# Economics and Techniques of Corporate Communication

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***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of the course is to provide students with an overview of the main theoretical-conceptual approaches used on the international scene for the purposes of corporate communication understood as a strategic corporate management operation.

To this purpose the course aims – firstly – to critically study the most important conceptual approaches to corporate communication found in international literature, in order to bring out any similarities, differences, innovative points and weaknesses.

There will then be an extensive special-subject module that analyses, in a multidisciplinary approach (socio-cultural and managerial), the strategic role played by brands on the competitive present-day scene, as well as the challenges stimulating its constant development to allow companies to gain a competitive edge. For this reason, the course will analyse not only the concept of brand, its functions across time, brand identity and positioning, but also the most important emerging communication strategies aimed at creating a relationship with active and informed consumers.

At the end of the course, students will be able to understand the strategic role that communication plays inside and outside companies towards the stakeholder system, as well as the multiple touch-points and the modes of expression through which communication allows companies and consumers to create value for the market and to develop cultural adherence to consumers way of life.

Moreover, by the end of the course, students will have developed critical awareness, both in terms of consumer trends and their impact on the lifestyle of people and communication dynamics, and with regard to brands and the ecosystem of actors and interactions in which they operate. This awareness will enable students to assess the effectiveness of the communication strategies adopted by companies, with a focus on the ones aimed to boost consumers’ engagement.

Finally, students will develop their planning skills thanks to a group project work aimed at facing the requests of a real company brief; this new ability will help them manage emerging communication and consumer engagement issues that brand have to face in the competitive international context.

***COURSE CONTENT***

General section

*The international landscape of business communication and consumer culture communication*

– The concept of corporate communication and the evolution of communication across time in terms of new technologies and consumers’ characteristics;

– The concept of consumer trends: discovering new consumer trends and analysing their impact on the culture and sociality of the consumer and on brand communications strategies.

*The theory of corporate communication: The Anglo-Saxon school*

– *Integrated marketing communications* (IMC): concept and distinctive traits.

– *Corporate communication*: concept and distinctive traits.

– Meaning, links between *corporate identity*, *corporate image* and *corporate reputation* and the role of communication in their management.

As part of the general section of the course, students will also be involved in a *series of seminars* on “*Corporate public relations*” led by Prof. Dalia Andreotti.

Special Subject module

*Brands. Multi-dimensionality, identity, positioning and communicative experimentation*

– The concept and purposes of a brand.

– Aspects of brand identity and the brand positioning process.

– Advertising communication: the systems, processes, strategies and professional figures of the advertising agency;

– Consumer-brand engagement;

– Techno-culture, liquid society and new forms of consumer aggregation and ways of relating with brands in techno-mediated environments;

– Experimentation in brand communication strategies: ambient and guerrilla marketing, retail experience, social media branded content and storytelling, influencer marketing;

– Cultural branding, real time marketing and brand activism.

Practical section

Students will undertake a *group assignment* for which they will learn about and analyse an international consumer trend and its impact on consumer-brand communication.

Students will also be involved in *project work in groups* on a real corporate communication case commissioned and assessed by the business partner involved in the project.

***READING LIST***

For attending students

Material published online on Blackboard.

For non-attending students

T. Heding, C.F. Knudtzen and M. Bjerre, *Brand Management: Mastering Research, Theory and Practice*, Routledge, London, 2020.

R.C. Gambetti-S. Quigley (eds.), *Managing corporate communication: a cross-cultural approach,* Palgrave McMillan, London, 2012 (Chapters 1, 2, 6, 9).

S. Biraghi, *Agenzie di comunicazione e clienti.* *Come cambiano le relazioni nel tempo della discontinuità,* Franco Angeli, Milan, 2017.

Suggestions for further non-compulsory reading:

R.V. Kozinets, *Netnography 3E. The essential guide to qualitative social media research,* Sage, Thousand Oaks (CA), 2020.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Interactive lectures, seminars and guest lectures given by corporate experts, group tasks and company projects.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

*Attending students* will sit a final written exam, complete a group assignment with individual assessment and a group company project.

The final test consists of a closed-question test with multiple choice answer methods delivered online on Blackboard. The written exam weighs 40% of the final grade. For the *group assignment,* students will learn about and analyse innovative consumer trends that unite consumers, respond to new needs and desires and influence their life styles and ways of communicating and interacting with the brand. The group assignment is worth 20% of the final mark and will be presented in class by students during the course. Although the assignment is to be completed as a group, individuals will be assessed based on their contribution to the task and class presentation. The general assessment criteria for the assignment are as follows: adherence to the tasks requested, relevance and depth of the analysis conducted, innovativeness and originality of the consumer trend identified and relevance of the impact of the identified trend on communication between consumers and on brand strategies. The four factors will be marked out of 30 and will each be worth 25% of the mark for the assignment.

Project work in groups involves creating an activation plan for brand communication based on guidelines provided by the business partner, and accounts for 40% of the final mark. The assessment criteria for this test include the relevancy of the answers presented to the brief, their variety and accuracy, the originality and feasibility of idea. Each of the four factors will represent 25% of the final mark given to the project work.

For *non-attending students* the course entails an individual final written examination consisting of three theoretical-practical questions regarding the reading list provided for study purposes. The final mark for the written assessment will take into account the following criteria: the relevance of the answers, the use of an appropriate jargon, and the ability to build a structured discourse and create links between the topics explained in class.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

In order to get the most out of this course, students should ideally have a basic knowledge of the key concepts of marketing.

Students interested in writing a thesis on Economics and Techniques of Corporate Communication should regularly access the virtual notice board of the lecturer’s webpage on the university website to check the dates for meetings with thesis-writing candidates.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.