Course objectives: Why are you here?

Organizational Communication and its Social Context is the second stage of Stern’s four year Social Impact Core Curriculum. Business and its Publics examines the relationships between corporations and society, particularly the social issues that arise from business operations. This course focuses on how companies communicate with multiple audiences: their stakeholders. In OC, you’ll learn how organizations respond to varied internal and external audiences using both traditional and emerging communication channels and media. You’ll also have the opportunity to master business communication in theory and in practice, applying communication strategy to oral and written business assignments.

Required Course Materials
1. Organizational Communication and Its Social Context - Custom edition available online via the instructions below.

   A) Go to: http://create.mcgraw-hill.com/shop/
   B) Enter the ISBN Number: 9781121619067
   C) Add the book to your cart and pay using a credit card.

   In the U.S., Technical Support is available at 800-331-5094


Grading

At NYU Stern, we strive to create courses that challenge students intellectually and that meet the Stern standards of academic excellence. To ensure fairness and clarity of grading, the Stern faculty have adopted a grading guideline for core courses with enrollments of more than 25 students in which approximately 35% of students will receive an “A” or “A-” grade. In core classes of less than 25 students, the instructor is at liberty to give whatever grades they think the students deserve, while maintaining rigorous academic standards.

Re-Grading

The process of assigning grades is intended to be one of unbiased evaluation. Students are encouraged to respect the integrity and authority of the professor’s grading system and are discouraged from pursuing arbitrary challenges to it.

If you believe an inadvertent error has been made in the grading of an individual assignment or in assessing an overall course grade, a request to have the grade re-evaluated may be submitted. You must submit such requests in writing to me within 7 days of receiving the grade, including a brief written statement of why you believe that an error in grading has been made.

Course basics: teams, readings, Blackboard

Reflecting the use of teams in the business world, a significant part of this course is based on teamwork and team assignments. You’ll be assigned to teams early in the course, and we’ll discuss the rights and responsibilities of the teams in class. Each team will need to meet on average once a week outside of class. In addition, this course requires two team meetings with the professor and/or the teaching fellow. Details will be explained in class.

Course materials will be managed by Blackboard. PowerPoint lectures, handouts, etc. that are available in electronic form will be posted to Blackboard. You’ll be directed to post assignments to specific Blackboard locations, unless paper versions are needed for class work.

To do well in this course, you need to:

- Complete all individual and team assignments on time, graded and ungraded
- Follow the specific assignment requirements in this course outline
- Participate in class discussions
- Contribute to team assignments

Participation guidelines:

Participation is a key factor in this course – which includes being prepared for class discussions, being on time for class, and attending class regularly. The course involves many in-class activities, which can’t be made up. Be prepared to discuss assigned readings. Participating in your team is also required, and poor team participation will result in lower grades. Participation also includes timely posting to Blackboard where required. Late assignments, lack of
preparation for class discussion or presentations, or more than two absences during the semester will result in a lower grade. As in any professional situation, explain any absence to me in advance or as quickly as possible; an email is appropriate.

Stern Policies

General Behavior

The School expects that students will conduct themselves with respect and professionalism toward faculty, students, and others present in class and will follow the rules laid down by the instructor for classroom behavior. Students who fail to do so may be asked to leave the classroom.

Plagiarism

Representing the ideas of others as your own is plagiarism, whether accidental or by design. Do not plagiarize. A few helpful links: “How to Avoid Plagiarism” from Northwestern University (http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html) and “What is Plagiarism?” from Indiana University (http://www.indiana.edu/~college/plagiarism/index.shtml).

There are numerous role-playing assignments in this class. Yet while you may assume the role of a corporate player, you may not assume their words, blogs, or web site ideas as your own. All references need to be cited or explained. Please ask if you need more clarification.

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are important to us and to students who come after you. Please complete them thoughtfully.

Academic Integrity

Integrity is critical to the learning process and to all that we do here at NYU Stern. As members of our community, all students agree to abide by the NYU Stern Student Code of Conduct, which includes a commitment to:

- Exercise integrity in all aspects of one's academic work including, but not limited to, the preparation and completion of exams, papers and all other course requirements by not engaging in any method or means that provides an unfair advantage.
- Clearly acknowledge the work and efforts of others when submitting written work as one’s own. Ideas, data, direct quotations (which should be designated with quotation marks), paraphrasing, creative expression, or any other incorporation of the work of others should be fully referenced.
- Refrain from behaving in ways that knowingly support, assist, or in any way attempt to enable another person to engage in any violation of the Code of Conduct. Our support also includes reporting any observed violations of this Code of Conduct or other School and University policies that are deemed to adversely affect the NYU Stern community.
The entire Stern Student Code of Conduct applies to all students enrolled in Stern courses and can be found here:

Undergraduate College: http://www.stern.nyu.edu/uc/codeofconduct
Graduate Programs: http://w4.stern.nyu.edu/studentactivities/involved.cfm?doc_id=102505

To help ensure the integrity of our learning community, prose assignments you submit to Blackboard will be submitted to Turnitin. Turnitin will compare your submission to a database of prior submissions to Turnitin, current and archived Web pages, periodicals, journals, and publications. Additionally, your document will become part of the Turnitin database.

**Recording of Classes**

Your class may be recorded for educational purposes

**Students with Disabilities**

If you have a qualified disability and will require academic accommodation of any kind during this course, you must notify me at the beginning of the course and provide a letter from the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD, 998-4980, www.nyu.edu/csd) verifying your registration and outlining the accommodations they recommend. If you will need to take an exam at the CSD, you must submit a completed Exam Accommodations Form to them at least one week prior to the scheduled exam time to be guaranteed accommodation.
**Calendar of assignments and due dates**

To track your grade throughout the semester, use the column (grade) to the right of the column with the available points per assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Value in Points</th>
<th>Your Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Business Document identifying purpose</td>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Best Team Experience</td>
<td>Class 5</td>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Benchmark Team Presentation on US Steel</td>
<td>Classes 7 or 8</td>
<td>5 team</td>
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<td>4. Team Goals</td>
<td>By Class 9</td>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>5. US Steel Document</td>
<td>Classes 9-10</td>
<td>10 indiv</td>
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<td>6. Team Presentation 2: Company Profile</td>
<td>Classes 14 or 15</td>
<td>5 team</td>
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<td>7. Threaded Discussion on Issues; and, Email Update on Issues to Professor and TF</td>
<td>Classes 18-19</td>
<td>5 team</td>
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<td>8. Team Presentation 3: Strategic Issue Response</td>
<td>Classes 20 or 21</td>
<td>5 team</td>
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<td>9. Written Document of “Issues and CSR”</td>
<td>Due by 11:59 PM</td>
<td>10 indiv</td>
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<td>10. Quizzes</td>
<td>TBA (2)</td>
<td>5 each (10 total) indiv</td>
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<td>11. Final Presentation</td>
<td>Classes 26, 27 or 28</td>
<td>15 team</td>
<td>15 indiv</td>
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<td>12. Participation: attendance, class discussion, video reviews, teamwork</td>
<td>Throughout the semester</td>
<td>10 indiv</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>100 points</td>
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- Individual grades - worth 70 points, and
- Team grades (meaning all team members get the same grade for a given assignment) - worth 30 points
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week # Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignments Due</th>
<th>Writing/ Speaking Assignments Due</th>
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| **WEEK 1:** | | | |
| Class 1 | Introduction to the course; Making the case for communication in a complex global marketplace | | Discuss the IBM Global Student Study |

| Wed. 1/30 | Models of Communication; aspects of theory | World Bank Organizational Communication overview; [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/OrganizationalCommunicationCommWeb.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/OrganizationalCommunicationCommWeb.pdf) | **Assignment 1:** Bring in a one-page business document from any organization and be prepared to answer the question why you selected it for this class. Submit your response via email to prof and TF. |

| **WEEK 2:** | | | |
| Class 3 | Communication Strategy: Introduction to Corporate Communication | *GP*, chaps. 1 and 2 | |

| Wed. 2/6 | Stakeholder theory; Discussion of US Steel case | *OC* text, chaps. 2 and 3 US Steel case in course outline; Articles on fracking | |

<p>| <strong>WEEK 3:</strong> | | | |
| Class 5 | Introduction to teams, meeting and listening; | “Brainstorm without Groupthink” on <em>BB/Course Documents</em>; McKinsey Report: The Social Economy (<em>BB/Course Documents</em>); Edelman Report: Social Business (<em>BB/Course Docs</em>) | Teams for the semester will be assigned in class today. Teams meet to work on first presentation. <strong>Assignment 2:</strong> Reflect on a best team story and be prepared to share it with your new team. Submit a short summary of the story to Prof, TF and your new teammates via email |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week # Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignments Due</th>
<th>Writing/Speaking Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 6</td>
<td>Presentation Delivery Techniques</td>
<td>GP, Chap. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 4:</td>
<td>Guest lecture: Elizabeth Allen</td>
<td>GP, Chap. 3</td>
<td>Assignment 3: After presentation, teams meet with professor and/or TF to review video.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 7</td>
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<td>SEC, pp. 5-10</td>
<td>Assignment 4: After presentation review, post a suggested team goal to the Group Pages Discussion Board on BB by Class 9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 5:</td>
<td>Team Benchmark Presentations on US Steel (all teams)</td>
<td>If time prevents all teams from presenting, the next session will begin with the teams left to present.</td>
<td>Assignment 5: Draft 1, US Steel document. Bring hard copy of opening paragraph and outline to class. Teams discuss which company they will choose for future assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 8</td>
<td>Business Writing: Structure, Organization, Persuasion</td>
<td>GP, Chap. 4</td>
<td>Assignment 5: Final draft of US Steel document due by 11:59 pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 9</td>
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<td>SEC, pp. 15-36 OC text, chap. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 10</td>
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<td>Assignment 5: Final draft of US Steel document due by 11:59 pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 11</td>
<td>Business Research Techniques</td>
<td>GP, Review chaps. 3 and 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 7:</td>
<td>Presentation Techniques revisited. Handling Q&amp;A</td>
<td>GP, chap. 5</td>
<td>Time allowing, teams will meet in class to plan upcoming presentation.</td>
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<td>Class 12</td>
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<td>Class 13</td>
<td>Using Visual Aids</td>
<td>GP, chap. 5</td>
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<td>Class Topic</td>
<td>Reading Assignments Due</td>
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<td>WEEK 8:</td>
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<td>Class 14</td>
<td>Informative Team</td>
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<td>Presentations: Company</td>
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<td>Profile</td>
<td>4 Teams Present</td>
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<td>Presenting teams submit</td>
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<td>Class 15</td>
<td>Informative Team</td>
<td>Assignment 6:</td>
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<td>Presentations: Company</td>
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<td>WEEK 9:</td>
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<td>Team Dynamics</td>
<td>Teams will conduct a mid-</td>
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<td>Class 16</td>
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<td>course peer assessment.</td>
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<td>Class 17</td>
<td>Strategic Corporate</td>
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<td>Communication:</td>
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<td>Managing Issues</td>
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<td>OC text, chaps. 4 and 5.</td>
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<td>WEEK 10:</td>
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<td>Strategic Corporate</td>
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<td>Class 18</td>
<td>Communication:</td>
<td>Assignment 7</td>
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<td>Presentations:</td>
<td>Part A: Threaded discussion</td>
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<td>Company</td>
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<td>discussion board on Group</td>
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<td>Pages by 11:59 PM.</td>
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<td>Class 19</td>
<td>Strategic Corporate</td>
<td>Part B: by 11:59 PM, team</td>
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<td>Communication:</td>
<td>must e-mail Prof. and TF a</td>
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<td>Presentations:</td>
<td>message about issues the team</td>
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<td>Week # Date</td>
<td>Class Topic</td>
<td>Reading Assignments Due</td>
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<td>WEEK 11:</td>
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<td>Class 20</td>
<td>Persuasive Team Presentation: Issues Facing the Firm</td>
<td>Assignment 8: 4 teams presentations</td>
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<td>Class 21</td>
<td>Persuasive Team Presentation: Issues Facing the Firm</td>
<td>Assignment 8: 4 team presentations</td>
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<td>WEEK 12:</td>
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<td>Class 22</td>
<td>Practice with Q/A: Team Impromptu</td>
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<td>WEEK 13:</td>
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<td>Class 24</td>
<td>Preparation for Final Presentations</td>
<td>Writing Assignment: “Issues and CSR” due 11:59 pm. Teams meet out of class to work on final presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 25</td>
<td>Preparation for Final Presentations</td>
<td>Teams meet to work on final presentations; coaching with professor and TF</td>
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<td>WEEK 14:</td>
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<td>Class 26</td>
<td>Final Presentations (3)</td>
<td>Presentation planners, and slide deck due</td>
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<td>Class 27</td>
<td>Final team presentations (3)</td>
<td>Presentation planners, and slide deck due</td>
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<td>WEEK 15:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 28</td>
<td>Final team presentations (2) Class wrap up.</td>
<td>Presentation planners, and slide deck due</td>
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Assignment 1: Business Document

Task:
Locate and bring a business document to class #2.

Details:
Locate any one-page business document that interests you from any company. It can be a part of a CEO letter in an annual report; another section of an annual report; an announcement / policy change / memo from their workplace; a full-page ad from a specific company, and so on.

Write and post to BB/Assignments a brief response to the following 2 questions:
• Why was it written and who is the intended audience?
• Which model or models of communication factored into its creation--whether intentionally or not?

Deliverable: A Word document of no more than 150 words that answers the two questions. Email professor by 11:59 p.m. Make sure your file is labeled with your first name/last name.
Assignment 2: Best Team Experience

In class #5 you will be meeting your team for the first time. This is the team you will be working with throughout the rest of the course. As preparation for getting off to a strong start, you will be participating in an Appreciative Inquiry exercise in class.

Task:
Reflect on a team experience where you performed at your best. It can be any team from a work or school project or volunteer experience. Capture the essential elements of that experience and be prepared to share it with your new team in Class #5. What was it like? What were your strengths in the team? How did the team operate? What descriptive adjectives characterize your performance? Try to be as specific with the details as you can.

Deliverable:
After class #5, submit a Word document that summarizes your best team experience. It should be limited to 250 words and exhibit what you have learned about communication strategy, specifically, AIM. You will address the document to your Professor, TF and your new teammates.
US Steel: Organizational Communication and Social Context case

Who is US Steel?

Here is a brief profile of the company edited from the description on its home website as of United States Steel Corporation, headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pa., is an integrated steel producer with major production operations in the United States, Canada and Central Europe and an annual raw steelmaking capability of 29.3 million net tons. The company manufactures a wide range of value-added steel sheet and tubular products for the automotive, appliance, container, industrial machinery, construction, and oil and gas industries.

U. S. Steel prides itself on being a leader in both process and product technology and has four research and development facilities dedicated to advancing the boundaries of steelmaking.

U. S. Steel produces coke; operates two iron ore mines and processes it into concentrated iron ore pellets, which are converted to liquid iron in the company’s blast furnaces.

U. S. Steel is also involved in railroad and barge transportation services through its Transtar, Inc. subsidiary and real estate operations through its USS Real Estate division.

Every day, U. S. Steel employees around the world dedicate themselves to putting the company’s five core values into action. Safety is first – it’s U. S. Steel’s top priority. The other core values are diversity and inclusion; environmental stewardship; focus on cost, quality and customer; and results and accountability. Focusing on these values guides the company’s highly skilled workforce toward realizing U. S. Steel’s Vision: Making Steel. World Competitive. Building Value.

U. S. Steel’s operations are efficient and high tech, and the company’s customer focus is intense. U. S. Steel has been making steel for more than 110 years, always with an eye to serving customers’ needs in the most cost-effective ways possible.

Companies that want to be competitive in an increasingly global marketplace must have a global outlook and presence. U. S. Steel continually looks for opportunities to strengthen the company’s existing presence in the global arena and strives to meet and set world-class standards in everything it does.

At U. S. Steel, creating value for the company’s stakeholders is a priority. To ensure the company’s long-term success, it aims to build value for customers, employees, shareholders, creditors, and the communities in which it operates using the same responsible approach that has positioned U. S. Steel as a leader in the global steel industry.
Why are we studying US Steel for Organizational Communication?

A company’s social and environmental footprint is as important today as the products and services it delivers. Many companies make commitments that are both broad and ambitious. How they communicate and manage these promises both within and outside of the organization can be quite challenging, especially if it appears to any stakeholder that the organization is “not” acting in accordance with their words.

US Steel presents itself as very committed to environmental CSR initiatives such as reducing emissions and creating a healthier environment. The recent news that US Steel manufactures the steel tubes that are used for hydraulic fracturing (fracking) presents a serious conflict for them in attempting to walk the “environmental good citizen” talk while providing products that could be among their most profitable, possibly saving them from bankruptcy.

This company presents a “real-time study” and learning opportunity. While case studies that are based on an historical context provide a sound basis for retrospective analysis, this type of study presents a current situation for testing your acquired knowledge against the risk companies must face. As you grasp the concepts and importance of organizational communication and its alignment with business strategy, you will be asked to develop your own strategies and recommendations for the US Steel executives. This company is facing many challenges that may be similar to what you might encounter in your future careers.

Corporations throughout the world are struggling with their identity as good corporate citizens. How one defines ‘good’ and communicates it throughout the world will be a continuing challenge for decades. Many of our corporate recruiters at Stern say: “We want employees who know how to communicate to broad audiences in many different cultures.” Our role in Organizational Communication is to give you the opportunity to develop the knowledge, capacity to analyze risk and execution skills/techniques to be very successful in the global business world. US Steel is a great opportunity to start acquiring this knowledge.

Have fun with these assignments! There’s a whole lot of learning here.
Assignment 3: Team Presentation on US Steel

Given what you have discussed in class about US Steel, their stakeholders and their communication strategy, what are the risks and opportunities for US Steel if they continue to focus on the environment and also pursue their strategy of producing and supplying steel tubes for fracking?

As a team, prepare a recommendation for US Steel’s top executives who are interested in discussing the risks of continuing the business strategy. These executives include:

- Larry T. Brockway, Senior Vice President and Chief Risk Officer
- James D. Garraux, General Counsel and Senior Vice President Corporate Affairs
- Courtney Boone, Manager, Media Relations
- Sarah Cassella, Public Affairs Representative II

You must support one of the following options:

A. Give up the environmental focus within the CSR strategy. Recommend a substitute CSR focus and a communication strategy to support the transition.
B. Continue with the current environmental focus within the CSR strategy and the business strategy producing steel tubes for fracking. Recommend a communication strategy to better explain your business strategy.
C. Recommend your own solution as a hybrid of A and B options above.

To effectively prepare your presentation, consider the risks and opportunities of continuing or changing the current business strategy of US Steel for all its stakeholders.

Here are a few you may consider:

- Key customers
- Local communities in support of fracking
- Local communities opposed to fracking
- Environmental Activists from national organizations
- Shareholders
- US Steel Employees
- Natural Gas company employees
- Employees of key customers
- Competitors

Task: Analyze the overall risk that US Steel faces with its stakeholders by continuing their current participation in the supply chain of fracking activities. Recommend how US Steel should communicate your selected option to its stakeholders.

To do an effective analysis of the situation and support your chosen option, your presentation should specifically state which option you are selecting and answer the following questions:
• How is US Steel communicating its environmental commitment?
• Who do you think is listening to this message?
• Who is responding to its message? How are they responding?
• What media is being used by US Steel to communicate their message?
• What media is being used by various stakeholders to comment on US Steel’s messaging?
• What specifically are the possible risks and/or opportunities of the current business strategy?

Consider information from the case, as well as other reading assignments on US Steel.

**Deliverable:** A team presentation lasting up to 7 minutes, with 2-3 minutes afterwards for questions; each team member must speak. No PowerPoint bullet slides are permitted, but you may use PowerPoint to show projected photographs, maps, charts or illustrations.

**Follow-up:** Each team will meet with the professor to review the presentation.

**Evaluation:** This is a team grade worth 5 points. Review the grading rubric listed on Blackboard.

**Resources:** On Blackboard/Course Documents, you will find a US Steel folder with news reports, data and information that will help you with this assignment.
Assignment 5: Individual Document Assignment on US Steel

Assignment objective: This assignment will give you an opportunity to learn how to organize data into a business report and demonstrate your understanding of communication strategy in business writing.

Task: US Steel has decided to continue with their current business strategy and would now like to refine their communication strategy with targeted stakeholder groups. Select one stakeholder group from the list in Assignment 1, analyze its power/interest, and recommend how US Steel could best communicate their decision to continue producing steel tubes for fracking and continue their focus on the environment. Consider whether using social, traditional media or a combination of both would be advisable and include your recommendation. Follow the Assignment Report Template.

Consider the following questions in your analysis:

- What is the group’s (potential or actual) relationship to US Steel?
- How large is the group? What are the demographics of the stakeholder group?
- Where is their power?
- What are their interests?
- What are the most effective ways of communicating with them?

Note: Each team member must write about a different stakeholder group.

Audience: Write to the same executives who heard your team presentation:

- Larry T. Brockway, Senior Vice President and Chief Risk Officer
- James D. Garraux, General Counsel and Senior Vice President Corporate Affairs
- Courtney Boone,.Manager, Media Relations
- Sarah Cassella, Public Affairs Representative II

Deliverable: A single document containing your report (2 pages maximum)

Submit the report as a single Word file – NOT a PDF. PDF’s will not be accepted as they do not allow for tracking changes, a useful tool for getting direct feedback on your writing from the professor.

Evaluation: This is an individual assignment worth 10 points. Review the grading rubric listed on Blackboard.
**Resources**

- Read the NY Times article on US Steel posted on Blackboard. “Welcome to Saudi Albany”
  [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/magazine/welcome-to-saudi-albany.html?_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/magazine/welcome-to-saudi-albany.html?_r=0)

- If possible, at least one team member should see the movie *Promised Land*, currently in theaters, to gain insight from a fictional approach to some of the issues in the case.

- Set a Google News Alert for US Steel to keep up to date on any current events with the company that may affect your recommendations.

In OC Fall 2012, a student team studied US Steel for their final presentation. They very graciously agreed to share some of their research, and here is a list what the students provided:

“I have compiled a list of the various websites and news sources that we utilized in order to determine the level of CSR by US Steel. The links I have provided all relate to US Steel and the environment. I hope that this proves to be useful!” Grace Garfunkel from Team 8, OC Fall 2013

Team 8 members: Christina Jiang, Alexey Frolov, Derek W. Chan and Michael Park.

[http://www.csrhub.com/CSR_and_sustainability_information/United-States-Steel-Corporation](http://www.csrhub.com/CSR_and_sustainability_information/United-States-Steel-Corporation) (Environmental rating higher than US company average)


[http://www.amcham.rs/corporate_social_responsibility_(csr)/amcham_members_success_stories_124.html?nId=442](http://www.amcham.rs/corporate_social_responsibility_(csr)/amcham_members_success_stories_124.html?nId=442) (Commitment to environmental responsibility in Europe)

[http://www.ussteel.com/uss/portal/home/aboutus/environment](http://www.ussteel.com/uss/portal/home/aboutus/environment) (Environmental stewardship area on US Steel Website, with explanations of each environmental initiative)


http://www.blf.sk/tmp/asset_cache/link/0000013134/Annual%20CSR%20Conference_26.4.06.pdf (Pontis Award granted to US Steel Slovakia and speech given on environmental responsibility)

http://www.worldsteel.org/steel-by-topic/climate-change/members.html (Affiliation with the Climate Action Programme)

Assignment 6: Team Informative Presentation: Company Profile

Task: For the rest of this semester, your team will work together to prepare and deliver a set of presentations concerning the corporate communication strategies of a selected firm. For future presentations about your firm, you will present as members of the company’s corporate communication department; however, for this assignment you are presenting as yourselves to all the other teams. Tell the class what specifically interests your team about this company.

Your team presentation should inform the class about the most important aspects of the company. Use the corporate worksheet from class to research interesting and useful company data. Your presentation should include basic information, such as:

- The size of the company: locations, employees, revenue, etc.
- Primary competitors
- Overall state of the industry
- Company mission or goals (as stated on corporate website or annual report)
- Brief financial summary
- Products and services
- Any special features of this company

In addition, this assignment should describe the company’s communication practices:

- What messages does the company emphasize?
- How does the company communicate its CSR, sustainability and/or environmental issues?
- What is the company’s brand promise?
- What are the company’s publications?
- What channels are employed?
- How frequently do messages on these topics go to which audiences

The assignment should incorporate the use of credible information sources, appropriate media resources, and information about the C-suite of the team’s company.

Hint: Organize your content for the effective delivery; do not use the above as a chronological checklist.

Your objective: Craft an interesting informative message about your company and provide a context for the class to understand your later presentations.

Your intent: “As a result of this communication the audience will specifically do, think or say: ______________.”
**Time limits:** Maximum 10 minutes for the presentation, followed by 2 minutes for questions. *You must share the speaking time equally.*

**Visual aids:** Use minimal visual aids; avoid using dense text slides. Think visually, not verbally on your slides. Consider necessary slides that enhance. One person from the team must post slides on Blackboard /Assignments *before* class time on presentation day so that slides can be retrieved from BB, and not from email or other accounts. It’s useful to have a back-up copy on a flash drive.

**Deliverables:** Submit both your completed Presentation Planner (found on Blackboard /Course Documents) and your completed corporate data sheet in class before your presentation. Also hand in a printed version of your slide deck, printed in a 3 slide/page format for grading.

**Evaluation:** This assignment is worth 5 percent for your team which includes teamwork and quality of information; 5 percent for individuals based on delivery.
Assignment 7: Team Discussion on Company Issues

Part A--Threaded Discussion
Task: For this assignment, each team member identifies a specific issue that concerns the team’s company and posts his or her thoughts to the team. This post will be a preliminary step towards selecting the content for the persuasive presentations that your team will deliver in classes 20 or 21.

Your objective: In your individual post, your goal is to inform the rest of your team about an issue that is critical to the company. Note that you are uncovering an emerging public issue that you determine will soon affect the company (if it isn’t already). You are not looking for day-to-day operational business problems stemming from competitive challenges or product marketing. Your issue will undoubtedly involve the interests of one or more concerned (or soon to be concerned) stakeholder groups.

Post to your team in the “Group Pages” (Blackboard / Communication) describing the issue and its importance as well as why it would be interesting to the class. Since this assignment is in electronic format, you need to be concise and clear.

Engage in a stimulated persuasive exchange with your classmates by responding to a minimum of 2 posts to help the team come to consensus on the issues.

Deliverable: As stated, your individual post should be submitted to Blackboard Communication / Group Pages.

Evaluation: Your individual posts count for your Participation grade.

Part B-- Email Update on Issues to Professor and TF
Task: As a result of class discussion and the exchange of posts earlier, your team should have a good sense of which stakeholder-driven issues it wants to talk about in the upcoming presentation. For this assignment, the team will jointly compose one e-mail message that will clarify which issues have been chosen.

Your objective: To inform the professor and teaching fellow about the chosen issues and to justify the team’s choices.

Format: Consider the best way to prepare an effective short document that is sent by e-mail and keep in mind the principle of “high skim value”.

Deliverable: Send the e-mail directly to the professor and teaching fellow.

Evaluation: This document will be evaluated as a team grade based on a combination of analysis, structure, and format.
**Assignment 8: Team Persuasive Presentation: Strategic Issue Response**

**Task:** For this presentation, your team will prepare a persuasive presentation concerning the primary issues facing your chosen company. As we discussed in class, how an organization responds to issues relates directly to stakeholder relationships. Assume that your team comprises the task force that has been assembled by the Senior Vice President of Corporate Communication. The SVP wants your team to analyze the primary issues facing the organization and which groups are pushing these issues. The SVP also asks the team to recommend a course of action that will address the issues and the relevant stakeholders. Keep the AIM model in mind as you prepare your recommendations and consider the appropriate communication channels to use.

**Your objective:** To persuade your audience that your issue-response plan will be strategically sound and tactically address critical stakeholders.

**Time limits:** Maximum 12 minutes for the presentation, followed by 2 minutes for questions. *You must share the speaking time equally.*

**Visual aids:** Use visual aids, but avoid using dense text slides. Think visually, not verbally on your slides. One person from the team must post the slides on Blackboard/Assignments by the deadline announced in class.

**Deliverable:** Submit your completed Presentation Planner (found on Blackboard/ Course Documents) in class before your presentation.

**Evaluation:** This assignment is worth 5 percent for your team which includes teamwork and quality of information; 5 percent for individuals based on delivery.
**Assignment 9: Written Document on “Issues and CSR”**

**Task:** Now that you and your team have identified the critical issues facing your firm, your SVP of Corporate Communication requests a one page analysis that assesses whether those issues align with or conflict with any of the company’s sustainability or CSR initiatives.

To accomplish this task, you will need to examine the firm’s current initiatives. This can be done by reviewing the company’s various websites, social media channels and also mainstream media reporting.

You should also review the Porter-Kramer article, “The Link Between Competitive Advantage and CSR” as well as “Why Every Company Needs a CSR Strategy” (On BB/Course Documents) for ideas that can help frame your response to the SVP’s request.

**Deliverable:** A one page document in standard business writing format.
Assignment 10: Quizzes

Although most people don’t enjoy taking quizzes, they do provide you with an assessment of how effectively you’ve absorbed and comprehended assigned readings and class discussions.

There will be two quizzes, each worth 5 percent. They will be short and will be announced in advance but I strongly recommend that you stay up to date on all assigned readings.
Assignment 11: Final Team Presentation

Task and Audience: The CEO of your company has publicly committed the firm to “high performance with high integrity” to maintain a positive social impact. Your team from Corporate Communication has already addressed the range of issues facing the company and how it should respond. Your presentations to the SVP of Corporate Communication have been forwarded to the C-Suite (CEO, CFO, CIO, etc.) of the company. As a result, the CEO requests a status report and assessment of how the firm presents itself to its multiple stakeholders.

For this presentation assignment, your team should choose only 1 of the following options:

1. How effectively is the company communicating its CSR initiatives or sustainability focus to major stakeholder groups? How does the company support its overall image as a socially responsible firm? Make sure that your measure of effectiveness incorporates how well these initiatives support the company’s overall mission and strategic plan. Consider the channels used and the frequency of messages to 3-4 market or non-market stakeholder groups.

2. Over the past 2-3 years, how has the company communicated its positive social impact identity visually? By reviewing images and design used in corporate logos, brochures, media/print advertising, and investor relations documents, assess how well the company presents an image consistent with its mission and strategic plan. Consider the specific audiences that the company is communicating to publicly: are the messages consistent? How valid are the channels used? You could consider comparing your company to 1-2 others in the same industry.

No matter which option you choose, you should incorporate the following points:

- Your audience is the CEO and other members of the C-suite. What information will be most effective in supporting your position to them? Be aware of what they can be expected to know.
- The company’s communication mix probably includes both strategic and responsive communication. Provide examples of each to demonstrate effectiveness.
- What recommendation/s would you make to enhance communication of the company’s strategy and mission to stakeholders?

Visual aids: Submit the PowerPoint file to BB by the announced deadline.

Hand in 2 copies of your PowerPoint slides printed as 3/page handout format. Use a cover sheet that clearly identifies your team and all the speakers.