STCM 459: Strategic Communications Campaigns for PR and ADV

Semester: Fall 2017  Section: C03  CRN: 84997  Credit Hours: 3

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Course Description

This course provides a hands-on campaign-planning experience for strategic communications majors. To enhance cognitive decision-making and improve teamwork, groups of students will research and analyze a client problem/situation and then research and develop an integrated strategic communications campaign for a local, nonprofit client. Students will creatively employ research techniques/analytical skills and further develop creative, writing, social and editing skills learned in previous courses. Class sessions will consist of lectures, discussions, agency meetings, workshops, student presentations and possibly guest speakers. Outside reading, group meetings, client meetings, travel and research are also required. Course prerequisites are all lower-level courses on in the major or consent.

This is an intense, time-consuming course with high professional and academic expectations. It should be one of the most demanding courses you have taken. Amid the rigor, however, I hope that you will enjoy the class. Have fun, work hard, and enjoy the opportunity to put everything you’ve learned into practice. In this class, you will gain actual hands-on experience with a real-world client, and at the end, you will have something to show potential employers.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

• **research and examine** a strategic communications (advertising and public relations) problem/opportunity in an actual, real-world situation;
• **analyze and interpret** data and apply it to strategic communications problems/situations to guide campaign planning;
• **identify, evaluate and target** specific and diversified audiences appropriate to the campaign;
• **define** measurable, realistic, deadline-specific objectives that are appropriate to the campaign problem/opportunity;
• **create** consistent, key strategic messages for target audiences;
• **develop** strategic communications strategies and tactics appropriate for specific and diverse audiences;
• **develop** a clear plan for campaign evaluation that is driven by the campaign objectives;
• **show** a basic understanding of campaign budgeting;
• **demonstrate** strategic communications skills through writing, editing, developing, creating, and/or designing materials for a variety of appropriate media and audiences;
• **adhere to and apply** the AAF Principles and Practices for Advertising Ethics and the PRSA Code of Ethics in developing/implementing an integrated strategic communications campaign plan;
• **demonstrate** appropriate verbal and audio-visual presentation skills through formal strategic communications briefings/pitches;
• **demonstrate** professionalism through appropriate client and team dynamics and presentations;
• **communicate** correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the advertising and public relations professions, their audiences, and the purposes they serve;
• **critically evaluate** your work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
• **apply** current tools and technologies appropriate for the strategic communications profession in a digital world; and
• **apply** knowledge from across academic disciplines, as applicable, to assist in the creation of a strategic communications campaign.

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**Text**

- **Course pack:** to be provided by the instructor free of charge
- **Course materials expenses:** Expenses for project supplies, duplicating and other similar expenses are your responsibility. Expenses related to the two professionally bound printed copies of the campaign book are the responsibility of your entire team. Plan accordingly.

- **Recommended for PR & Medial Relations Director:** *The Associated Press Stylebook*. Dust it off, as you’ll need to use it for the tactical portion of your campaign!
- Additional Readings will be posted on Delicious, the class eCampus site, Twitter and/or distributed in class.

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**eCampus**

I will use the class eCampus site to post important course documents and to communicate with you. Among other things, you will find this syllabus, PowerPoint slides, assignment information and supplemental readings. If you happen to lose any class handouts, you should be able to find them here. You may also be required to turn in some of your assignments via eCampus. Please become familiar with the site and check it often. I will try to e-mail you when new information is posted. PowerPoint slides, when used, will be posted before class and remain on the site until the end of the semester. **Discussion Board feature:** I strongly encourage you to use this feature for accountability
purposes, to post progress reports, to discuss your campaign and to bounce ideas off of each other. I will check the site periodically to ensure everyone is contributing, and I’ll check group accountability as well. Here you can talk about any challenges you are facing, things that have worked/have not worked, or other issues that may arise.

Course Structure
This seminar requires students to participate actively in problem analysis/discussion and requires students to work both independently and in groups to research, create, and partially implement and evaluate a strategic communications campaign plan. The instructor will provide foundational materials, commentary, analysis, mentorship and guidance. The instructor will serve as the lead decision maker for the campaign.

Important note: This is not a course for slackers. You will be held accountable for the work you produce (or fail to produce). This course is designed for you to fulfill learning objectives while making a contribution to our community. Please don’t hesitate to ask for assistance or explanation of class materials or assignments. My goal for this course is to make it a beneficial experience for you and for our clients.

Over the course of the semester, you will develop a strategic campaign plan for a client. We will be on a tight schedule to get everything accomplished by the end of the semester. Excellence and professionalism are expected. You can expect to spend more time on this class than any other you have taken in the program. You will work in 2 teams and will function as a full-service strategic communications agency. More information about the clients/projects for the semester will be thoroughly discussed in class.

Team Positions: I will choose positions within teams. Each student must turn in a resume and an application letter addressed to me explaining your qualifications. In your letter, you must provide me with your top two position preferences and why you are qualified, or should be permitted, to serve in this role. You must also indicate your top project preference, and briefly explain why you would like to work on this team. You must also be prepared to sell yourself for a particular position during a brief individual interview situation, if needed. I will assign all roles and teams, and each student will have a specific role. The strongest team members work across positions, when needed (which is ALWAYS). More specific instructions, the deadline, and a complete explanation of each position will be provided in a separate document.

You will have a chance to use class time for development of each phase of our campaign work, but much of the work will need to be done outside of class. I know it is often difficult to coordinate schedules, so it will be to your benefit to develop a team culture/work schedule as soon as your teams are assigned. Use class time wisely for planning and assigning workloads to team members. A large part of campaign development is working together as a team and using your resources wisely. Use e-mail, Google Drive, Google Docs, DropBox and team social media resources as much as possible. Texting and group chat is fine for informal conversations for your team, but you need the accountability of a written email chain should you need to copy me in or forward to me to help
you resolve a team issue. If you have any information or resources to share with the class, you should tweet it using the following hashtag: #Colistra459.

Upon completion of work through the midterm, as well as at the end of the semester and submission of the final products, each member must turn in an evaluation of the other members’ contributions to the assignment/project (peer evaluations). These will be heavily factored into your grades. Client/instructor evaluations will also be considered in your final grade. Specific instructions will be provided, and you can find a detailed breakdown of peer-evaluation calculations under the Grading section in this syllabus.

Professionalism, Manners, & Policies

Professionalism & Manners
This class will mirror a job in strategic communications. Consider it an apprenticeship. To that end, professionalism is expected as well as good manners.

• Please be on time. Class starts promptly at 10 a.m., and you should have read all materials and be ready to participate. Tardies will be counted (see Attendance below). All assignments are due at the beginning of class; deductions result from work turned in after 10 a.m. (yes, even one minute late!)
• You are permitted to use your cell phone in class ONLY to interact with your client contacts. Otherwise, please turn off your cell phone ringers in the classroom. Do not text in this class! If this becomes a problem you will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day, which could mean a 0 for the day’s assignment. Non-client use of cell phones during class time will result in lowering the instructor evaluation portion of your grade by ½ a letter grade on each occasion, no exceptions.
• Please be respectful. Ignore your personal life for 75 minutes and focus on our class.
• Attendance will be taken daily at the beginning of class and at the beginning of your agency meeting. Please arrive on time. Three tardies will count as one absence. Regardless of whether or not you are in class, you will be responsible for any announcements made and the material covered in class. If you miss a class, ask a teammate for notes and information. You must also notify your Account Executive and Dr. Colistra’s teaching assistant (TBA).

Policies

EMAIL POLICY
Communication between professors, students and clients is professional in nature, not informal. Write professionally as if you are writing to your boss at work, not to your friend. Also please check course syllabus and eCampus carefully before sending any emails. When I receive same questions from three or more students, I will post my response on the eCampus. Please include “STCM 459” in the subject line for a prompt response. Indicate your name and issues clearly. I will do my best to respond to your emails in a timely manner, but realize that I do not work around the clock. Note that I do NOT RESPOND to an email 1) if your questions in email can be answered by looking at course syllabus or eCampus, 2) if your email is incorrect, rude, or completely incoherent, or 3) if your email does not include your name and class information. My email address is rita.colistra@mail.wvu.edu
### RECORDING POLICY
You may not record audio or video, take photos, or live stream the professor, the classroom environment, meetings, or workshops unless you have clear permission from the instructor. If you require recording for accommodations, please make sure to get me the proper University paperwork at the beginning of the semester (first two weeks of class). If you have questions, come see me or set up an appointment during my office hours.

### Assignments and Deadlines
As a professional in training, you are expected to produce professional work and turn assignments in on time. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. If class has begun before you turn in your assignments, you will be penalized a full letter grade. **This means even if it's one minute late!** Assignments turned in after class but within 24 hours of the due date will be docked two letter grades. Those turned in after 24 hours will earn a 0.

All assignments in this course are expected to be professionally presented. Your work should be should be grammatically correct with no typographical or factual errors, misspellings or handwritten corrections; otherwise, you will lose points. You will lose a **SIGNIFICANT** number of points (-25) if you incorrectly spell a person’s or an organization’s name OR if your work contains factual errors (-15).

### Attendance
**Do not miss this class.** You are expected to attend all classes, and attendance will be taken during every class period. Just as professionals go to work each day, I expect you to come to class on time and be prepared to work. **Excessive absences (more than 2) will result in a reduction of 5 points off your final grade.** A student with more than 5 absences will automatically earn an F in the course. **Absences:** You will be eligible for an excused absence (e.g., a university-sanctioned event) only if you seek permission prior to class. Make sure you contact me before class. **In-class assignments cannot be made up.** Presentations cannot be made up. If you do not participate in your team’s presentation, you will earn a 0.

### Agency Meetings:
Throughout the semester, we will schedule times for me to meet with each group separately. During these agency meetings (scheduled during class time), we will go over the elements of your campaign plan, and I will provide feedback and guidance. **If you miss an agency meeting, you have missed a class.** If you arrive late to your meeting, this counts as a tardy. Agency meetings will take place in our classroom, unless otherwise noted via prior communication with all students.

### Work Days:
We will have several scheduled work days. **THESE ARE NOT DAYS OFF!** You must meet with your team and work on your campaign. We are under tight deadlines, so use this valuable time wisely. You will have the classroom available to meet. I will be either working with your during the workdays within the classroom OR in my office to give you individual help during these times. I’m here to serve as your fearless leader (gulp) and to help you. I will be ready to help you tackle the challenges that you face (or ideas and opportunities that you may have), and I will
look over research protocols, research reports, PR pieces, ADV concepts/designs, drafts, outlines, design work, social media content calendars… **pretty much anything you need. I’m here for you!**

**Working in teams:** You will work in an agency team throughout the semester. I expect all members of a team to contribute equally. Should a problem arise with a team member, I expect you to first try to solve the problem within the group. If the problem continues, I should be notified in writing. Written documentation of a student’s lack of participation will be factored into the final grade.

**Assignments:**

1. **Campaign Chapter Assignments (45%)** will be assigned and due throughout the semester. All chapter assignments will be graded on accuracy and thoroughness as well as content and writing skills. The chapter assignments must be typed and double-spaced and must follow the guidelines provided in class. I will provide a letter grade and return each chapter to you with my comments, and you will be given an opportunity to revise those sections before you submit your final campaign book. The revisions, however, will not be factored into this grade. In other words, you will not be graded again. Instead, you’ll use my marks to improve your work for your final products (i.e., the campaign book and presentation).

2. **The Final Written Campaign Book/Plan (15%) and Presentation(s) (10%)** will be submitted on the day of our final. Your final campaign book should be professionally bound and follow the guidelines provided in your course pack. **You must turn in two copies of your leave-behind campaign plan to me.** One will be graded and one will be given to the client. You will also turn in an electronic version of the campaign plan (via Google Drive share or on a flash drive) one for me and one for the client. You must turn these in in two file types: an editable design file type (such as InDesign) and a pdf. (Note: Expenses for project supplies, duplicating and other similar expenses are your responsibility.)

For your final presentation, you will have a set time period to inform your classmates and your client of your campaign. You should use PowerPoint/Prezi/emaze, interactive media, posters, and other visuals to inform your audience. Be creative. There are no boundaries here. Make us say “Wow!”

The final campaign plan and presentation will be graded based on the following: a) your overall campaign program (logic, structure, cohesiveness, and creativity of the campaign); b) your final campaign plan; c) the packaging of your leave-behind campaign plan; d) the professionalism of your presentation; and e) the client’s evaluation of your campaign. More specific guidelines will be provided in class.

*Your group MUST turn in a final campaign plan and must present your campaign to the client in order to receive a final grade in this course. If you miss your presentation, you will receive a “0” for the campaign plan/presentation grade.*
3. Individual Assignments/Quizzes/Reports/Reflections/Participation/Tweets (15%). Throughout the semester, especially through the first month, I will give quizzes and/or in-class assignments to ensure that you understand the material. You will also be required to provide Progress Reports by a designated deadline for accountability (see below). Additionally, I may also designate individual assignments, including topic presentations/posts, that are relevant to your assigned position on your respective team. You also will be asked to voluntarily and anonymously provide formal reflections and feedback of your service-learning experience. Finally, you will, at times, be required to provide outlines of selected chapters before submitting the chapter to me for a grade. These outlines can help to ensure you’re on track with your work. All of the aforementioned items will be factored in here.

- **Progress reports:** Each team member will be required to submit once-weekly *progress reports* to a designated eCampus Discussion Board Thread every Friday morning (once I announce it). Deadlines will be discussed in class. This information will help hold everyone accountable and will help us stay on track with the campaign. Part of your instructor evaluation grade will come from your contributions, quality of work, and meeting the assigned deadlines. These reports also are considered for the professionalism points portion of your grade.

4. **Professionalism Points (10%):** This portion of your grade is based on your professionalism, participation, teamwork, personal interactions, contributions, quality of work, iServe, reflections on the service-learning experience, responsible handling of equipment, and progress reports. I also will evaluate you on the quality and quantity of your work and collegiality. Because this is an intense, small class and we will interact regularly in even smaller team meetings, I will know how much each student is contributing to the team. I reserve the right to base your final grade on how much I feel you are contributing to the team and overall class experience, regardless of the team assignment grades.

- **Agency-meeting Agendas (Prepared by Account Executives; everyone contributes):** Each time we have agency meetings, your team will need to have a meeting agenda prepared and copied for every person at the meeting (I’ll provide an example). Agendas drive meetings in the real world, so learn how to run a meeting now. The purpose of these reports is to address anything that needs covered, to identify any questions you have, and to detail each group member’s contribution. You may use bullet points and/or outlines as appropriate. These are not graded; however, they will contribute to the *instructor evaluation* portion of your grade. Failure to submit one each meeting will result in this grade being lowered.

- **Meeting Minutes/Recaps:** These are recaps of any and all meetings involving your team (e.g., Agency Meetings with me, weekly team meetings, weekly client meetings, etc.). The last couple of capstone teams provided these after EVERY CLASS SESSION to ensure their teams were all informed! Doing so is now standard practice. These recaps/minutes should be posted in a designated folder on eCampus. See me for assistance and advice. The most successful teams/classes have made “minutes calendars” as soon as the teams were formed to divvy up the responsibility of taking, editing, and posting class/meeting minutes after every session.

- **Logging iServe Hours:** This is a service-learning class, so why not get credit for service hours and keep track of your time spent working with your respective clients (you’ll be
surprised!)? In the future, you’ll need to keep track of billable hours, so this is a good start. More information will be provided.

- **Equipment**: At times, you may need to check out equipment (e.g., cameras) from the College in order to complete some of the work for your clients. All students are required to sign the Equipment Liability form (provided in class) and adhere to the policies described therein. Late returns of or damage to equipment will result in deductions for the professionalism portion of your grade. Late fees $$$ also apply.

5. **Client/Professional Evaluation (5%)**: The client is expected to attend campaign presentations at the end of the semester. The client will evaluate you, based on your our professionalism, dedication, results, etc. I also will have professionals evaluate your work and factor in my individual observations as well. These evaluations will make up this portion of your grade.

**Peer Evaluation** *(See below for calculation. Worth half of your total group assignments grades.)*: Your peers/team members are your support during this entire process. You should be pulling your own weight. You will not be able to just coast along and ride on the coat tails of your teammates; you are expected to work, contribute and do your part. Each person will confidentially evaluate his or her fellow team members. In addition to more informal peer evaluations, each student will provide an overall formal peer evaluation of the entire campaign experience. Guidelines and submission procedures will be provided in more detail in class.

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**Grades**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Chapter Assignments*</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Written Campaign Book*</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Campaign Presentation(s)*</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assignments/Quizzes/Reports/etc.</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism Points</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client/Professional Evaluation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Percentage grades are calculated to one decimal place and rounded to the nearest whole number. For example, the lowest A is 89.5 (rounds to 90); however, an 89.4 is the highest B (rounds to 89).

**Borderline grades stay borderline. No Exceptions.**

* Your group assignment work (marked with a *) constitutes 70% of your course grade. Therefore, your contribution to the group, and your peers’ evaluation of your work, is important, to say the least.

Your total group assignments grade (70% total) will be evaluated based on the following formula:

**Individual Score = Group Score x (0.5 + Peer Evaluation Score x 0.5)**

In other words, 50% of your final grade on your group assignments grade comes from peer evaluations. For example, if your group grade is 90% (A-) and you receive 85% (B) on your peer evaluation, your individual grade is: 0.9 x (0.5 + 0.85 x 0.5) = 0.8325 (B). Or if your group grade is 60% (C-) and you receive 70% (B) on your peer evaluation, your individual grade is: 0.6 x (0.5 + 0.7 x 0.5) = 0.6525 (B).
grade is 90% (A-) and you receive 60% (D) on your peer evaluation, your individual grade is:
\[0.9 \times (0.5 + 0.60 \times 0.5) = 0.72\] (C).

**Please note:** Students who earn below a C in the course will have to retake the class.

**College of Media Equipment**

Please read, sign and hand back the Equipment handout distributed in class.

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**Formalities**

**Inclusivity Statement**

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (304-293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see [http://diversity.wvu.edu](http://diversity.wvu.edu).

**College of Media Diversity Statement**

Through its faculty and student work, the Reed College of Media is actively committed to presenting diverse viewpoints to a general audience and to seeking, nurturing and maintaining ties to a base of multicultural sources. In public relations and advertising, the college equates excellence in campaigns to representing and communicating with diverse clients and audiences. In news storytelling, excellence is equated with the ability to produce stories for and about a wide range of communities and audiences.

**Academic Integrity**

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Catalog at [http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#academicintegritytext](http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#academicintegritytext). Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

**College of Media Statement on Plagiarism & Fabrication.** As future journalists and communicators, your reputation for honesty and integrity is the basis of your credibility. In this course, you will be held to the highest standard of ethical behavior. If you are caught cheating, or engaging in plagiarism or fabrication, meaning the invention of any fact, quote or source, you could receive an “F” for the course, or an “F” for the assignment. You could also receive an “Unforgivable F” on your academic transcript.

**Plagiarism.** The University defines plagiarism in terms of proscribed acts. Students are expected to understand that such practices constitute academic dishonesty regardless of motive. Those who deny deceitful intent, claim not to have known that the act constituted plagiarism, or maintain that what they did was inadvertent are nevertheless subject to penalties when plagiarism has been confirmed. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following:
1. Submitting as one’s own work the product of someone else’s research, writing, artistic conception, theme, thesis, dissertation, commercially prepared paper, musical piece or other written, visual, oral or electronic/computerized material that has been copied in whole or in part from the work of others, whether such source is published or unpublished.
2. Incorporating in one’s submission, without appropriate acknowledgment and attribution, portions of the works of others; that is, failing to use the conventional marks and symbols, such as quotation marks, to acknowledge the use of verbatim and near-verbatim passages of someone else’s work or failing to name the source of words, pictures, graphs, etc., other than one’s own, that are incorporated into any work submitted as one’s own.

**Cheating.** The University defines cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and projects as including, but not limited to:

1. Obtaining help from another student during examinations.
2. Knowingly giving help to another student during examinations, taking an examination or doing academic work for another student, or providing one’s own work for another student to copy and submit as his own.
3. The unauthorized use of notes, books, or other sources of information during examinations.
4. Obtaining without authorization an examination or any part thereof.
5. Submitting materials developed for one assignment/class and using them in another assignment/class without instructor knowledge/permission.
6. Note that the College of Media includes fabrication of quotes as a form of cheating. Any student who presents work that knowingly, and without instructor approval, fabricates quotes of sources can be found guilty of cheating.

**Student Evaluation of Instruction Statement.**
Effective teaching is a primary mission of West Virginia University. Student evaluation of instruction provides the university and the instructor with feedback about your experiences in the course for review and course improvement. Your participation in the evaluation of course instruction is both strongly encouraged and highly valued. Results are strictly confidential, anonymous, and not available to the instructor until after final grades are released by Admissions and Records. Information about how you can complete this evaluation will be provided later.
STUDENT ACCEPTANCE OF SYLLABUS AND CLASS POLICY

I have read the entire syllabus and understand the performance expectations and policies used in this course (STCM 459) and accept these conditions. I will abide by the class policies and directions specified in the syllabus. I will also follow the directions given by the professor, which may not be specified in the syllabus.

I understand that, given the nature of the class, the instructor may modify the syllabus/course content with or without prior notice. I understand that the instructor has the right to vary the number and type of activities during the semester. If I have any comments or complaints about any issues pertaining to the course, I will make constructive suggestions as they arise, not after the fact.

I understand that a professional level of conduct and respect is expected, both between students and the professor, between students and peers, and between students and clients. Also, I understand that it is my responsibility to check my email at least twice each day to make sure I have received the latest messages regarding this class.

I understand that this class involves service-learning, and I agree to work in this environment. If not, I will notify the professor by the second day of class.

I understand the email policy, as described in this syllabus.

I understand the attendance policy, as described in this syllabus.

I understand the recording policy, as described in the syllabus.

I understand that grades are earned, not given, and I understand the grade policy as described in the syllabus.

I understand that I will have to either silence or turn-off my cell phone, and that using my cell phone in class (i.e., text messaging, online browsing, etc.) will disturb the class. I know that using a cell phone, reading a newspaper, or using a laptop to send an email or for activities not related to the class is directly intended to insult the instructor and classmates and will be subject to a penalty.

I have also read and will abide to the University’s Plagiarism Policy as indicated in this syllabus.

Date: ___________________

Student Number: ______________________

Student Name (print): _________________________________________

Student Signature: ____________________________________________