

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS: FRAMING, WRITING & STORYTELLING

COURSE DATA

Code	E000006967
Degree	European Track
Level	Undergraduate
Semester	Spring 2025
Credits	3 ECTS
Department	Department of Translation, Interpreting and Communication
Language of instruction	English
Name and email of instructor	Daniel Lewis Wuebben dlewis@comillas.edu

SHORT DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on three core competencies of strategic communication: **framing, writing, and storytelling**. Students will learn to design a communicative frame, or reference context, that shapes the interpretation of a message with intentional nuance and purpose. Framing allows

communicators to highlight certain dimensions of a topic while downplaying others, thereby conditioning how audiences understand and react to information.

At the same time, students will develop the ability to transform a message into a story tailored to a specific audience, in a particular context, at a particular moment, and with a concrete objective. This involves more than simply transmitting information—it requires selecting a perspective, structuring a narrative, and choosing a mode of delivery that resonates with an audience.

To achieve these goals, students will refine their **written expression** so that it is clear, concise, and aligned with communicative objectives. Writing and revising will not be abstract exercises but will instead be rooted in **close analysis of exemplary literary texts (mostly short fiction)**, drawn from a wide range of genres and styles. In doing so, students will develop sensitivity to both form and function in communication, training themselves to identify how narratives persuade, inform, and inspire.

Building on this foundation, the course moves between **theory and practice**. Weekly readings and discussions introduce the basics of narrative arcs, character development, setting, and genre conventions, while practical assignments require students to apply these concepts in different modalities. For example, they will craft autobiographical and fictional stories, analyze framing strategies in media and politics, and experiment with multimodal communication (text, audio, visual).

Assessment is designed to reflect the professional practice of global communication. A **final exam (50%)** tests students' knowledge of narrative and framing theory and their ability to apply it to media analysis and reframing exercises. A writing **portfolio (20%)** allows students to practice narrative strategies in both autobiographical and fictional writing, encouraging creativity, precision, and genre awareness. A **group presentation (15%)** challenges students to research and present how one of the European Commission's current priorities has been framed in political, media, and cultural discourse. Finally, a **participation grade (15%)** reflects active engagement in class discussions, attendance, and smaller assignments.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize and critically evaluate frames in political, media, and organizational contexts.
 - Write in clear, purposeful English across multiple genres of strategic communication.
 - Craft stories that incorporate character, setting, and action in ways that resonate with audiences.
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- Apply framing and storytelling techniques in both professional and creative contexts.

Demonstrate awareness of ethical, cultural, and political dimensions of narrative practice.

COURSE CONTENTS

Introduction – The basics of storytelling

Topic 1: The basics of strategic narratives

Topic 2: Storytelling strategies – Narrative arcs

Topic 3: Storytelling strategies – Character development

Topic 4: Storytelling strategies- Setting and action

Topic 5: Introduction to narrative genres and structures

Framing in theory and practice

Topic 6: Framing and storytelling in politics

Topic 7: Framing public policies

Topic 8: Social networks and transmedia storytelling

WEEK	DATE (2026)	CONTENTS	ASSIGNMENTS
1	Jan 15	Topic 1: Stories and Strategic Narratives	
2	Jan 22	Topic 1 continued; Topic 2: Narrative Arcs	Read Hemingway, <i>"Hills Like White Elephants"</i>
3	Jan 29	Topic 2 continued; Topic 3: Character Development	Read Melville, <i>"Bartleby the Scrivener"</i>
4	Feb 5	Topic 3 continued	Listen: <i>"Welcome to Your Authentic Indian Experience™"</i> (podcast episode)
5	Feb 12	Topic 4: Setting and Action	<i>"A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"</i>

6	Feb 19	Topic 5: Genre and Structure	Task #1 due (Autobiographical Story)
7	Feb 26	Topic 6: Framing and Politics	Crow & Lawlor, <i>"Media in Policy Process"</i>
8	Mar 5	Topic 6 continued	<i>"The End of Framing as We Know It"</i>
9	Mar 12	Topic 7: Framing Policy Proposals	
10	Mar 19	Topic 7 continued	Task #2 due (Shift from Fact to Fiction)
11	Mar 26	Topic 8: Multimodal Framing	
12	Apr 9	Class Presentations	
13	Apr 16	Class Presentations;	
14	April 23	Final Exam Preparation	Final Exam TBD

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is divided into a **final exam (50%)**, a portfolio including **2 written tasks and a reflection (20%)**, an oral **group presentation (15%)** and a participation grade based on a series of small assignments, **active class participation and attendance (15%)**.

Exam 50%		Portfolio 20%		Presentation 15%		Participation 15%	
Final exam	50%	Task 1	10%	Presenta- tion	15%	Quality and quantity of submissions, active class participa- tion & attendance	15%
		Task 2	10%				

- The **use of AI** to create complete works or relevant parts, without citing the source or the tool or without being expressly allowed in the description of the work, will be considered plagiarism and regulated according to the General Regulations of the University.

COMPETENCIES AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

General

CG01	Ability to think analytically, synthetically, and critically in the context of international communication	
	RA1	Describes, connects, and interprets simple situations and approaches.
	RA2	Selects the most significant elements and their relationships in complex texts.
	RA3	Identifies gaps in information and establishes connections with external elements related to the situation presented
CG02	Ability to apply communication knowledge to practice in international contexts	
	RA1	Determines the scope and practical usefulness of theoretical concepts.
	RA2	Correctly identifies the knowledge applicable to each situation.
	RA3	Relates knowledge to different professional or practical applications.
	RA4	Solves practical cases that simulate real professional situations.
CG04	Ability to communicate orally and in writing in four languages	
	RA1	Expresses ideas in a structured, intelligible, and convincing way.
	RA2	Speaks confidently and fluently in front of a group.
CG06	Ability to think and manage strategically in the context of international communication	
	RA1	Reflects on the best strategies applicable to each situation.
	RA2	Manages diverse situations dynamically, identifying the relevant knowledge and skills applicable in each case.
	RA3	Correctly identifies and defines the problem and its possible causes before its effects become evident.
	RA4	Proposes pertinent solutions and designs an action plan for their application.
CG08	Information management skills in a communication environment	
	RA1	Can search for and analyze information from diverse sources.

	RA2	Uses a variety of documentary search strategies.
	RA3	Correctly cites those sources.
	RA4	Incorporates information into their own discourse.
	RA5	Uses databases relevant to the field of study.
CG09	Critical and self-critical capacity	
	RA1	Analyzes their own behavior with the aim of improving performance.
	RA2	Is open to external critique of their work.
	RA3	Detects and identifies inconsistencies, important gaps, and problems in a given situation
CG14	Ability to apply interpersonal skills in the professional communication environment	
	RA4	Can depersonalize ideas in the context of group work to focus on the task.
CG20	Capacity for ethical commitment in professional activity	
	RA5	Is concerned about the consequences that their activity and conduct may have for others

Specific

CE18	Able to analyze communicative messages and write informative and persuasive texts adapted to the medium and target audiences.
CE19	Knows and applies framing and storytelling techniques in international communication.