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Brand Strategy Experience: a professional approach

PROF. STEFANIA VITULLI

Term	Summer 2026
Area of study	Marketing and Communication
Credits	6 ECTS
Dates	23 June – 4 July 2026 (2 weeks)
Method of instruction	In person

Course description

The course provides an immersive experience in which students can approach the communication world as professionals, but in the comfort zone of a University course.

The first week will prepare the students to approach the successive real experience of one communication brief and communication roles simulations. In this week, group assignments on essays and surveys, and company visit will introduce the immersive experience. The course will provide also an overview of the latest trends in the brand communication scenario and the role experience, emotions, and entertainment play in building consumer-brand relationships. On this section, they will do a midterm theoretical exam on two open ended questions.

Then they will receive a complete and real communication brief: a traditional or digital communication job to be done on market analysis, strategic goals, creative proposals for one or more of this following communication fields: adv, PR, events, tvc or viral videos for socials, below the line campaigns. They will do their brainstorming with the agency professionals.

Then they will have two days - followed by professor Vitulli (who has been a creative copywriter senior and strategist for 20 years and now is a creative consultant) – and supported by one or more of the agency creatives, to prepare the final presentation. So, they will work also on the effectiveness of a presentation: how to prepare it in a “wow effect” way to support the creative contents.

They will present their job to the agency/company and they will receive an immediate feedback on the presentation and in a follow up a detailed, professional qualitative evaluation (what the agency really will do to answer to this real brief and a check about which one of their ideas could be really “used”) together with the final grade.

Course contents

- To create a real strategic/creative project on a real brief with a real feedback
- To simulate the working under pressure of a consultancy project
- To understand the complex relationships client/agency-creativity/effectiveness

Method of teaching

The course is based on a short theoretical introduction in order to provide a conceptual framework of the topics described above, and basically on practical assignments as well as field trips. Finally, the “field” session is rooted in practice-based experience of field analysis, company visits, and case study generation. Reading materials will also be provided on-line to allow students going more in depth in the subject matter.



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Students will be evaluated based on their active participation in class, their effectiveness in the accomplishment of the ongoing assignments and their creative talent and public speaking abilities.

Grading

Class participation 20%
Midterm exam 20%
Final presentation 60%

Course reading and materials

Some readings (books, essays) will be available during the course and some other essays and lecturer's slides will be available on Blackboard.

Course contents summary

Lesson 1: Course presentation and introduction/Creating teams

The role of stakeholders in corporate communication: what changed: stakeholder intelligence in a stakeholder-driven marketplace.

Lesson 2:

The role of stakeholders in brand management: the co-creation of value/the birth of prosumers/influencers/converters

Lesson 3:

COMPANY PRESENTATION. Introduction to CORPORATE HISTORICAL STORYTELLING - BRANDED CONTENT – REBRANDING

Lesson 4:

BRIEF for the Team Assignment (presentation of a communication strategy) GUEST SPEAKERS: COMPANY – AGENCY

Lesson 5:

MIDTERM EXAM (2 h: 14-16).

TOPICS: Corp comm/Stakeholder relationship evolution. The brand as relationship partner: consumer/brand relationship forms and strenghts - Co-opting customer competence/communities: how and why – Brand

Equity and brand resonance: perspectives and challenges

References: Vitulli Slides – essays uploaded – case studies discussed in class

Lesson 6:

COMPANY VISIT

TUTOR GUIDED SIMULATION OF THE PRESENTATION MIDCHECK

Lesson 7:

PRESENTATION MIDCHECK/BRAINSTORMING WITH AGENCY

Lesson 8:

Company visit expected.

Lesson 9:

FINAL PRESENTATION COMMUNICATION STRATEGY PROJECT

Jury: company/agency/professors



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Lesson 10:

FEEDBACK AND DEBRIEF ON COMM STRATEGY PROJECT (group by group)

Rules of conduct

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and no absence/s will be excused. Please consider that Field Trips are considered equal to regular classes and indeed you are expected to attend the visits. Unexcused absences will not be accepted. An excused absence will only be granted if you are seriously ill and can support your claim with a local doctor's certificate dated the day you missed class (therefore you must go to the doctor that same day) that has to be delivered to the Professor or to Cattolica International Office. Any other absence will not be excused and will result in not being admitted to the final exam, which corresponds to a 0 (zero) in the final exam.

Exam Date: The exam date cannot be re-scheduled. Should the dates of the final exams be moved for force major reasons, Cattolica International Office and the Professor will promptly inform you in class and/or via email on the new date agreed. Unexcused absences to the exams will result in a failing grade in the course. In cases of unforeseeable circumstances such as illness or injury on the day of the exams, you must submit a medical certificate and communicate your absence to the Professor and Cattolica International Office via email prior to the exam. If the student does not justify his/her absence through sufficient documentation and with adequate notice before the final test, you will receive an automatic Failed. Absences for other unforeseeable circumstances will not be accepted and will result in a failing grade.

Instructor Bio

Stefania Micaela Vitulli is a communication consultant and journalist. She is adjunct professor of Business Communication, Advertising Management and Corporate Communication at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan. She is research fellow at LabCom, Università Cattolica, and professor and Senior Tutor at the Master in Corporate Communication, UCSC. Her research fields at the moment are sustainability, corporate reputation, CEO branding. She is the author of articles and academic papers on green communication and ecoluxury.

@: Stefania.vitulli@unicatt.it