University of Toronto
Faculty of Information

12-week course

INF2310UH-S-LECO101 Information, Communication and Community: Explorations in strategic communication and social entrepreneurship
Instructor: Dr. David Nostbakken (david.nostbakken@utoronto.ca)

Course Description
This course explores innovation in strategic communication and social entrepreneurship for local and global community. In this context it explores the use of modern tools of information, strategic communication and social enterprise for social awareness and change. The course will give practical opportunity for students to work with existing NGOs to review and advise on strategic communication and/or to work with a team in an exercise to create a new social enterprise. Students will interact with successful communicators and social entrepreneurs and their for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises.

Communication strategies are most effective when linked to public policy, personal and institutional leadership, and community mobilization. This course explores emerging models of enterprises and communications initiatives for positive community level social change. Examples of not-for-profit, for-profit, and hybrid initiatives, as well as ICT-based businesses that have grown up around social needs in fields of environment, health, religious expression, cultural diversity, sustainable development and peace will be examined. A mix of theoretical considerations and practical approaches will characterize the course with an emphasis on providing opportunities for hands-on student activities and an exploration of effective evaluation for improving strategic outcomes.

Students will have an opportunity to exercise some aspects of social entrepreneurship in the shaping of class activities, assignments, and marks.

Course Objectives
This course will provide theoretical frameworks for strategic communication, and social entrepreneurship relating to community engagement and development with specific attention to emerging opportunities in rapidly changing information and digital realities. Within these theoretical overlays, students will have opportunity to examine their own interests, ambitions, university studies and experiences, exploring possible options for their lives and careers post-university.

Learning Outcomes
- Students will have an understanding of the fundamentals of strategic communication from both a theoretic and practical perspective. They will have first-hand experience in determining the merits and advantages for companies, organization and enterprise in incorporating proper communication and information tools and approaches in leveraging advantage for the overall corporate strategy and goals. Students will have practical knowledge in methods of strategic communication auditing and evaluation of existing companies.
- Students will have theoretical and practical understanding of social entrepreneurship in filling the gaps left by institutional incapacity to keep up with rapidly changing digitally mediated times. They will have personal insight into a range of possibilities for creating their own enterprises to meet growing social demand.
• Students will have an understanding of the principles of community that are fundamental for positive and sustainable social change. They will recognize opportunities tied to “community” in the local sense, and in what McLuhan called the global village. Students will see that these principles are of systemic value to strategic communication and social entrepreneurship.

• Students will represent their understanding of the above elements in class discussion, weekly blogs, group work, Q and A sessions, group work reports, individual sessions with the instructor, and final summative “super blog”.

Relationship Between Course Learning Outcomes and MI Program Outcomes
This course is designed to help students make sense (for themselves) of the interface of theory and practical real-life opportunities their university training represents within the activities and experience of the class. The class is a space for some self-reflection within the principles at the core of the course.

Students will be challenged to understand the productive value of evaluation properly applied in any enterprise, institution or undertaking, including the evaluation system of the class itself. They will be able to see “marking” as not just “judgment” but as support to improvement that they will encounter outside the university setting.

Students will be challenged to identify “what really matters” in relation to social change and changing needs. To some extent the trend of the class will be shaped by the students in it, their motivations, ambitions and the social issues identified by them.

The class will be seen as a quasi-community, that fully shares what is learned and experienced, and organizes itself in groups to maximize the strength of individual students.

This course challenges students to step up and to take leadership in shaping community and social solutions, including through developing social enterprise to meet gaps left by the rapidly changing times and the inability of many institutions (including memory institutions) in keeping up or dynamically adapting in the digital environment of this new century. Students will examine the direct role and exploitable opportunities that information and communication technologies play in social and institutional change. In keeping with MI program outcomes, Students will develop understanding and application of new technological developments to the preservation and communication of information, and in the identification of the impact of such developments on society.

Students will be writing weekly accounts relating to readings, group exercises, interactions with outside guests to the class, and the realities and experience they individually bring to the table. These submissions are shared with all fellow students, and are characterized as course “readings”. Publishing opportunities will be offered in select cases.

Students will be challenges to undertake the necessary research particularly in conducting group work in strategic communication and social entrepreneurship. That is, they will to some extent be required to learn for themselves rather than to take notes in a lecture. The instructor will tell them to take “no notes, unless it is for something you wish to remember for the rest of your life”.

Format
The course includes lectures, guest presentations, student work sessions, student blogs, student-led workshops, presentations and discussions based on readings. A number of themes will be covered over the twelve three-hour sessions, including:
• The fundamental principles and examples of social entrepreneurship

• The fundamental principles and examples of strategic information and communication planning and applications

• The meaning of community locally, regionally, and globally

• The three-pronged strategy of communication, policy change, and community/institutional leadership in social change programs

• The function of evaluation in support of learning and improvement

• Fundamentals of social need and the positioning of communication tools and methods in addressing them

• The roles played by public and private institutions in influencing human behaviour and some examples of institutional change and leadership for social benefit

• Canadian examples of innovative use of media and ICTs for social benefit in ecology and the environment, religious expression, sustainable development, and peace

• Successful social entrepreneurs: meet them in person and by teleconference

• Emerging examples of collaboration among public and private interests in the 2.0 age and the opportunity they represent for social entrepreneurship

• The Wiki, Facebook, Twitter, and mobile world of things: student located and researched examples of new approaches to social change

During the course, representatives from a variety of organizations will be invited to meet with students in class or via teleconference. Among them (students will be engaged in making choices as to which are invited):

• Centre for Social Innovation https://socialinnovation.org/

• Taking it Global https://www.tigweb.org/

• Tamarack, an Institute for Community Engagement

• Students on Ice

• Farm Radio International

• Aga Khan Foundation Canada

• Vision Television

• Burlington Green

• Canadian Red Cross
Suggested Early Reading

- Social Entrepreneurship: Definition and Boundaries, https://timreview.ca/article/523
- The Spitfire Strategies Smart Chart 3.0

Please see also the Stanford Innovation Review (www.ssireview.org) for listed articles.

Course Requirements

Students are required to participate in group discussions based on readings and guest speaker talks, and in online research, group work, presentations and blogs. All readings will be assigned to students for presentation unless the class can agree on an alternative approach.

Evaluation

Students will be held to the highest standards in both the work they submit and in their ongoing conduct in and outside of the classroom. They will be expected to attend class as they would a full-time job; to commit to the group as they would a work team; to complete assignments on time; and to deal in a courteous and professional manner with their colleagues, guests and community organizations participating in the course. Sloppiness and lack of preparation, errors in spelling, grammar or punctuation, misrepresentation of research evidence, and failure to plan and execute your research
strategy according to group or community needs and objectives will be reflected in the group evaluations.

- Submission of **all assignments** is required in order to pass the course.
- Always keep the original of written assignments and hand in a photocopy.
- Late submissions will be penalized for each weekday after the due date in accordance with University policy.

There will be time allotted in the first class for discussion and negotiation (in entrepreneurial style) of the marking system for the term based on the following proposition:
- Class Participation: 10%
- Weekly Blog: 50%
- Week 6 test: 15%
- Class Presentation and Interim Written Report on team project: 10%
- Final Presentation and Written Report on team project: 15%

**Class Participation (10%)**
Class attendance is mandatory. Individual exceptions will be considered with full explanation only. Group breakout sessions are not at liberty to leave class early. Class participation includes such elements as **presentation of readings** and **research**, discussion, questions, argumentation and evidence that readings have been attended to either through class deliberation, directed questions, or blog notation.

**Weekly Blog (50%)**
Narrative blogs are required to be entered each week at a time negotiated and agreed to by the class over 10 specific weeks. Each blog of no less than one and no more than two double-spaced pages is graded on a five-point grid. The marking is based on the following:

- Meet the agreed to **deadline** with a finished university standard product.............................1 mark
- Lead with **one clear point** or theme as the focal point of the blog. That is to say, the reader should know immediately what this narrative is about. Do not bury the lead. The choice of central point may relate to your group work, blogs of other students, the class discussion, readings or something that has independently occurred to you or that revolves around the broad themes of the class. The first class topic will be assigned. Students will be given an opportunity to designate when the topic is assigned, and when it is left to the student to independently determine.................................1 mark
- Include **scholarly reference**. Show clear evidence of understanding of readings assigned to the class throughout the course or additional reading you have done in relation to social entrepreneurship, communication strategy, or the subject of your particular breakout group. Student blogs qualify also as “readings” and may be referenced. You may also wish to make reference to your previous three or four years of studies at Carleton University. In this way you might seek to make sense of and apply what you have been studying.................................1 mark
- Show **originality of thought**. Writing may range from sharing your responses to readings or class discussion to criticism, analysis, rant, reaction, or blue-sky brainstorm thoughts relating to the themes of the course. You might also make reference to work you have done including your job (if you have one), people met, things that have emerged as meaningful to you, failures you have learned from, victories you have had, your professional ambitions or aspirations, what really matters...
to you again in relation to the themes or issues of the class.................................................................................................................................2 marks

Select students will be given an option for on-line publishing on matters concerning the environment and sustainable development.

**Week Six (6) Test (15%)**
A one-and-a-half hour essay question test on principles and articles read and discussed will be conducted in class unless a more productive use of this 15% can be determined.

**Class Presentation and Interim Written Report (10%)**
Students will break into groups to work on a term project on a topic negotiated in class. Each group will provide an interim report on the project and present work to class at agreed upon times in the term. This is an opportunity to “test” drive your concept for student and instructor questions, comments and constructive criticism. Class presentations of group work are marked on the basis of three factors for a total of 10%:

- An interim written report (see below for guidelines) on the progress, decisions and outcomes of the group’s work. The report should be no fewer than two pages, and no more than ten for each presentation........................................................................................................................................6 marks

- A prepared “update” presentation of no more than 5 minutes for class consumption. Members of each group should show preparedness and capability in fielding questions and comments of peers and the instructor after each presentation. Each group should show evidence of teamwork, shared knowledge and responsibility ........................................................................................................................................2 marks

- Evidence of a solid body of thorough research and inquiry, consultation and knowledge pertaining to the chosen area of work, the field of need served, and its strategic purposes. Evidence of the analysis of strategic communication and/or social entrepreneurship principles and their application relating to the subject at hand........................................................................................................................................2 marks

**Final Presentation and Written Report (15%)**
The final 15-20 minute presentation and written report requirements will be discussed in class. The written report should be no more than 10 pages. The presentation may include audio-visual aids such as power point. The presentation should include all members of the group.

**NOTE:** The final mark of individuals within each group will be weighted by a peer review evaluation within each group at the conclusion of the group work, final report and final presentation.

**WRITTEN REPORT GUIDELINES**
Both interim and final written reports should include the following:
1. A cover page to include the group title (subject and chosen area of work) and group number, the group membership by name, the date and the class number.
2. Description of the sector or project being worked on.
3. Your process of engagement and evaluation. Your evaluation of the communication strategy in accordance with the Coffman Audit Guide, the Kramer Guide or another guide of choice based on class research.
4. The tasks undertaken in positioning and/or improving the communication strategy of the organization associated with the group’s work, or in developing the elements of designing a new social enterprise.

5. Reference to any research or literature used in the analysis of the field, and any unexpected outcomes, revelations, insights or discoveries.

6. Conclusions and recommendations.

A half-class session will be devoted to a class discussion of the final report for a refinement of the elements of a report which may vary somewhat among projects.

Effective adherence to academic integrity requires that students understand the meaning of academic dishonesty. The following list describes conduct that violates standards of academic integrity which may lead to the imposition of sanctions pursuant to this policy. It is important to note that this is not a comprehensive list and should not be viewed as exhaustive.

1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own. Plagiarism includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, and material on the Internet.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks.

2. Unauthorized Resubmission of Work

A student shall not submit substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs. Minor modifications and amendments, such as phraseology in an essay or paper do not constitute significant and acceptable reworking of an assignment.

3. Unauthorized Cooperation or Collaboration

An important and valuable component of the learning process is the progress a student can make as result of interacting with other students. In struggling together to master similar concepts and problems and in being exposed to each other's views and approaches, group of students can enhance and speed the learning process. University of Toronto encourages students to benefit from these
activities. However, it is also critically important that each individual student's abilities and achievements form the basis of the evaluation of that student's progress. As result, while collaboration is supported as being beneficial for various components of course and is generally encouraged, instructors typically limit the amount of collaboration allowed and communicate this to students in the course outlines. To ensure fairness and equity in assessment of term work, students shall not cooperate or collaborate in the completion of an academic assignment, in whole or in part, when the instructor has indicated that the assignment is to be completed on an individual basis. Failure to follow the instructor's directions regarding which assignments, or parts of assignments, should be completed by the individual alone will be considered violation of the standards of academic integrity.

4. Misrepresentation

Students shall not submit or present false assignments, research, credentials, or other documents or misrepresent material facts for any academic purpose. Examples of misrepresentation include but are not limited to:

- research or lab results and data;
- concocted facts or references;
- medical or compassionate certificates;
- admission documents;
- letters of support or other letters of reference;
- academic records, transcripts, diplomas or other registrarial records;
- misrepresenting the date or time of submission;
- changing a score or record of an examination result and/or
- altering graded work for resubmission.

PRELIMINARY COURSE SCHEDULE

Texts and other resources are indicated for each class.

Week 1, January 12

Introduction to the Course: Identification of Priorities, Assignment of the First Blog

Students will be asked to think through and identify those personal and social issues and opportunities that most interest them or matter to them. Some of the shape of the class from then on will be determined by the commonalities of interests within the class body.

The class will review one particular option for class focus in the environment and sustainable development sector. Opportunity will be introduced for a direct connection with an environmental initiative with publishing and possible future work opportunities for participating students.

See video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSYFTZrABMg&feature=email

Suggested reading:
• See websites:

  http://www.ashoka.org/
  http://hubottawa.org/
  https://www.innovate4good.org/
  http://www.skollfoundation.org/

**Week 2, January 1  McLuhan Salon:** Toronto Reference Library to present a discussion on the thorny ethics of hacks and leaks, with expert on Anonymous, Gabriella Coleman, Executive Director of the Mozilla Foundation, Mark Surman and Fortune writer Mathew Ingram. Toronto Reference Library 789 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4W 2G8

**Required Reading:**


**Week 3, January 26 Entrepreneurship: Definitions and Arguments**

1. Discuss the logistics of the group’s in-class and outside-of-class schedule and work.

2. Begin the process of researching existing NGOs, agencies and associations in the field (particularly Toronto-based) to identify those that may benefit from a new communication approach or entrepreneurial strategic plan.

**Required Reading**


http://www.schwabfound.org/content/what-social-entrepreneur

**Additional Reading**

• Developing a Social Enterprise Business Plan,

  www.academia.edu/1512815/Environmental_Entrepreneurship

Week 4, February 2 Strategic Communication
This class will include a discussion of strategic communication, communication auditing and the parameters of a strategic planning exercise for designing a new enterprise or NGO. Group work will be organized for half the class time in designated rooms to:

1. Analyze the communication strategies of a chosen organization; and
2. Determine class groupings.

Each group will be required to deliver a one-page overview and a five-minute presentation of the group’s work on March 2.

Required Reading


Week 5, February 9 Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation: Characteristics

Required Reading


Additional Reading


Week 6, February 16 Community and Ownership

Required Reading
Week 7, March 2 Philanthropy

Required Reading

The Crowdfunding Platform for Changemakers
www.startsomegood.com/?gclid=CjwKEAiA17LDBRDEIqOGq8vR7m8SJAA1AC0_vRS3awQzJop-PaJ_-Mrd55ihwGvzX50yBhMJYyMlchoC5OTw_wCB

The Schwab Foundation Web-site: http://www.schwabfound.org/

Additional Resource

Week 8, March 9 Corporate Change and Charitable Giving

Required Reading


Week 9, March 16 Positioning Media and ICTs in Social Change Strategies

Required Reading

See this video:

Week 10, March 23 Communication Strategy and Public Awareness

- See website for discussion: Centre of Excellence for Public Sector Marketing
- Wikipedia overview: Theory of Planned Behavior

Suggested Reading


**Week 11, March 30 Class Presentations and Discussion: Final Reports**

**Week 12, April 6 Class Presentations and Discussion: Final Reports**