

Business 4402  
**COMMUNICATION AND SOCIETY**

Professor Michael Sider  
Office Rm. No. 2R12B - Tel. 519-661-3951  
10 Sessions

Assistant  
Andrea Kloetzner  
Office Rm No. 2R36 – Tel. 519-661-2111 ext 85277  
[akloetzner@ivey.uwo.ca](mailto:akloetzner@ivey.uwo.ca)

**PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES**

- To work toward a stronger understanding of corporate communications
- To explore the impact of corporate communications on society
- To learn how to handle difficult conversations successfully

**OVERVIEW**

This course is about stakeholder communication. It explores how corporations do and should communicate with the public. It attempts to define “the public” in relation to “business,” and to work out a framework for ethical dialogue between corporations and society. Because this dialogue is tense at many times, the course also explores how to handle difficult conversations successfully.

**MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT**

Case package supplemented by reserve material

**WORKLOAD/EVALUATION**

The grade from this course comes from two sources:

Class contribution (30%)

I will assess contribution based on the level of preparation contributors demonstrate, the level of analysis and insight shown in contributions, and the contributor’s ability to lead the class in discussion toward shared learning. I’ve put on reserve a large amount of material (films, journals, magazines, books) in the Business Library; I hope you’ll use these resources to prepare for class. Missed classes will result in no contribution marks for the class missed; if you have a good reason to miss class, please let me know beforehand. Absence from class without notice, negative comments in class, or the demonstration of lack of preparation will be seen as negative contribution to the class, and judged accordingly.

Final report (70%)

Your final report will be one page in executive summary style, 11-pt font. You have three choices:

1. Summarize and analyze a current “difficult conversation” between business and society. Use the tools explored in class where they can help your analysis.
2. Transcribe and then analyze a difficult interpersonal conversation you’ve had recently using the tools explored in class where they can help your analysis.

3. Summarize and analyze the role the media have played in a recent “difficult conversation” between business and society.

Component	Weight %
Class contribution	30
Final report	70

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

- C1 Business and Society
- C2 Business and Society
- C3 From Stockholder to Stakeholder Organization
  - Sterling Drug, Inc.
- C4 Handling Difficult Conversations: “PETA’s ‘Kentucky Fried Cruelty’ Campaign”
- C5 Handling Difficult Conversations: Monsanto and Roundup Ready Wheat
- C6 Active Listening
- C7 Listening to the Inner Voice
- C8 The Media as Influencer in Difficult Conversations: Media Relations
- C9 Media Encounter (March 31)
- C10 Difficult Conversations Exercise
  - In class role play where we demonstrate what we’ve learned

**EXPECTATIONS**

You are expected to be fully engaged in the entire learning process. This means devoting time and energy to preparation before class, including learning team meetings, listening to others during class discussions and engaging in class discussions. Collective reasoning and discovery are critical to the successful application of the case method. *Prior to any case discussion, engaging in discussions with (or examining notes from) others who may have already experienced a case is a clear violation of our norms.*

Detailed note-taking during class can often be distracting for others and counterproductive to your own learning. Instead, we would advise you to be selective in taking notes during class. At the end of each class or at the end of the day it is a good idea to consolidate what you have learned.

Using your computer during class for personal activities such as reading/writing email, writing letters, surfing the Web, playing games, etc. is also distracting and counter productive and violates our norms.

Attendance at all sessions in this course is mandatory. Circumstances may arise which make it impossible for you to attend. For example, if you are unable to attend a class due to health-related reasons, you are expected to advise your professor in advance. Under University regulations, your professor can determine at what point absenteeism has become excessive and thus can prevent you from passing the course.

**PLAGIARISM**

Students must write their essays and assignments (*at Ivey this includes case exams and reports*) in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers (*at Ivey this includes case exams and reports*) may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (hyperlink [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)).

**APPOINTMENTS**

Please email me directly for an appointment ([msider@ivey.uwo.ca](mailto:msider@ivey.uwo.ca)).