\*Students that score lower than a 55% will be assigned a grade of 55% (so that one low grade cannot jeopardize their chances of passing COM 3580). However, students who cheat, do not to show up for the test, or otherwise exhibit poor behavior will receive a zero (00%). Also, students who take the test at an alternative test time for a non-University approved reason will not be eligible to receive the 55% float.

For example, a student who received an 83% (B) on the first test, a 68% (D+) on the second test, and a 94% (A) on the third test, and an 81% on the fourth exam would have a course average of 83.5%.

$(\text{test 1 \%} \times \text{test 1 weight}) + (\text{test 2 \%} \times \text{test 2 weight}) + (\text{test 3 \%} \times \text{test 3 weight}) + (\text{test 4 \%} \times \text{test 4 weight})$

$(83\% \times .10) + (68\% \times .20) + (94\% \times .35) + (81\% \times .35) = 83.5\%$

$(8.3) + (13.6) + (32.9) + (28.35) = 83.5\%$

To convert the course average into a course grade, the following scale will apply:

<u>Course Average</u>	<u>Course Grade</u>
90% and up	A
87% and up	B+
83% and up	B
80% and up	B-
77% and up	C+
73% and up	C
70% and up	C-
67% and up	D+
63% and up	D
60% and up	D-
59% and below	F

Thus, our hypothetical student would have a B (83.5% is above 83% and below 87%).

**ADA Statement:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act. The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

**Addressing Sexual Misconduct:**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, SSB 328, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

**Campus Safety:**

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [safeu.utah.edu](http://safeu.utah.edu).

**Academic Dishonesty:**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest and professional manner. Any attempt (successful or not) to behave dishonestly will result in an automatic zero for the course. For information on proper conduct at the University of Utah, see:

<http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html>

**Lecture Attendance:**

COMM 3580 is an online course.

**Exam Attendance:**

Exams will be online. Students will have 7 days to complete each exam.

If a student wants to miss an exam for a University-sponsored activity (e.g., playing in a volleyball tournament), then the student **must** contact Professor Jensen (at least) two weeks in advance of the absence. If a student fails to contact Professor Jensen in this time period, then the absence is not excused. Professor Jensen reserves the right to refuse any excuse at any time regardless of documentation.

**Offensive Material:**

Strategic communication is the study of public relations, advertising, and health communication. Given that, we will view and discuss strategic communication messages across a wide range of topics and from countries around the world. Sometimes we will view or examine content that may seem offensive to one or more students in the class (e.g., an ad for condoms, a beer ad, etc.). Some courses at the University of Utah provide students with the option to avoid potentially offensive material, or professors censor course materials in advance. Professor **Jensen does not offer alternative assignments or censor material in class.** Preparing students to critically consider potentially offensive material is part of education, and it is paramount to citizenship.

**Illness Plan:**

In the event that Professor Jensen falls ill, then Dr. Helen Lillie, a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Communication, will take over teaching students and continue the class as normal.

**Fall 2021 Calendar:**

	<b>Unit 1</b>
Monday, August 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Lecture 1a
Wednesday, August 25 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 2a
Monday, August 31 <sup>st</sup>	Lecture 3a
Wednesday, September 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Lecture 4a
Monday, September 6 <sup>th</sup>	NO CLASS: Labor Day
Wednesday, September 8 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 5a
Monday, September 13 <sup>th</sup>	Exam 1
	<b>Unit 2</b>
Wednesday, September 15 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 1b
Monday, September 20 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 2b
Wednesday, September 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Lecture 3b
Monday, September 27 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 4b
Wednesday, September 29 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 5b
Monday, October 4 <sup>th</sup>	Exam 2
Wednesday, October 6 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 1c
Monday, October 11 <sup>th</sup>	NO CLASS: Fall Break
Wednesday, October 13 <sup>th</sup>	NO CLASS: Fall Break
	<b>Unit 3</b>
Monday, October 19 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 2c
Wednesday, October 21 <sup>st</sup>	Lecture 3c
Monday, October 26 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 4c
Wednesday, October 28 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 5c
Monday, November 1 <sup>st</sup>	Exam 3
Wednesday, November 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lecture 1d
Monday, November 8 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 2d
Wednesday, November 10 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 3d
Monday, November 15 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 4d
Wednesday, November 17 <sup>th</sup>	Lecture 5d
Monday, November 22 <sup>nd</sup>	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving
Wednesday, November 24 <sup>th</sup>	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving
Monday, November 29 <sup>th</sup>	Exam 4