

Syllabus Strategic Communication & Sustainable Development I



International Strategic Communication (Term 1)

Name of Institution: CHE / Ede Christian University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands)

Course Number/Name: International Strategic Communication and Sustainable Development

Place in year: 1st of September 2025 – November 2025

Number of Contact Hours (full semester total): 420

Number of Credits (or EC, please specify): 15 EC

Prerequisites for the course: 2 years of Higher Education

Length of the course (in weeks): 10

Instructor Name(s):

- Mr Jelle Terpstra
- Mr Erik Kolkman
- Mr Erik Geluk
- Mr Jeroen van der Zeeuw
- Mr Harm Hilvers

Textbooks used (provided by school)

- Cornelissen, Joep (2020). *Corporate Communication. A guide to theory and practice* (6th revised ed.). Sage.
- Nunez, Nunez Mahdi & Popma (2017) *Intercultural Sensitivity*. Koninklijke Van Gorcum.
- Sachs, J. D. (2015). *The Age of Sustainable Development*. New York City, United States of America: Columbia University Press.
- Wide range of articles related to weekly topics.

General Remarks

This course consists of three programmes, that all relate to the field of international communication, but are organized as three different programme elements.

1. Cultural Encounters (5.0 EC): Communication is a tool in processes of both 'binding' and 'bridging'. Cross cultural communication skills and diversity competence are required in a global multi-cultural society.
2. International Strategic Communication (5.0 EC): Strategic communication is aimed at building sustainable relations with internal and external stakeholder groups. For governments, companies and organizations sustainable communication is a prerequisite to earn (societal) trust.
3. Sustainable Development (5.0 EC): Sustainable Development is about the 'wicked problems' our world is facing, related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, peace and justice.

1: Cultural Encounters (5 EC)

In this programme students act and learn on two levels. On the personal level of cultural

encounters we discuss, based on the book “Intercultural Sensitivity” by Nunez, Nunez Mahdi & Popma (2017), the experiences of the students themselves while living and studying in the Netherlands. This helps them better understand what happens with and around them in the Netherlands and it gives them a better understanding of their own cultural background. Since all students are part of a project group, we want all students in this group to visit and participate in cultural activities from each of the individual countries that they’re from. On the national level of cultural encounters we discuss the topic of public and economic diplomacy, based on a variety of texts from different authors in the field. This helps students gain a better understanding of the macro-context in which international business and international communication takes place, and thus how organizations can and should influence the public debate.

Assignment

This assignment consists of two parts. The first is a group assignment, in which students do research on the projected and experienced narratives of their home countries. The goal is to make students aware of the fact that and how these narratives change over time. The second assignment is an individual assignment, in which the student reflects – based on a number of cross-cultural theories (amongst others Hofstede, Trompenaars and Schein) – on their own cultural experiences whilst working in a mixed cultural project group. The goal of this is to help students become better cross-cultural professionals.

2: International Strategic Communication (5 EC)

Our world has turned into a global village. Continents have become neighbourhoods and the interconnectedness and interdependency between nations is ever increasing. Governments, companies, organizations/NGO’s are looking for skilled (strategic) communication experts who have state-of-the-art professional knowledge and skills as well as a highly sophisticated awareness of intercultural communication and societal issues.

The minor focusses on completing students’ knowledge in strategic corporate communications (in an international context) and acquiring advanced skills in intercultural communication. Special attention will be given to societal issues (corporate social responsibility and creating shared value) and sustainable development. What contribution can strategic communication make to attain the Sustainable Development Goals?

In an international classroom students will broaden both their professional and personal horizon.

Learning outcomes

- gain knowledge about and insight in (international) corporate communication, cross cultural communication, corporate social responsibility (ESG -criteria | ecological, social and governance) and sustainable development;
- learn how to use communication to help solve societal issues;
- develop a profound interest in international and intercultural issues;
- deepen their cross cultural sensitivity;
- acquire skills to work and communicate in an international and multicultural setting.
- be able to make a thorough analysis of an organisation’s CSR efforts and her corresponding communication practices;

- develop a sensitive ethical awareness about truthful, transparent and accountable practises and communication.

Assignment

This assignment consists of two parts. For the first assignment students write a personal essay in which they describe their vision on communication as an instrument to build communities and to create trust. They show that they have acquired a sufficient body of knowledge and connect this with current events and developments in society. They explain how - from an organizational point of view - they strive to behave and communicate professionally in a trustworthy and constructive way. For the second assignment students present a TED-Talk in which they show their capacity in public speaking.

3: Sustainable Development (5 EC)

In this course students will study in a multidisciplinary environment in which they will learn to frame (international) problems within the 17 sustainable development goals of the UN. The sustainable development goals are interconnected – often the key to success to one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another. The work of Jeffrey Sachs provides the theoretical framework, critically compared with Wolterstorff and Goudzwaard.

Sustainable development is a much broader concept than protection of the Earth. It implies a concern for future generations and for the long term health and integrity of the dimensions of our living environment. It embraces concern for the quality of life (not just income growth), for equity between people in the present (including prevention of poverty), for inter-generation equity (people in the future deserve an environment which is at least as good as the one we currently enjoy, if not better) and for the social and ethical dimensions of human welfare. It also implies that further development should only take place as long as it is within the carrying capacity of natural systems.

Students are taken on a learning journey in which they discover for themselves that environmental, urban and health challenges are interrelated, that an integrated approach is required that undertakes action at various levels simultaneously. Subjects are:

1. A stewardship perspective on sustainability (from a Christian worldview).
2. Sociological issues (justice) and shalom (a flourishing society)
3. Sociological issues (poverty, social exclusion, education) and human capital
4. Biological questions related to our use of the earth and biodiversity
5. The economic and political question of climate change
6. History of urbanization and trends for the coming decade

Assignment

This individual assignment consists of an essay in which the student critically reflects on the theoretical work of Sachs (2015) related to the sustainable development goals.