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SCC498

Dr. Weber

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Coursework Paper

As a sociology and strategic and corporate communication double major, I feel as though I have a unique understanding of how people function in groups as well as how they communicate with one another. Through my robust coursework at Chapman, I am prepared to use the skills I obtained from my classes and apply them to my career. I gained a multitude of skills from my classes like Group Communication, Introduction to Research Methods, and Marketing Through the Communicator’s Lens, to name a few. I also had practice applying those skills in my job as Features Editor at The Panther and my internship last semester at DoLA. Consequently, my coursework proved incredibly useful in preparing me for a career in Media & Publishing as a writer and editor.

In Group Communication (COM212), I learned how to define, describe, and identify a small group, explain the processes involved in small group development and identify and explain small group theories. I also learned how to describe, analyze, and apply small group decision-making and problem-solving processes as well as describing and identifying not only roles in small groups but also leadership in small groups as well. The last skill I obtained from this course was the ability to evaluate my own and other group members’ performance following the project. The knowledge from this course can be applied to the workplace setting by my ability to effectively implement small group communication and team-building skills at virtually any job. I can also use the content from this course to identify cultural and global implications of communication theory and research. Finally, I was able to develop, organize, and deliver oral messages that fit the topic, purpose, and audience of the clientele at any given business. This course provided me with information to be able to identify different types of groups, the nature of group decision-making and problem-solving, member relationships and roles as well as group identity. Group Communication provided me with the knowledge and expertise to implement decision-making and problem-solving strategies in my job at Chapman’s newspaper, The Panther. All of these skills are salient to a successful career in any industry that works in groups.

In Introduction to Research Methods (COM295), I gained experience understanding and evaluating research in addition to designing our own research project as a class. In the course, we looked at both quantitative and qualitative research that studied communication through surveys, experiments, observation, interviews, and content analyses. I was also able to understand the goal of communication research and the steps involved in the research process. This course allowed me to identify the strengths and weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and which is best to use given the topic of study. We also learned how to critically evaluate different research methods and outcomes in scholarly journals and popular media in addition to learning how to use quantitative statistics in SPSS. Through this research methods class, I was able to apply communication studies research and the scientific method to test hypotheses or research questions. A certification I had to complete for this course was the Ethics training through the CITI program, which gave me the qualification to be a student researcher. This will help me in the job market because this verifies that I have the expertise to conduct research experiments under supervision of a professional. Overall, this course reiterated what I learned in the research courses I took for my other major in Sociology while also giving me the ability to research from the lens of a strategic communicator.

In Marketing Through the Communicator’s Lens (SCC305), I was provided with the knowledge regarding a given business’s product or service policies, different types of pricing for said products and services, as well as the advertising, selling, and distribution involved with marketing products and services. I was also able to reinforce my ability to identify and use theories and practice of strategic communication to be able to analyze and evaluate messages from organizations; Marketing Through the Communicator’s Lens also reinforced my ability as a strategic communicator to design and deliver messages supported with evidence depending on the topic, purpose, and audience. Even though I have never taken a marketing course before this, I had a really concrete understanding of how businesses work in addition to how the marketing strategy of a company has an enormous effect on the success of that company. After learning about marketing strategy for different marketing situations or types of products, I was able to create a marketing plan which included environmental scanning, a press release, and SWOT analysis. We also learned about the 4 P’s: price, product, promotion, and place/distribution, which helped me with my final project where we picked a company and created a new product for their company using everything we learned. The press release assignment was another opportunity for me to put my journalism and reporting skills to practice with the marketing and copywriting expertise I obtained in this course. I also used the knowledge from this course to inform my copywriting for my internship last semester as well. In summation, Marketing Through the Communicator’s Lens provided me with an in-depth knowledge of marketing and conducting a successful strategic marketing campaign for any company in a wide range of industries.

I began my schooling at Chapman as a Sociology major prior to adding Strategic and Corporate Communication as my second major in the fall of my junior year. This resulted in a multitude of courses outside my major of SCC, such as Social Theory (SOC305), Field Research (SOC301) and Survey Research (SOC37). My Sociology coursework added to my overall education because it gave me the skills to be an exceptional qualitative and quantitative researcher while also being able to relate my findings back to the critical theories in Sociology or Communication disciplines. The electives I took in Sociology were the most enjoyable for me personally, especially courses like Sociology of Sexuality (SOC371) and Sociology of Religion (SOC320). The elective courses that I took gave me a robust understanding of the identities and backgrounds that people come from and how those effect how people function in groups. My double major experience at Chapman has allowed me to become a multifaceted researcher who can understand a variety of backgrounds and perspectives in a diverse job market.

My work experience has allowed me to improve on my skills as a journalist as well as a strategic communicator. Beginning in January of 2019, I was hired as a Features Writer at Chapman’s student-run newspaper, The Panther. As a Features Writer, I wrote up to two articles or reviews per week in the Associated Press writing style. I also gained experience using the Google Suite, since we do all our work on Google Docs, Sheets, and Drive. Some of the many skills I learned in this role that could be applied to the job market would be interviewing skills, email etiquette, and transcribing interviews in addition to pitching stories to the newspaper. In August of 2019, I was promoted to my boss’s job: Features Editor. This role was considerably more work because I managed the Features, Entertainment, and Review sections of the paper. I managed two writers my first year, and now that I’m in my second year in this position I am managing four writers. Each week, I would write up to three articles in addition to editing the articles of my writers in AP style. Last year, when we were still printing the newspaper before COVID, I would layout my sections of the newspaper in Adobe InDesign. The skills I gained from my experience working at The Panther can be used in the workforce; the AP style is required for many news outlets and skills like pitching, writing, and editing are important for any job in Media & Publishing. I also think that my role at The Panther involves a lot of strategic thinking: my first signature theme from my StrengthsFinder results was strategy, which allows me to play out different scenarios in my head (what if this happened, what if that happened). I had to think about what would happen if a writer couldn’t submit something in time for publishing and think quickly about what to do in that situation. This also involves adaptability, which was my second signature theme. In the fast-paced world of journalism, adaptability is very important because stories change and evolve rapidly.

As is required for School of Communications students, I completed an internship last semester in the spring. I interned at DoLA, a Los Angeles events publication based in Downtown LA. I was hired through Handshake as a Content & Social Intern and during my time there (both physically and eventually remotely) I wrote content pieces about local free events in Los Angeles, featured restaurants, and then COVID-related information about blood donation and resources from the LA County Library for DoLA’s newsletter and website. I was also tasked with writing copy for social media posts in addition to finding photos for DoLA’s Instagram account. Another facet of my internship was updating the DoLA website: using the program Radmin, I added, edited, and deleted events like virtual livestream comedy shows, Happy Hours, and at-home workouts. The other two programs I used during my internship were Asana, which I used to complete the tasks assigned to me, and Slack, which I used to communicate with the DoLA team. Not only was I able to home in on my writing skills in this role, but I was also able to learn new programs that smaller companies are using in the workforce. I feel as though this will give me a better chance at success in jobs I apply for because I already have the knowledge about how to use programs common in my field.

My coursework, job, and internship allowed me to obtain knowledge on how to embody a strategic communicator as well as how to apply that knowledge in the real world. I am able to enter the job market with a multitude of skills and abilities under my belt in addition to some experience working at a couple different publications. My classes in Sociology taught me how to be an affective researcher – and since I’m a double major, I’ve had to take Introduction to Research Methods twice in addition to a quantitative research course for Sociology. My experience in research coursework has helped me write research papers for both of my majors in case I do end up going to graduate school given a better financial situation. The programs I learned through these courses include but are not limited to Stata, R, and SPSS. This may also lend itself helpful for jobs geared towards market research and analyzing research on a variety of subjects in the liberal arts. Overall, I feel as though Chapman’s School of Communication has adequately prepared me for what I may encounter in my career and given me an analytical mindset to view group communication and effective strategic marketing in any aspect of my career.