The Practicum Methodology Course

An AI-Enhanced Course Summary

Course Title: The Practicum Methodology: Strategic Communication Principles

Instructor: Robert Hornsby

Duration: Nine (9) modules

Focus: Comprehensive exploration of strategic communication and its practical application across diverse professional settings. Emphasis is placed on applied learning through structured analysis, reflection and planning.

The course focuses on building a strategic communication framework, distinguishing between goals strategy and tactics, and incorporating metrics and evaluation. Designed for working professionals across all sectors and disciplines.

Value Proposition

The course provides a direct pathway to proficiency in strategy development. Participants will cultivate skills to execute effective communication that aligns with overarching objectives.

Core benefits for participants:
- **Build** institution-wide clarity by aligning communication goals with organizational priorities, improving coordination across departments and reducing wasted effort.
- **Strengthen** executive decision-making by producing actionable communication strategies supported by metrics and evaluation rather than ad hoc tactics.
- **Enhance** organizational culture by training leaders to deliver consistent, compelling key messages that reduce confusion and improve trust among staff and stakeholders.
- **Advance** personal leadership capacity by mastering a replicable methodology that equips participants to solve communication challenges, adapt strategies in real time, and guide teams through complex institutional changes.
- **Demonstrate** measurable outcomes through reports that connect communication activities directly to enrollment, funding, reputation and other institutional objectives.

Learning Modules

Each module covers one element of a strategic communications plan. The modules build toward completion of an actionable plan. Participants are encouraged to apply the learnings from the modules to their current work or challenges.

Week 1: Foundations
- Introduction to the course and strategic communication principles.
- Define strategic communication and its relevance across sectors.
- Explore course philosophy: audience, purpose and outcomes.

Week 2: Situation Analysis
- Explore methods for situation analysis.

- Understand audience perceptions and communication landscapes.
- Discuss current communication assets and personal communication habits**.**

Week 3: Communication Goals
- Distinguish between organizational and communication goals.
- Understand the importance of aligning communications with institutional objectives.
- Develop reasonable, achievable communication goals.

Week 4: Strategy Development
- Define communication strategy and the difference between strategy and tactics.
- Learn common communication strategies in use today.
- Adapt strategies to changing conditions.

Week 5: Key Messages
- Develop clear, compelling and consistent key messages.
- Answer the essential question: What do you want people to know, feel and remember?
- The role of storytelling in effective messaging.

Week 6: Tactics and Implementation
- Understand the role of tactics in relation to strategy.
- Survey of tactics: Content creation, public relations, social media, community outreach.
- Avoid the pitfall of pursuing tactics without strategy.

Week 7: Metrics
- Measure the effectiveness of communication products.
- Identify key metrics: engagement, reach, impact.
- Learn which metrics really matter.

Week 8: Evaluation & Reports
- Evaluate communication outcomes.
- Design reports to reflect meaningful results.
- Connect your projects to business goals.

Week 9: Wrap up
- Review of key concepts, their applications and discussion on how to apply them going forward.
- General discussion of lessons learned.
- Suggestions and comments about the delivery of the course (depth, pace, etc.).

AI Integration for Enhanced Learning

Each module leverages AI tools to automate complex analytical tasks and refine strategic output. This accelerates skill development and validates strategic decisions.

Module Area	AI-Enabled Enhancement
Situation Analysis	Utilize NLP and sentiment analysis on organizational data to map communication assets and quantify audience perceptions.
Communication Goals	AI assesses and refines goals against SMART criteria; cross-references goals with institutional objectives for alignment verification.
Strategy Development	Apply case-based reasoning to suggest suitable strategies; simulate the impact of changing conditions to guide strategy adjustments.
Key Messages	Use consistency analysis and generative models to optimize message clarity, resonance, and memorability; integrate narrative generation suggestions.

Module Area	AI-Enabled Enhancement
Tactics & Implementation	Rule-based systems audit proposed tactics against strategy, identifying tactical drift; models implementation timelines and resource allocation.
Metrics & Evaluation	Machine learning distinguishes causal metrics from correlational data; automated report generation synthesizes data, connecting outcomes to business goals.

Course Structure and Time Commitment

The nine (9) modules build progressively toward the completion of an actionable strategic communication plan. Participants apply learnings to current work challenges.

Component	Frequency/Duration	Note
Class Session	1 hour weekly (Tuesdays, 2:00 – 3:00 pm ET, live via Zoom)	Required.
Discussion Section	1 hour weekly (Fridays, 2:00 – 3:00 pm ET, live via Zoom)	Optional, recommended, guided, open discussions; includes guest experts.
Written Assignment	Estimated 1 hour weekly (outside class)	Weekly assignments track modules; instructor provides feedback on every assignment.
Total Estimated Commitment	3 hours per week	