



Sekretariat:  
Cornelia Böhlend  
Telefon +49 341 97 35040  
stratkomm@uni-leipzig.de

September 15, 2024

**ACADEMIC COURSE WINTER SEMESTER 2024/2025**  
**MASTER COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT, MODULE 06-005-537**

**Global Corporate Communications (S)**

**Dr. Jan Dietrich Müller**

Thursday, 10:15–17.45hrs, on the following dates at the seminar building:  
24.10.2024 (HS 16), 28.11.2024 (HS 16), 16.01.2025 (S 205), 06.02.2025 (HS 16)  
Examination: Portfolio; written part due on 27 March 2025

**Topic**

The seminar covers current challenges and approaches for strategic communications in global companies. Practical knowledge on the success factors of international corporate communications will be conveyed and unpacked along case studies. The focus will be on long-term communication strategies, tactical communications planning, setting up the communications function and organization, while always being mindful of corporate communications' overall purpose. Specifically, the following topics will be addressed based on current debates and literature introduced in the parallel course "International Research in Communication Management" in this module:

- *Communications strategy*: today's communications environment and the shifts it induces – from reputation to conversion; analyzing and understanding the key ingredients into strategy building; operationalizing strategy to make it matter,
- *Navigating politics and societal expectations*: dealing with regulatory and activist pressures amid heated and volatile societal discourse, considering regional specificities of global communications,
- *Creating impact: strategically operating a communications insights and technology stack*: Setting up the tools and using appropriate techniques to gauge stakeholder sentiment and influence stakeholders with the right message at the right time.

**Learning objectives**

Upon completion of the module, students will be able to understand challenges of communication management in international corporate environments and to design solutions. In addition, they will be able to bridge the gap between debates in academia and society on the one hand and practical demands for communications leaders and practitioners on the other. Students will be able to assess the significance of current debates for companies and their communications, and they will be able to develop strategic concepts for addressing the practical implications of currently debated challenges by means of corporate communications. The aim is to recognize not only the professional requirements for excellent corporate communications, but also the unfolding changes in the global environment for communications while always "keeping the eyes on the ball" and not getting distracted with currently hyped themes. To lay the groundwork for this, the lecturer will introduce some fundamental notions inspired by classical rhetoric at the outset of the course.

**Universität Leipzig**  
Institut für Kommunikations-  
und Medienwissenschaft  
Lehrstuhl für  
Strategische Kommunikation  
04081 Leipzig

Besucheradresse:  
Nikolaistraße 27-29  
04109 Leipzig

Für Pakete und Expresssendungen:  
Ritterstraße 24, IPF 165153  
04109 Leipzig

**Telefon**  
+49 341 97-35040

**Fax**  
+49 341 97-35049

**E-Mail**  
christof.ehrhart@uni-leipzig.de

**Web**  
www.communicationmanagement.de

## Method

The seminar is based on interactive discussions and group work. Essential insights into the anthropological grounding of communications and its fundamental role in society, into practice of global corporate communications and dimensions of the fundamental change in corporate communications will be conveyed by the lecturer in the first session. In the January session, students will be able to engage in a live virtual dialogue with communications leaders from APAC and the US, getting first-hand insights into the specificities of these markets. In a second step, students are asked to develop their own ideas and perspectives for specific challenges (listed below). The international research literature discussed in the parallel course in this module can serve as a starting point, but additional sources need to be identified. 9 teams with three to four students each will be formed to develop strategic solutions for specific communications challenges and to defend them against critical questions from fellow students. Specific observer teams will be created to exercise giving feedback. Each group will consider the feedback and prepare a final paper that presents their solution in writing. Starting with the second session, the teams will, after a short preparation time, engage in pro-and-con debates to make the case for or against a pertinent, current question of communications management. Specific observer teams will be formed to provide feedback both on the viewpoints put forth and on the speaking performance demonstrated.

## Module overview and examination

This course is part of the module “International Communication”. Students enrolled have to attend both classes. Examination: Portfolio, composed of a) case study solution with presentation (in the seminar), b) presentation, moderation or protocol (in the lecture). Grading is based on a) presentations, while b) moderations and notes have to be assessed as “passed”. Regular attendance during this course is required, as study regulations require 30 hours of presence time for acquiring credit points in this course. Please inform the lecturer in any case of illness etc. via e-mail. The written study solution has to be submitted by 27 March 2025 digitally (PDF via e-mail to Dr. Müller and Prof. Zerfass) and in print (via post or personally to Ms Böhland).

## Topics

9 groups with 3–4 students each will be formed to address one of the challenges below. These are preliminary outlines that might be modified or detailed during the seminar. Topics fall into two categories:

- The *strategic advisory topics* require students to research the challenge at hand and identify potential implications for global companies and their communications at large. Imagine that the trend at hand pops up in the public discourse or during a top management meeting, and the CEO asks your team to unfold what this means for the company, its communication strategy, and practical implications for the set-up and modus operandi of the communications function. Your task is to give a concise overview, outline potential areas of action, and suggest what priorities emerge and how they must be addressed by appropriate projects. Given this task type does not comprise designing concrete tactics/campaign measures, the focus is on deep analysis and relevant discussion of pertinent theory positions.
- The *applied strategy topics* ask students to research the challenge at hand and its implications for corporate communication of a specific industry. Imagine that you are in charge of global communications in a company part of the identified industry, or that you are a communications consultant working for clients in the industry. You design strategic approaches and tactics to address the challenge through concrete communications measures. Your task is to develop a communication concept for a self-selected company from this industry.

#	Type	Topic
		<i>Communications strategy</i>
1	Advisory	AI-driven disinformation – how big a problem for a global B2C food corporation (think Nestlé or Danone)? Gauging real world examples (from B2C) and identifying organizational implications to get ready and react.
2	Advisory	The ideal contemporary strategy and planning process – between annual and agile. Defining ingredients, ambitions, steering resources and follow-through methodology for a global industry equipment manufacturer (think Siemens Industrial Automation).
3	Applied	Managing the turn back to combustion – devise a communications strategy for a German car manufacturer (think Daimler-Benz or VW) with global market presence to mitigate the consequences from the EV market fatigue.
		<i>ESG</i>
4	Advisory	ESG as a guiding concept – are there better alternatives? The corporate sustainability agenda between CSRD, EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, European NGOs and US state attorneys.
5	Applied	Financing the energy transition between green-washing and green-hushing. Defining a stakeholder engagement strategy for an EU-based commercial (industry) insurer (think Allianz AGCS) with a sizeable oil and gas portfolio.
6	Applied	The net-zero transition plan as next step of the sustainability agenda in business and communications. Introducing a NZTP and what it means for the communications strategy and stakeholder outreach of an EU-based fashion retailer.

		<i>Creating impact</i>
7	Advisory	What are we here for, and who is calling the shots? A comparative analysis of contemporary concepts of the purpose of corporate communications in discourse and society leading to a recommendation regarding the set-up of the function and how it measures success.
8	Advisory	Is CommTech real? An assessment of the notion and state of play of CommTech as a developmental vision for corporate communications, its benefits for the organization, its set-up and its parameters of success.
9	Applied	Creating awareness and buzz amongst the "general public" – defining an outreach strategy, targets, and execution plan at the crossroads of media relations and the digital media arena for the rebranding of a big airline (with a limited budget).

### Contact

Please contact Dr. Jan Müller via e-Mail ([jan\\_mueller@swissre.com](mailto:jan_mueller@swissre.com)) or during the seminar sessions.

### Course material

There is no Moodle course for this seminar. Basic research literature for the topics in this seminar will be discussed in the parallel course “International Research in Communication Management” and provided there via Moodle.

The following literature serves as inspiration for further reading:

Aristoteles. *Rhetorik*.

Blumenberg, H. (1986). Anthropologische Annäherungen an die Aktualität der Rhetorik. In ders., *Wirklichkeiten, in denen wir leben: Aufsätze und eine Rede*, (pp. 104-136). Reclam.

Müller, J. D. (2011), *Decorum. Konzepte von Angemessenheit in der Theorie der Rhetorik von den Sophisten bis zur Renaissance*. DeGruyter.

Pilhan, J. (1995). L'écriture médiatique. Entretien avec Jacques Pilhan. In *Le Débat* 1995/5 (No. 87, pp. 3-15).

Platon. *Gorgias*.