

Advanced Peer Review of Teaching Project
Inquiry Portfolio

ADVERTISING MEDIA STRATEGY

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Journalism and Mass Communications, Advertising Sequence

Part I: Stating an Issue or Problem to Investigate

COURSE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Course Overview

ADVT 460/860- (Advertising Media Strategy) provides students with a basic understanding of mass media in the United States and how the media planning process is incorporated into advertising strategy. Planning, selection and evaluation of all major advertising media are the focus of this course, as well as various decisions that arise in those processes. Class discussions usually focus on strategic approaches to solving different challenges in advertising media planning. After students learn to create a strategy for a client that connects with an audience, they practice buying media that reaches these audiences effectively and efficiently. Discussions, assignments, and in-class exercises are geared toward practicing specific parts contained in a media plan, resulting in a semester project of writing an actual media plan.

ADVT 460/860 is an undergraduate/graduate class that is required for all advertising majors and is the fifth course in a sequence of six. In addition to our students, we also accommodate news-editorial, broadcasting, marketing, communications studies, textiles, clothing and design, as well as ag journalism majors. This four-credit hour class is capped at 25 students and builds heavily on foundations laid in the previous course, ADVT 357 (Communications Research & Strategy). The class combines lectures based on reading assignments with student activities. Projects assigned in this course include both group as well as individual components. Students are encouraged to discuss real life media planning issues in class every time we meet.

Philosophy

Teaching this senior-level course gives me the opportunity to prepare students for the capstone course, advertising campaigns, as well as their first entry-level jobs once they graduate and leave the university to pursue professional careers in advertising. For this reason, I teach this course from a marketing perspective, heavily influenced by real-life business decisions companies are faced with. It is important for students to be able to see “the bigger picture” of media planning and to understand how media strategy fits into the overall advertising/marketing process.

COURSE GOALS

The goals for this course are partially outlined by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, some of which directly apply to this course. In addition, some goals were set based on how this course fits into the overall curriculum of the College of Journalism and Mass Communications, and particularly the advertising sequence. These goals are outlined in the course syllabus (appendix 1). At the end of this course students should know the following:

- Goal #1: How the institutions of advertising relate to each other.
- Goal #2: How advertising is coordinated with marketing and other aspects of a company or organization’s activities.
- Goal #3: A wide range of alternatives for delivering advertising messages and how to use those delivery vehicles.
- Goal #4: Secondary research methodologies appropriate to guiding advertising strategy and evaluating its results.
- Goal #5: An appreciation for the diversity of markets and audiences for whom advertisers create campaigns and messages.
- Goal #6: Critical and independent thinking, communication and presentation skills.
- Goal #7: The ability to work with others as well as individually to solve problems creatively.

- Goal #8: Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Goal #9: How to write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve (i.e., writing a comprehensive strategic communications platform and marketing-driven media plan).
- Goal #10: Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

More specifically, the goals for this course are detailed on the syllabus and will be achieved through lectures, readings, discussion, small group activities, individual in-class assignments and written projects. Students will:

- Goal #11: Become familiar with the terminology used in advertising media.
- Goal #12: Develop tools for critical examination and evaluation of media strategies in advertising: Use and interpretation of syndicated research data; Cost-per-thousand and cost-per-point comparative analysis
- Goal #13: Become familiar with a variety of media strategies and tactics used in advertising.
- Goal #14: Develop skills necessary to write and execute advertising media plans.
- Goal #15: Understand and apply basic statistical methods and concepts.
- Goal #16: Evaluate other students' work individually and as part of a team.
- Goal #17: Be prepared for an entry-level media position or be equipped with the basic knowledge to work with a media planner.

I have taught this course every semester since I started teaching at UNL in the fall of 2002. For the past three semesters I have taught two sections of it per semester and have stepped into the leadership position in terms of curriculum development. Before I was hired, the course was taught primarily by industry professionals (media planners from local advertising agencies), resulting in various versions of the course that lacked consistency. When I first started teaching the course I built my first syllabus around those of adjunct faculty that had taught the course in the past. The first semester of teaching was difficult because I tried to follow the path that others before me had laid out.

I decided to participate in UNL's peer review of teaching project, which enabled me to dissect the course, focus on specific goals and how to assess student learning. After a major overhaul of the course as a result of the peer review outcome, I have made small changes to the course every semester since. Writing a course portfolio was one of the most useful activities in order to improve the course. I have used many of the techniques that I learned in the process to refine the course further and to improve student learning. For example, I developed PTA scales for every single assignment and students have commented positively on receiving constructive criticism/ suggestions on their projects instead of simply receiving a grade with a few final comments.

In my initial course portfolio I had suggested several changes that I have since implemented. For example, I had noticed that there was too much emphasis on learning how to purchase national media, but most of our students find media jobs in the local media. In addition, I had heard from several faculty members that students had not been prepared to purchase media locally as part of their campaigns class requirements. As a result I wrote a local case study using local rate cards to give students the opportunity to buy space and time in local media that they are all familiar with. I also weighted the case study more heavily than I had in the past, signaling to the student that understanding local media is just as important as being able to purchase national media. After having implemented the changes several semesters ago, faculty who are teaching the capstone course have told me that they noticed that students are now better able to purchase media locally and conduct research associated with media planning.

Another issue in this class is that students sometimes have a difficult time recognizing how the abstract principles of media strategy and planning fit into "the bigger picture" of advertising and marketing. One of the items I have implemented is the "Five-Minute Article Presentation," for which each student has to find an article in an advertising trade publication that relates to media planning in some form, present a summary of it in class and ask

two discussion questions. This technique has been very successful as an "ice-breaker," and it helps students understand how principles learned in class relate to the real world. Every time I "tweak" the course I want to make it easier for students to see the "bigger picture," and to understand how the tools of media planning can help them to solve a communication problem.

ISSUE UNDER INVESTIGATION

I would like to investigate two questions in this particular course, both of which relate directly to goal #6 above, outlined by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications: to develop critical and independent thinking.

The literature in advertising education also focuses on this goal. Slater, Robbs, and Lloyd (2000) found that 87% of media-planning professionals indicated that it is important for students to know how media (planning) fits into the bigger picture of advertising, as opposed to only 56% of educators who felt that it was important. Based on the findings of their study, the authors recommend that advertising professors teaching the media planning course should focus on "teaching students how to understand the overall workings of marketing communications and their role in brand development." One of the respondents remarked, "The key is to train students *how* to think, not *what* to think." Slater et al. suggest that one of the best ways to teach this type of critical thinking is by using cases because they force students to develop many solutions, not just one.

Writing a media plan is another strategy that teaches students the process of strategic planning. The students in this course are required to write an individual marketing-driven media plan for a specific consumer product as a final project. Students are required to write a brief rationale for each objective and strategy they are setting, in order to teach them how to defend their decision. Because the media plan is a function of the overall advertising plan, which in turn is a function of marketing, the rationale is a key component of the (academic) media plan.

The rationale is supposed to be a tool for the instructor to assess whether students can "see the bigger picture" in a marketing context. While some students have excelled in writing a rationale that clearly showed their understanding of "the bigger picture," I have been somewhat disappointed with most students' rationales. They either didn't provide a rationale at all or offered answers directly from the book (with and without proper citations) or from my lectures without including their own original thoughts. While these answers weren't necessarily incorrect, they did not give me an indication as to whether the student really understood why s/he made a particular strategic decision. In other words, I was reading rationales that reflected *what* I wanted them to think, not *how* I wanted them to think.

The advertising media strategy course is a prerequisite for the capstone course in our curriculum (Advertising and Public Relations Campaigns). It is important that students learn *how* to think, in order to make solid strategic decisions that help them solve a larger marketing problem. In the capstone course, students are expected to work and solve problems in groups. I don't think that students would equally benefit from writing the media plan as a group, but there is a place for peer review, where students read, analyze, and evaluate each other's work. If students decide to become media planners, they will have to know how to evaluate the work of others. I am interested in using the same principle for this project and find out whether students can help each other with the writing of their media plans based on mutual constructive criticism. It would also help them articulate their questions and comments to others instead of sending last minute emails to the instructor the day before the project is due.

The central research question I would like to answer in this inquiry portfolio is, "Are students able to think critically and independently in the advertising media strategy course?" I am particularly interested in students' ability to see "the big picture" and in the effectiveness of peer review as a teaching tool to help them reach this goal.

ISSUE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

I noticed the issue of not being able "to see the bigger picture" almost immediately. Many of our students are marketing minors and understand the basic principles, but they are not always able to apply new material in the larger marketing context. One reason might be the fact that the media strategy course is based on numbers, not words. The course is quite different from the other advertising courses we offer and many new concepts are introduced that students haven't been exposed to before. Students tend to get lost in all of these new concepts,

terms, and definitions, and are unable to relate them back to the marketing problem they are asked to solve. I have taken several steps to help students see the bigger picture. For example, students have to write brief marketing scenarios for each project they are working on and clearly identify the marketing problem they are trying to solve. They also have to write a complete marketing plan as basis for their semester project, identifying goals, objectives and creative strategies.

The media plan project is quite complex and requires students to work on it consistently over a four-week period. Some students wait until the weekend before it is due, which usually results in media plans that are not accomplishing goals and that are not strategically sound. Several semesters ago I decided to break the media plan into smaller, more digestible sections, and encouraged students to turn in drafts of each section for me to review and give feedback on. About half of the students per class usually take advantage of this offer and historically, these students' finished media plans were much stronger at the end of the end of the semester.

I would like to have all students work on their media plans in sections and turn them in each week for review, but teaching two sections of this course per semester with a total of 40-50 students, the workload on my part is simply overwhelming. I decided to use peer review (students commenting on their peers' work) so that every student would get feedback from other students on his/her work. Blackboard was a useful tool to host the discussions on the discussion board and I was able to give feedback when necessary. This strategy helped students get feedback on their work, while also encouraging them to articulate their questions and comments to each other.

Part II: Methodology

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Central Research Question:

"Are students able to think critically and independently in the advertising media strategy course?"

Sub-questions:

1. "Do students understand how the tools of strategic media planning fit into the bigger picture of advertising and marketing?"
2. "Is student peer review an effective strategy to help students succeed in their individual writing of the media plan?"

METHODS OF INQUIRY

I collected both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions. The key factor in answering the first sub-question was to motivate students to articulate the rationale behind their decisions before they turn in their final semester project. It is important to explore students' original thoughts and comments in order to determine whether they were able to see the bigger picture and think independently.

To answer the second sub-question it was necessary to engage each student in the discussion of someone else's media plan and the strategic decisions s/he is making in order to accomplish the media objectives. After posting their own sections of the media plan on the Blackboard discussion board, each student had to read and comment on at least three other students' sections within each assigned group. In addition, I was interested in students' opinions about the effectiveness of peer reviews during the four-week process.

DATA COLLECTION

The data were generated during the four-week process of writing the media plans. I noticed in the past that many students sat together in their spare time and worked on individual media plans together, asking questions, explaining to each other what was expected, and how to improve certain components. Therefore, I decided to require students

to work on drafts of a section each week and post it on Blackboard. Then, students would have two days to read sections of at least three other students and provide critical feedback using techniques learned in class. In addition to student feedback, I also provided feedback, making sure that the suggestions made by other students were indeed appropriate. I found that students' rich peer evaluations of the sections were often more revealing than their own posted sections.

In addition, a simple survey helped me measure the students' perceptions of the degree of difficulty of this project as well as how helpful they thought the peer evaluations were in their own learning process. The survey was based on Diamond's "Evaluation of an Assignment" survey (Diamond, 1989) and conducted after they turn in their finished projects. The sample consisted of 35 students.

Part III: Analysis and Assessment of Findings

INTERPRETING THE DATA

Sub-question 1: "Do students understand how the tools of strategic media planning fit into the bigger picture of advertising and marketing?"

To answer this question, it is important to refer to students' postings of sections of the media plan on Blackboard, specifically their peers' feedback postings because they were often even more conclusive when determining whether students are able to "see the bigger picture." The Blackboard discussions consisted of three sections of the media plan: the situation analysis (including linked marketing and advertising objectives), media objectives and strategies, and media analysis and recommendations. These three sections provided the strategic component of the assignment. Students were then asked to execute their strategies by simulating a media buy using Media Flight Plan software. It was not necessary for them to share their executions with their group members.

Situation Analysis

This section is a summary of the marketing plan the groups had to present as first part of the project. Students needed to base their media decisions on facts and figures they had researched in this first part of the assignment. While the original assignment was a 10-page report, students had to condense it to the mere basics (2-3 pages) for the media plan.

While many students commented on the format of this section and the media plan in general, several students did an excellent job commenting on content, demonstrating that they were able to think critically and independently. Many of these comments focused on the use of numeric data to support strategic decisions. As one student noted,

"One thing I noticed is that there is no geographic information in your paper. You may also want to add the actual dollar amounts to the marketing objectives section, in addition to the percentage goals." Other common comments pertained to the product life cycle and the need to include numbers to back up decisions. "Talk about the locations of Payless and the product life cycle in there so that we (the advertisers) know that Payless is in a decline and so we can work with that."

Another student demonstrated the ability to see how media planning fits into the larger marketing realm by stating,

"I would add a little more about the fact that women are able to buy a variety of shoes and styles due to the lower prices. I'd also suggest including seasonal sales info/assumptions to help determine the best times to buy advertising space."

This student made a connection to the volume of shoes that needed to be sold in order to reach a marketing objective, and also pointed out that the media schedule should coincide with sales patterns.

Media Objectives and Strategies

For this section of the media plan students must set specific media objectives and then devise marketing-driven strategies that will help them achieve these objectives. One of the objectives students needed to set was a budget objective based on past advertising budgets. This proved to be challenging for a number of students, but they were not afraid to ask their peers for help.

Some suggestions were as simple as recognizing the difference between a marketing objective (which usually relates directly to sales) and an advertising objective (which usually relates to communication). One comment simply states,

"You may just want to mention that "changing the habits of 37% of the target audience" is the advertising objective, not the marketing object."

This comment shows that the student understands the role of advertising in the marketing context.

Another advanced way to describe and work with a target audience is to define it in terms of usage levels. Not all students did this, but one group in particular discussed usage levels showing that they were thinking about how objectives can be reached by fine-tuning the target audience. One student states,

"When you talk about changing the extremely light users to light or moderate users, how do you measure their usage level? One time you said an extremely light user visited the store once in 3 months, but later you said they would need to buy 2 pairs of shoes as a light/moderate user. You could maybe clarify what classifies a moderate user."

The following is a detailed description of how one student derived her budget, which clearly indicates that she was able to think independently. The only instruction I had given in class was that they should look at the client's past advertising budgets in order to predict what it may be for the next fiscal year.

"Okay, here's how I got the budget for the campaign...and I'm not sure if I did it correctly, but I'll tell you anyway: In 2003, Payless ShoeSource spent \$62 million on advertising. Over a ten month period in 2004, \$43.5 million was spent on advertising (www.payless.com). Based on these figures, the estimated budget for this campaign will be \$43.95 million dollars." (Excerpt from my paper so I can see the numbers). Okay...they spent \$62 mil. in 2003. Per month, that is \$5.17 mil. In 2004, they spent \$43.5 mil. in TEN months...not the whole year...so that is \$4.35 mil. per month. So to find the total they spent in 2004, I took \$43.5 mil (ten months) and added \$8.70 mil (two months) to get a total of \$52.2 mil. Then, I took \$52.2 mil. and divided it by \$62 mil...doing that, you get 84.19%...and if you subtract 84.19% from 100%, you find that the budget, from 2003 to 2004 decreased by 15.81%. So, to calculate our budget, I took \$52.2 mil. (the total from 2004) and multiplied it by 15.81% (assuming that the decrease in the amount spent on advertising would be constant) and got \$8.25 mil, the amount that the budget would decrease. So then, I subtracted \$8.25 mil. from \$52.2 mil. and got \$43.95 mil, the amount I set as my budget."

Finally, the reach and frequency objectives, which are vital in any media plan, are often difficult concepts to grasp. Instead of simply stating what they are, student need to cite reasons why they set them at a certain level. As one student commented on another student's R/F objectives,

"Good work here--I have just a few suggestions. First, you didn't mention if you are emphasizing reach or frequency--it looks like they are both pretty high. There is a page in the MFP book as well as a chapter in the book which explains when you should emphasize reach and when to emphasize frequency. Also, when giving reasons for the different media choices, there are two figures in the book which give reasons why the different [media] are beneficial--you might back your choices up with some examples from these."

Media Analysis and Recommendations

Students must analyze and synthesize statistical data in order to make strategic media recommendations. This has often been the most difficult portion of the media plan because there are no right or wrong answers.

One student recognized that although quantitative analysis is important, media planners also need to consider qualitative values when making strategic decisions.

"I would suggest explaining a little more about why you chose primetime for your television vehicle since its CPP is so high...I think it's the right choice, just maybe mention a little more about it. You might also want to mention why you didn't choose the other two in that section as well."

Another student explained why two other students calculated different numbers, showing that she saw the bigger picture, by correctly interpreting a media planning tool that had been introduced early on in the semester and that students now had to apply in their media plans.

"CPP [cost-per-point] can vary for each of ours depending on which spot markets we use and how many spot markets we use. The cost becomes different, thus the CPP is different as well."

One of the survey questions asked students to state in their own words what they learned from this assignment (appendix 2). Many of the answers pertained to the details they had to pay attention to when crafting the plan. Students realized that each piece is a part of the bigger puzzle.

"I really just learned how it all worked together. It's interesting to see the media buying in detail."

Several students commented on the budget, which is an important aspect in marketing strategy, and one that they had not paid much attention to in other advertising courses leading up to this one. As one student pointed out, s/he learned,

"How to effectively allocate a budget into a national plan; how to allocate GRPs to achieve maximum (optimal, effective) reach & frequency, and that \$43.95 million isn't a lot."

Some students commented directly on the media plan as a piece of marketing strategy.

"[I] learned media from a marketing aspect. [The] overall understanding of the process is important to know even if you are in a different realm such as creative." Another student noted, "I learned how the entire advertising process works together."

Yet another student indicated s/he learned,

"How to set marketing, communications, and advertising goals and how to use numbers in those goals."

This outcome is one that I had been working toward for the last few semesters and it appears that at least one student believed it was important enough to mention in this question of the survey.

Sub-question 2: "Is student peer review an effective strategy to help students succeed in their individual writing of the media plan?"

The Blackboard peer discussions appear to be a good forum for students to comment on each other's work. While they often provided and received useful feedback from their peers, it is also a good forum for the instructor to give feedback. In addition, students encouraged each other during this process simply by sharing their ideas, questions, and suggestions. Many students reminded each other to include numbers in their rationales, where to find them and how to interpret them. Some students commented on the writing styles used and reminded their peers that a media plan is a business document and should therefore be succinct.

Students were surprisingly eager to share information that would help their peers. For example, in response to a student who didn't understand how to work out the media budget another student wrote,

"As far as budget goes, [...] and I worked on it last week so I'll make a little note sheet to show you how we came up with the figures."

Another student explained correctly, why one of her peers' numbers were off:

"I think the reason why the numbers are off is because I used the raw number for the CPM and it looks like maybe you used the circulation number?"

Students became very creative when they had to set their own budgets. Two students from the same group decided to research the client's most recent SEC filings and then shared their strategies with the rest of the group on the discussion board.

For the instructor, peer review is an effective way to find out about questions students have but may be too shy to ask in class. I was able to clarify several issues in class or on each group's discussion board based on issues they raised in their peer evaluations. In addition, Blackboard was an effective tool to post comments and track the quality and quantity of each student's postings. When grading the media plans, I took those issues into consideration. It is important to point out that the quality of comments varied among students. While some comments clearly showed that the author was able to see the bigger picture in a marketing context, others merely touched on the writing style or stated that everything "looked great." It appears that the majority of students were able to succeed in their writing of the media plan at least partially because of the peer review process.

The survey revealed that more than half of the students (52%) found the peer review process "very helpful," with another 39% finding it "somewhat helpful." None of the students thought that it was not helpful at all and only 9% found it not particularly helpful.

How helpful was the peer review component of this assignment?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Very helpful																	
Somewhat helpful																	
Not particularly helpful																	
Not at all helpful																	

The open-ended question on the survey asked students to comment on the peer review process as a learning tool for this assignment. Most students commented positively on the peer review process for two reasons: 1) it helped them catch mistakes that they would have otherwise missed, and 2) it helped them stay on track with the assignment. One student noted,

"[The] peer review throughout the assignment was very helpful – [it] allowed us to share ideas and thoughts and critique to improve." Another student pointed out that "it was great to have sections posted at different times, so we weren't waiting until the last minute to complete the assignment." The same student indicated that s/he would have liked to see other components of the media plan (implementation) in the peer review as well. ("...I would have liked a peer review of the flowchart, too").

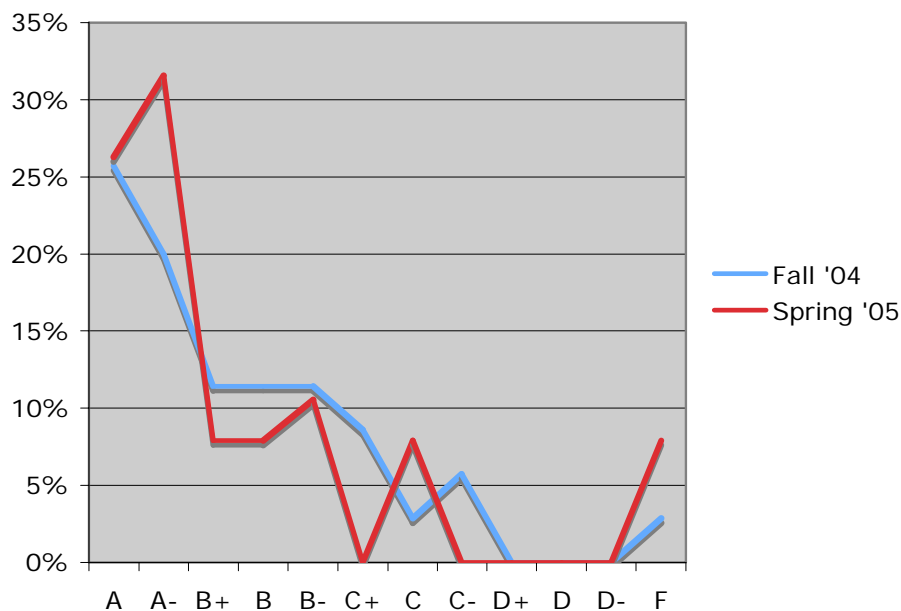
Other challenges included the fact that some students were uncomfortable commenting on other students' work because they did not know if they would give adequate feedback. One student said, "I don't like commenting on other people's work when I'm not even sure about my own." Therefore, it is important for the instructor to check students' feedback and point out any potential problems or errors immediately without intimidating the student. Another student thought that the peer review process was a waste of time and that "time could have been better spent working on [the] actual media plan." Finally, not all students commented on three other students' work on a regular basis. ("Not everyone participated – frustrating").

Central Research Question: "Are students able to think critically and independently in the advertising media strategy course?"

To answer the central research question whether students are able to think critically and independently in the advertising media strategy course, it was necessary to examine both qualitative and quantitative data. The feedback students gave their peers revealed that the majority of students were able to think critically by providing constructive criticism of their peers' work. In addition, the survey results indicate that students are aware that media strategy is a component of advertising, which, in turn, represents a component in the marketing mix. It can be concluded that the majority of students who have taken this course, are indeed able to think critically and independently. However, some improvements could be made to help even more students succeed in media planning, and specifically this assignment as detailed below.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Media Plan Grade Distribution



Implementing peer review into the media plan semester project has helped students succeed tremendously. The graph above shows the grade distribution of this assignment from the target semester (spring '05) to that of the previous semester (fall '04), during which I also taught two sections of the course. During the fall '04 semester, peer review had not been implemented. However, I had set up an optional schedule for students who were seeking

feedback from me. About half the students took advantage of this offer, and almost all of them produced high quality media plans.

As can be seen, students in the Spring '05 semester were more successful with this semester project than the students the previous semester in that the number of media plans that received As or A-s increased. In addition, fewer projects scored below average (C or lower) compared to the previous semester with the exception of media plans that failed. It should be noted that all three media plans that received an F were the result of not having turned in the final project.

FUTURE INQUIRY AND DEVELOPMENT

Overall, the investigation helped me improve the outcome of student learning on a crucial assignment in this course. Students appreciate the feedback of their peers, while also recognizing that everyone on the team has to participate in order for it to work.

The data show several areas for improvement. For example, while the peer review process seems to be an effective tool in helping students succeed, it also adds to their workload. I had asked them to comment on three fellow students' sections each week, which turned out to be too much. As one student put it, "I think you should only comment on 2 others because on 3 it gets redundant." In addition, I commented on each student's posting individually, but I found that many of them that were in the same group made similar mistakes. Next time, I will comment on their sections as a whole, which will save me some time while being equally effective for the students.

I noticed that some groups had much better discussions than others. Much of it depended on the students comprising each group. Some of the groups included a graduate student, whose presence almost always added to the depth of the discussion. Next time, I have to ensure that each group includes at least one graduate student.

The comments became less frequent and less thorough toward the end of the semester. Perhaps I waited too long to implement peer review and toward the end of the semester students may have been too busy with other courses to continue to comment. Also, some students were unable to keep up with the suggested timeline, in which case they were not able to post their sections on time and then give and receive feedback. I will try to start working on the semester project earlier next semester, which would also allow students to revise their plans.

Another suggestion students made was to allocate some of the final grade to the quality of feedback students were giving. I will incorporate that suggestion into next semester's syllabus. For most students, this course is the first time they are expected to base their decisions on numerical data. It would help if they were exposed a bit sooner, so that I don't have to also help them get over their general math phobia.

In terms of professional development, this inquiry portfolio provided evidence for several "hunches" I have had in the past. For example, I always knew that students could write better media plans by the questions they were asking me. Many of them I had covered in class, but because of their complexity, my lectures and class discussions were not enough to really make an impact. I found myself answering similar questions all the time, and was trying to find a better way to communicate them to all students, not just a few that were interested in excelling in the course. The peer review process is an efficient and effective way to help answer students' questions. In addition, it gives students another opportunity to show the instructor that they truly understand a particular topic by commenting on and critiquing other students' work.

I am planning on writing either a course or inquiry portfolio for each course I am currently teaching because it helps me to document the effectiveness of my teaching and ultimately produces a better student.

References

- Diamond, R.M. (1989). *Designing and improving courses and curricula in higher education*. San Francisco, CA. Jossey-Bass.
- Lloyd, Carla, Slater, Jan, and Robbs, Brett (2000). The Advertising Marketplace and the Media Planning Course. *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, 55(3), 4-13.

Appendix 1: Course Syllabus

Advertising Media Strategy

University of Nebraska • College of Journalism & Mass Communications

Course: Advertising 460, Section 003, Spring 2005
Credit Hours: 4
Location: 114 Andersen Hall
Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays,
9:30 - 11:10 a.m.
Instructor: Frauke Hachtmann
Office: 332 Andersen Hall
Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays,
3:30 – 5 p.m. and by appointment
Phone: 472-9848
E-mail: fhachtmann1@unl.edu



Required Course Materials

Sissors and Bumba (2002). Advertising Media Planning, 6th Ed. McGraw Hill.

Martin and Coons (1996). Media Flight Plan Plus, 4th Ed. Deer Creek Publishing. Mac or PC version.

Materials

Pocket calculator (must bring to every class)

What you will learn

This course will provide you with a basic understanding of mass media in the United States and how the media planning process is incorporated into advertising strategy. We will discuss the planning, selection and evaluation of all major advertising media and consider the various decisions that arise in those processes. Class discussions will focus on strategic approaches to solving different challenges in advertising media planning. After we learn to create a strategy that connects with an audience, you will practice buying media that reaches these audiences effectively and efficiently. Discussions, assignments, and in-class exercises are geared toward practicing specific parts contained in a media plan, resulting in a semester project of writing an actual media plan.

Awareness: Through this class, you should gain an awareness of the mass media market today and the available tools you can use to deliver your communication strategy. This learning environment will help you to develop your skills in media strategy and purchasing advertising media using different strategies. Media exist primarily to deliver message content, including entertainment, information and advertisements, to vast audiences. Advertisers regard media as a convenient and relatively inexpensive delivery system. However, it is important to realize that consumers are different and have specialized needs that media can meet. Whether the objective is to reach mass and/or specialized audiences, it is important to plan the purchase of media as far in advance as possible, in order to be both effective and efficient.

Knowledge: Class assignments and discussions are designed to achieve the following:

- Familiarization with the terminology used in advertising media.
- Assisting students in developing tools for critical examination and evaluation of media strategies in advertising.
- Familiarization with a variety of media strategies and tactics used in advertising.
- Development of skills necessary to write and execute advertising media plans.
- Preparing students for an entry level media position or equip them with the basic knowledge to work with a media planner.

Application: As a result of technological advances and audience fragmentation, the role of media planners has changed and ranks in importance with marketing and creative planning. With the increase in number of available media, as well as increased media spending and competition, media planning has become much more complex than in the early stages. This class is designed to let you apply strategies and techniques learned in an actual media plan, based on a thorough situation analysis and marketing plan.

What is expected of you

To enroll in this course you must be a junior with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.75 (if you are using the 2002-2003 Undergraduate Bulletin or a later version) or a junior with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 (if you are using an earlier version of the Undergraduate Bulletin). You also need to have completed ADVT 281, ADVT 283, ADVT 333 and ADVT 357 with a grade of C or better.

Deadlines are important in advertising. If you miss a deadline without prior approval, you will get an F for the assignment. An excused absence (for documented illness or family emergency) may be made up, but you must let me know in advance to take advantage of this make-up option.

Homework assignments and class projects are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will absolutely not be accepted and result in an F.

At the beginning of each class period, be prepared to discuss the reading assignments listed with the week's topics and activities in the semester schedule as posted on Blackboard.

Class participation is required. I hope you will learn as much from class discussions and projects as you will from the text and instruction. You must stay up-to-date on your assigned reading each week and come prepared to join the discussion and answer questions during class. In addition to the assigned readings, we will discuss current industry trends. Make it a habit to read the following publications:

- The New York Times (business section on Monday mornings – pay close attention to the media stories)
- Ad Age
- AdWeek
- Wall Street Journal
- Fortune
- Fast Company
- Forbes
- New York Times Ad Column (on Tuesdays)
- MediaWeek

You are responsible for referring to Blackboard for possible changes to the tentative schedule and/or assignment changes included in this syllabus (<http://my.unl.edu>). Assignments with poor grammar and/or spelling will be downgraded. Feel free to bring a dictionary or other references to class and have someone proof read your work before you turn it in. Unless otherwise instructed, you are expected to turn in your own work and not collaborate with others on any given assignment. Attendance is mandatory. If you miss class more than three times (excused or

unexcused) your final grade will be affected. Writing and turning in the media plan by the specified deadline is mandatory in order to pass this course.

Important Policies

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in an F for the course. You may even get expelled from the university. Refer to the 2004-2005 Undergraduate Bulletin for details (p. 394). Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication and falsification, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, helping or attempting to help another student to commit an act of academic dishonesty, falsifying grade reports, misrepresenting (of illness or other emergency) to avoid academic work, etc.

Please keep our classroom and equipment in proper order and pick up after yourself. Turn off your cell phone/pager before class. It is rude to interrupt the classroom and highly unprofessional. I expect you to be on time. If you show up late it indicates a lack of interest in the class and disrespect of this college.

Grading Process

Your course grade will be determined from in-class and take-home assignments, two exams, a final project consisting of a group and an individual part, as well as class preparation/ participation. In addition, graduate students are expected to write a research paper on a specific topic, which must be approved by the instructor. I reserve the right to raise or lower your final grade based on how well I believe you understand and are able to apply concepts learned and discussed in class.

<u>Undergraduate Students:</u>		<u>Graduate Students:</u>	
Marketing Plan (group):	15%	Marketing Plan (group):	15%
Media Plan (individual):	20%	Media Plan (individual):	20%
Exam 1:	15%	Exam 1:	10%
Exam 2:	15%	Exam 2:	10%
Case Study:	10%	Case Study:	10%
Group Media Presentation:	5%	Group Media Presentation:	5%
Assignments:	5%	Assignments:	5%
Five-minute article:	5%	Five-minute article:	5%
Participation/Preparation:	10%	Participation/Preparation:	10%
		Research Paper:	10%
Total:	100%	Total:	100%

Marketing Plan: The class project consists of two parts. You will be assigned a client, for whom you need to create a marketing plan as part of a group. This plan will be the foundation for your media plan that you will create individually toward the end of the semester. You will present the marketing plan at the midpoint of the semester and will receive a group grade unless there is evidence that you contributed significantly more (or less) to the project, in which case your grade would deviate.

Media Plan: The second part of the project is the media plan. It will be based on the marketing plan you wrote as a group, but each student will write the media plan individually. The media plan will be due toward the end of the semester, but you will not have to present it.

Exams: The exams will cover readings, class discussions and assignments.

Case Study: The case study was designed to help you plan and buy local media. You will create a local media plan based on a real-life marketing scenario.

Group Media Presentation: This presentation is a brief 10-minute presentation about a medium I will assign. You need to research the pros and cons of "your" medium and present your findings using PowerPoint.

Assignments: I will collect and grade some of the assignments you are asked to complete. Please remember that these assignments are due at the beginning of class.

Article Presentation: You will select an article from a trade publication that is in some way related to media planning and/or buying (see a list of publications in this syllabus) that you will summarize in your own words. You will then present the article briefly in class and ask two questions leading the class discussion.

Participation: Topics, readings, and assignments will be discussed and explained in class. Attendance and participation in class are mandatory. You may miss class no more than four times this semester. If you miss more than that your grade will be affected. Participation is not limited to the classroom. You should comment on students' Blackboard postings all semester. The quality and frequency of your responses will count toward your participation.

Tentative Schedule

This schedule is tentative and may slightly change during the semester. I will update the schedule every weekend to reflect any changes, additions and deletions that may occur. It is your responsibility to refer to Blackboard before each class period to familiarize yourself with the updates.

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments Due
1	Jan. 11	Course introduction	
	Jan. 13	Introduction to marketing-based media planning	📖 Ch. 1
2	Jan. 18	From Gutenberg to Cyberspace: the evolution of media	
	Jan. 20	MEDIA GROUP PRESENTATIONS	
3	Jan. 25	Local media and how to use rate cards	
	Jan. 27	Relationship among media, advertising, and consumers	📖 Ch. 3 pp. 39-50
4	Feb. 1	Cost-per-thousand and cost-per-point	📖 Ch. 3 pp. 51-55
	Feb. 3	CASE STUDY PRESENTATIONS	CASE STUDIES DUE
5	Feb. 8	Basic measurements and calculations (magazines) • SRDS	📖 Ch. 4 pp. 57-72
	Feb. 10	Basic measurements and calculations (newspapers) • SRDS	📖 Ch. 4 pp. 57-72
6	Feb. 15	Basic measurements and calculations (television and radio)	📖 Ch. 4 pp. 73-79
	Feb. 17	EXAM #1	
7	Feb. 22	The strategic marketing plan: intro to semester project	
	Feb. 24	VISIT TO LOVE LIBRARY	📍 MEET AT LOVE LIBRARY
8	March 1	Target Audience selection using MRI/Simmons data	📖 Ch. 7 pp. 159-182
	March 3	Index number analysis	📖 Ch. 7 pp. 159-182
9	March 8	Buying power indexes	📖 Ch. 7 pp. 183-192

	March 10	Reach and frequency	📖 Ch. 5
10	March 16 March 18	SPRING BREAK	OFF
11	March 22 March 24	EXAM #2 Geographic Weighting • Budgeting	📖 Ch. 8
12	March 29 March 31	Group work day MARKETING PLAN PRESENTATIONS	MARKETING PLAN DUE
13	April 5 April 7	Introduction to the media plan and media flight plan software Principles of Planning Media Strategy	📖 Ch. 10 ➔ MFP #12 due
14	April 12 April 14	Setting and linking objectives Selecting media classes • Media Mix • Share of Voice	➔ MFP #13 & 14 due 📖 Ch. 9 except pp. 248-254
15	April 19 April 21	Evaluation and selecting media vehicles • Rankers Multimedia • Cross-platform integration • Cyberspace	📖 Ch. 11 📖 Ch. 9 pp. 248-254
16	April 26 April 28	Media costs, buying problems & ethics Course Evaluations	📖 Ch. 12 MEDIA PLAN DUE
17	May 3	FINALS WEEK	OFF

Appendix 2: Responses to Open-Ended Survey Questions

In your own words, what did you learn from this assignment?

- I learned the ins and outs of media planning. There is a lot of consideration and thought that goes in media planning and buying.
- That money goes like water ☺ I learned how to stretch a budget and make everything work together.
- How to effectively allocate a budget into a national plan; how to allocate GRPs to achieve maximum (optimal, effective) reach & frequency. That \$43.95 million isn't a lot.
- I learned how to write a media plan. However, some things were unclear and didn't make sense.
- I learned a little bit more than the basics of media planning. I learned a great deal more about actually writing a media plan than plugging in numbers.

- This project helped my media writing skills as well as my ability to work with and think clearly about buying media (in terms of how to determine which ones to buy, etc.)
- How to use resources to create a media plan for a company.
- I learned a lot about how to organize and complete a media plan, and what steps are needed in order for a plan to be successful.
- How the world of media planning works and the time and effort it takes to complete each piece of the big puzzle.
- I learned that there are so many ways to choose the correct vehicles for advertising, but that it was almost impossible to have all my goals reached. Media planning involves a ton of critical thinking and that may have been the hardest part.
- That media planning is complicated. The use of resources and formulas creates a valid argument for nearly any case.
- Independence in media buying
- After I completed the assignment I felt that I had a better understanding of reach & frequency. I was able to see how vehicles affected their final results.
- I learned that media planning is a whole lot more complex than just picking media and spending money.
- How to effectively plan for a media budget, something that is important when making media sales and creating advertising
- Learned a lot about what to look for in different media when you are purchasing them. I learned a lot about the amounts of \$\$ that is involved in the process and how you decide where to spend the \$\$.
- Learned media from a marketing aspect. Overall understanding of the process is important to know even if you are in a different realm such as creative.
- How to choose effective media vehicles by using statistical/numeric analysis. How to effectively reach the right amount of audience members.
- I really just learned how it all worked together. It's interesting to see the media buying in detail.
- I feel like I went into the assignment a little unprepared. I was intimidated by it so I think I did poorly in it. After doing this I now know that I don't want to do media planning.
- How hard it is to be the one that needs to select and buy the correct media. If the person does an adequate job the message (good or bad) never gets across to the correct people.
- Overall, I learned a lot from this project, but some areas are a little "cold." I felt like some areas were tough to do with the amount of knowledge. But as I said above, the project taught me a great deal about writing a media plan.
- I learned how the entire advertising process works together.
- How to set marketing, communications, and advertising goals and how to use numbers in those goals.
- How to put together a whole media plan. Using configurations I never knew how to do before (another world to me before this).
- A great deal. The group project before individual project really helped.
- A lot about why we place ads, where we place ads, and how we go about buying the placement...this was all the things I didn't know or realize why until this class.
- I had never had to write a media plan before, so the entire project was very valuable for me.
- I learned that there is a lot more that goes into media planning than I thought.
- I learned where all the ## come into play and how important each piece is to a project like this.
- I learned a lot from the process. Many steps were very confusing and took time to figure out, but with the help of Frauke it was made less confusing.

Please share any comments you may have regarding the peer review process here:

- Comments from students who felt peer review was at least a somewhat helpful tool:

- I felt the class was [a] very comfortable environment and it was easy to ask or answer questions of one another.
- It helps to see errors in your work as well as examples of how to do things correctly.
- Peer review throughout the assignment was very helpful – allowed us to share ideas and thoughts and critique to improve.
- I thought that it was helpful for the most part. It helped to get some feedback and to be able to ask questions.
- It helped me catch a few things that I overlooked. I think you should only comment on 2 others because on 3 it gets redundant.
- Keep the schedule for the final project the same as it is now, It really makes it a lot less stressful on us.
- I liked it!
- I really liked being able to talk to my group and bounce ideas off of them.
- If the two males in our group hadn't dropped the class then perhaps their perspective would have been useful.
- The only reason why I liked it was because I had to do the work prior to the night before. I made finishing the project much easier.
- It was great to have sections posted at different times, so we weren't waiting until the last minute to complete the assignment, but I would have liked a peer review of the flowchart, too.
- Peer review was a great idea and was very helpful in keeping on track.
- Liked getting feedback, helped me catch mistakes.
- Great thing! I would have failed without the weekly deadlines/peer reviews.
- Helped a ton and the suggestions were great!
- I loved it! It made the project a lot less stressful.
- Negative:
- I wish I felt that I could talk to my group more for more explanation if they got it.
- I don't like commenting on other people's work when I'm not even sure about my own. It helped to see that we were all moving in the same direction (even if the written stuff was a little different based on our own data/conclusions).
- Time consuming to read and comment on each other. Time could have been better spent working on actual media plan.
- Not everyone participated – frustrating
- It was kind of awkward – I would have preferred guidelines of sort.
- Again, I was just a big overwhelmed. It was a difficult project – but breaking it up helped a lot.
- It would have been more helpful if other group members posted/responded. Only one other group member did regularly.
- Review should be a percentage of grade to encourage everyone to participate.
- As far as the peer review, I didn't think it really helped. I like how we had parts due each week, but reading each other's work and critiquing didn't help.
- I don't think it was necessary and was not as helpful as it could have been – I think people just wanted to focus and get their own done.