

JOUR 5725
The Management of Media Organizations
(3 credits)

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
& MASS COMMUNICATION
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

- Lecture and class discussion twice a week
- Group presentations
- Instructor varies

Prerequisites

- Non-JOUR major or [JOUR major, course approved on program plan] or [pre-JOUR, adviser approval]

Course Description

This course introduces students to the nature of news media and other mass communication organizations (including advertising and public relations agencies) as business entities, the roles and responsibilities of managers and the principles that should/actually do guide their behavior. The course is designed to expose journalism and strategic communication majors and other interested students, both graduate and undergraduate, to the concepts and principles of management as they uniquely apply to these organizations and to teach students about the key management challenges facing these organizations today as a result of the emergence of the Internet and related digital technologies. This course is organized around six “units,” five of which will include discussion of a particular challenge facing mass communication managers today, along with related management concepts and issues as they apply to mass communication organizations. And each unit will conclude with a discussion of either a case study or one of the two books students are required to read for this course (each of these books is essentially an extended case study). The various units will reflect key elements of two broad themes that will permeate this course: 1) developing a business strategy (and appropriate organizational structure) for the digital age, and 2) leading and managing people in times of organizational change.

Expected Previous Knowledge

There are no specific prerequisites for this course. However, students are expected to have some understanding of the activities of media professionals (journalists or those involved in strategic communications) and the types of organizations in which they are generally employed. Some familiarity with the basics of a business and some type of work experience (as an employee or a manager) is helpful but not required. Group projects in the course involve case studies of real media organizations in the Twin Cities.

Course Objectives

This course has five learning objectives. By successfully completing this course, students will:

- Be able to understand and apply the principles and concepts of management as they apply to mass communication organizations, including being able to write a business plan for such an organization.
- Understand what is unique about mass communication organizations and the implications for managing them.
- Be able to recognize and evaluate the choices that mass communication managers are making today.
- Be prepared to meet challenges mass communication managers face in dealing with the emergence of the Internet and related digital technologies.

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- Be prepared to meet the challenges of managing a diverse workforce in today's business environment.

Assignments and Activities

- Case Studies: Units 1, 2, 4 and 5 will each conclude with discussion of a case study. The case study will be handed out (and posted on WebCT) at the beginning of the unit. You will be asked to prepare a brief (2-3 pages) memo identifying the key issues, your assessment of the facts, what management principles are involved, the assumptions (if any) that you make, and what action you would recommend. Each case study will count for 5 percent of your final grade.
- Midterm Exam: There will be a midterm exam in class on Thursday, October 23rd; it will count for 20 or 30 percent of your final grade (see "Grades" below). This exam will be a mix of short answer (focused on whether you understand key concepts) and essay questions (focused on whether you can apply key concepts). The WebCT site for this course will provide additional information and study guides prior to the exam. In addition a section of the WebCT site will be devoted to the discussion of sample questions.
- Book "Reports:" At the end of units 3 and 6 you will be required to do a written assignment related to the book you have been reading for the given half of the course using the format that will be posted on WebCT for each book. The first of these will essentially be a comparative case study. The second will require you to develop a business plan (for the three years beginning where the book ends) for the company that is the subject of the book. These reports will each count for 10 percent of your final grade.
- Group Project: Students will participate in a group project that involves investigating an analyzing a real management issue at a real Twin Cities media company. Students will be expected to interview managers of the subject company, as well as other professionals in the same industry and to prepare both a 12-15 page written report and a 20 minute oral presentation that includes recommendations for how to address the problem. It is expected that students will share these recommendations with the managers of the subject company.

Workload

There is no general textbook required for this course. However, for those students with no background in management who desire a reference, *Management*, by Patrick Montana and Bruce Charnov is available in the bookstore or as an e-resource from the U of M library.

This text introduces basic business concepts, terminology and management theories. It presents a broad overview of the roles, functions and responsibilities of managers. A guide showing the correspondence between the various topics being covered in this course (both in class and online) and the sections of this text is posted on WebCT. In lieu of a textbook, students will be required to read two short books, one a case study of the BBC and CNN and the other a case study of an advertising agency. One will be read during each half of the course (see course calendar); students will be required to prepare written assignments related to each of these books (see "written assignments" below). Additional optional reading (in the form of handouts or postings on the WebCT) may be distributed during the semester. While students will not be tested on this material, they find it helpful in doing other written assignments (including the group project). In total, students will be expected to read about 60-75 pages a week. A key premise of this course is that the Internet will become an increasingly important part of every manager's work. Consequently, this course will make extensive use of the Internet

through WebCT. In addition to posting grades, providing information not contained in this syllabus, announcing any changes to the information in this syllabus, and making supplemental materials available (including class notes and assignment details), WebCT will be utilized: 1) to provide information on “sidebar” topics (material not covered in class, but which will be useful for doing written assignments other than the midterm); 2) to provide an online discussion built around sample exam questions (to help students check whether they are studying in the right way); and 3) to provide a space for each group project to communicate and share ideas with group members in a way that the instructor can continue to offer guidance. Combined with the activities listed above, it is anticipated that this course will have a workload that is spread out over the semester and that is about average for a 5000 level course.