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***SMU J-Term in Taos***

***Environmental Communications: Advocacy and Campaigns***

***COMM 5305 — Topics in Comm. Studies***

***Mon. Jan. 6 through Wed. Jan. 15, 2014***

***Professor: Nina Flournoy***

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**Course Description:** This experiential course takes place in SMU’s rustic campus situated in the beautiful Carson National Forest just outside of Taos, New Mexico. The concentration of nonprofit organizations based in the region, coupled with a breath-taking natural landscape, makes the SMU-in-Taos campus an ideal setting for studying environmental cause communications. Students will explore ways in which environmental nonprofits in the Southwest use communication skills and public relations strategies to inform the public, rally support and develop campaigns for promoting causes. The course combines class lecture, guest speakers, field trips and visits to Taos-area environmental nonprofit organizations. As such, students will gain first-hand understanding of the challenges facing nonprofits, and the vital role communications plays in their success. Student work will entail researching, conducting interviews and writing papers, as well as engaging in social media reporting, with an emphasis on posting blogs about environmental issues in the Southwest. Public Relations and Communication Studies majors can earn degree credit, but all majors are welcome.

Permission of instructor is required as class size is limited.

**Class supplies:**

Laptop or iPad and cell phone. (Remember chargers.)

Three-ring binder with pocket section dividers.

**Required Reading**

***Note:*** *J-Term is a concentrated, time-intensive format. This course requires reading to be completed prior to arriving in Taos. The class Blackboard site includes links to all reading materials.*

**“**Communicating a ‘‘New’’ Environmental Vernacular: A Sense of Relations-in-Place”

#  “Working with the Media: Nonprofit Toolkit”

# “Crisis Communication Plan”

# “Building Advocacy”

# “Fundraising and Development”

# “Creating High-Impact Nonprofits” by Grant & Crutchfield

# “Mora leaders push for ‘sustainable’ growth”

# http://www.taosnews.com/news/article\_7cd6921e-be4a-11e2-8e0e-001a4bcf887a.html

**Resources:**

Basic Press Outreach for Mission-Based Organizations: <http://www.coyotecommunications.com/outreach/promote2.html>

# Non-Profits Web Tool Kit: <http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/non-profits_web_tool_kit.php>

**Websites we’ll be browsing:**

Foundation Center: <http://www.foundationcenter.org>

Guide Star: http://www.guidestar.org

Charity Navigator: http://www.[charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org/)

Board Source: http://www.boardsource.org

Benton Foundation: http://www.benton.org

Idealist: http://www.idealist.org

Center for Nonprofit Management: [www.cnmdallas.org](http://www.cnmdallas.org)

NPO Comm. Blog: <http://www.nancyschwartz.com/articles.html>

Environmental Communication: <http://ninaflournoy.wordpress.com>

Taos Great Outdoors: <http://taos.org/outdoors>

Mesa Green Guide: mesagreenguide.com

Blackstone Ranch Institute: http://blackstoneranchinstitute.org

**Assignments Overview**

**Formal writing assignments** will be negotiated through a collaborative process between the student and the professor. All written assignments should emphasize clear, concise writing and mechanics. Assignments will be judged by professional standards. Neat, well written, typed copy with no spelling or grammatical errors is expected.

**Blog:** Students are required to submit at least three blog posts to the class blog site: Environmental Communication: http://ninaflournoy.wordpress.com.

Blogs should provide insights into your experiences and observations with regard to nonprofit communications during J-Term in Taos. Additionally, students will submit at least one informal personal blog post to Student Adventures ([www.smu.edu/adventures](http://www.smu.edu/adventures))

**Final Binder:** At the end of the semester, all of your work will be compiled in a three-ring binder and should include the following information:

• Cover sheet

• Environmental communications campaign case study paper

• Printed copy of three Environmental Comm. blog posts

• Print out of at least one Student Adventures blog

• Print out of Tweets and Facebook posts (three each)

• Final presentation slides with photos (Power Point, Presi, etc.)

**Taos Dates/Schedule**

Following is a tentative syllabus and schedule. I will email a more complete schedule in late December. Please note the speakers and nonprofit organizations listed on the schedule thus far, and research them online to develop a list of questions and or points you’d like to discuss with each. All students will be expected to research, write, photo and/or video tape our experiences. Each student is required to write at least three blog posts (for Environmental Communications blog at: ninaflournoy.wordpress.com), contribute at least five photos or one video, three Tweets, and three Facebook wall notes during the course of the trip. All of these are to be uploaded to the Environmental Comm blog site, and/or in the Comm. Studies blog site (SMUComm.com), and/or submitted for publication in the *Daily Campus*, the Meadows Creative Community site (<http://mcs.smu.edu/media>). Each student must also submit one personal blog post on SMU’s Student Adventures site.

Weekday class sessions begin at 9 a.m. We will break for lunch at noon, and resume class activities from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. (Bring laptop to all classes. Be prepared to take notes and photos on each field trip.)

**Jan. 5:** Campus Check-in 5 p.m. in Dining Hall

 Dinner from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

 Taos Orientation: 7 p.m.

 We will meet briefly after orientation.

**Jan. 6:** Overview of the Civil Society Sector

 Nonprofit History and Growth

 Diversity of Culture in the Southwest

 Impact of environmental nonprofits in Taos region

 PR and Corporate communications primer

 Assignments overview

#  Discuss reading “Fundraising and Development”

 Discuss reading: “Building Advocacy”

 Campaign case study

 Taos Overview (Guided tour of Taos Pueblo)

**Jan. 7:** Researching the nonprofit sector

Nonprofit Communication documents

 Review Nonprofit Toolkit (on Blackboard)

 Professionalism and expectations

 Understanding nonprofit structure

 Nonprofit staff/ volunteers

 Discuss reading: “Creating High-Impact Nonprofits”

 Campaign case study

 Field trip: Earthfire Institute Wildlife Sanctuary and Retreat Center, led by

 Susan B. Eirich Ph.D., Executive Director [www.earthfireinstitute.org](https://webmail.smu.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=2056c51e0cd640e18bc2b74b43e65d76&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.earthfireinstitute.org)

Jan. 8.: Nonprofit campaign case studies

 Boards and how they operate

 Discuss reading: “Building Advocacy”

 Guest speaker: Erin Sanborn with Taos Green Chamber of Commerce

 Fieldtrip to Wild Earth Guardians in Santa Fe ([www.wildearthguardians.org](https://webmail.smu.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=2IwrYtrIGkGyitMZ42KDVYtOSus4Fc8I38RHy8fasKUCa8hpTfMRw-6Rcl4L66KDhX39lFHKzrM.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.wildearthguardians.org))

 Kevin Gaither-Banchoff, Development Director

Jan. 9: Guest Speaker: John Richardson, Blackstone Ranch Institute

 Identifying Nonprofit Publics

 Comparing Non Profit and Business PR

 Review La Jicarita News : Community newspaper for Northern NM

 Discuss reading: “Working with the Media: Nonprofit Toolkit”

 Nonprofit campaign case studies

 Field Trip: Amigos Bravos, Brian Shields, Executive Director

 (http://amigosbravos.org)

Jan. 10: Environmental documentary: *Call of Life*

 Guest Speaker: Tara Waters Lumpkin, PhD and founder of IZILWANE:

 “Connecting the human animal to the global ecosystem” ([www.izilwane.org](https://webmail.smu.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=2056c51e0cd640e18bc2b74b43e65d76&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.izilwane.org%2f))

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#  Crisis Comm. in the Nonprofit

#  Discuss reading: “Crisis Communication Plan”

 Annual Reports

 Communication Audits

 Public: Foundations, Corporations

 Field Trip: Earthships tour and talk by architect Mike Reynolds

Jan. 13: Nonprofit Media Relations

 What’s news: how to get media coverage

 Building credibility

 Knowing your markets/ local vs. national

 Creating a media list

 Building an online media room

 Online communication efforts

 Social networks and the nonprofit

 Guest Speaker: Sharon Leach, editor and writer for Mesa Green Guide

Jan. 14: Strategies for doing business in civil society sector

 Cause marketing

 Measuring outreach

 Guest speaker: TBA

 Lab work: Preparing presentations

Jan. 15: Final student presentations

 Final folder due.

 Campaign case study paper due next week.

 Please bring to my office (217 Umphrey Lee).

Jan. 16: Depart Taos