Master of Science in Communication, Management and Health

2017/18
Communication, Management and Health. The world is becoming increasingly complex, with simultaneous opposing demands for more specialisation, a broader understanding of issues, as well as an international outlook. While this is true for most fields, it is particularly the case in the domain of health, where science and its applications continue to gain in complexity and sophistication.

Goals and contents
The Università della Svizzera italiana (USI), Switzerland, in collaboration with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VT), USA, offers a Master in Communication, Management and Health (MCMH), a unique programmer in Europe.

The purpose of the MCMH is to give students:
- A solid theoretical background in multiple academic disciplines: communication, marketing and management;
- A focused and in-depth knowledge of the health sector;
- The option of a dual Master’s degree at Virginia Tech University.

The ultimate goal of the MCMH is to have our students well prepared to perform jobs either with the private or public sector in all size organisations in health and beyond. The programme offers the unique opportunity of two educational pathways: one based entirely at the Università della Svizzera italiana, the other with one study-abroad semester at Virginia Tech University.

Graduates who complete their second semester at VT will be awarded two Master of Science (MSc) degrees:
- A VT MSc in Business Administration with a specialisation in Marketing and
- A USI MSc in Communication, Management and Health.

This full-time study programme comprises 120 ECTS spread over 4 semesters. Students have the possibility to spend their second semester at Virginia Tech University, focusing on quantitative and qualitative methodology which introduce students to the analysis of marketing. During the fourth semester, students will complete their master thesis. In addition, they will acquire professional and practical experience undertaking a three-month field project in which they apply their theoretical knowledge and methodological skills.

Language
This programme is entirely held in English. Applicants who are not native English speaker or whose first degree was not taught in English, must supply an internationally recognised certificate to demonstrate a C1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for language learning (CEFR). Candidates wishing to be considered for Virginia Tech University need to participate in a selection process, as VT can only offer a limited number of places. Applicants interested in spending their second semester at VT, need to submit either the TOEFL or IELTS English test.

Student profile and admission requirements
Bachelor's degree granted by a recognised university, in the fields of Communication Sciences, Economics or other relevant disciplines.

Career opportunities
MCMH graduates are prepared for career opportunities in marketing and communication for pharmaceutical, biotech, and insurance companies, as well as government and other health organisations. Marketing departments from other sectors will also value the distinctive profile of MCMH graduates.

The programme enables students to:
- Acquire specific skills in the health sector and at the same time get an education in business and marketing;
- Collaborate on on-going research projects commissioned by different stakeholders in the health domain (e.g. health promotion institutions, etc.).

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Study programme

First semester

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USI Health Communication</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Methods in Health Communication</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Marketing</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Strategy</td>
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<td>Accounting</td>
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Second semester

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VT Marketing Policy and Strategy</td>
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<td>International Marketing Strategy</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing, Entrepreneurship, and the Public Purpose</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistics for Research (II)</td>
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<td>Electives</td>
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Third semester

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<tr>
<td>USI Corporate Identity and Image</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Communication Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Corporate Communication</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>Electives</td>
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Fourth semester

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<td>USI Thesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Project</td>
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Please be aware that slight changes in the study programme may occur.

Health Communication

Health communication, as the study and application of communication theories in the field of health, is nowadays recognised as a crucial domain to efficaciously inform and influence individual and community health-related decisions. In this course, students will study the most recent theoretical and practical developments in the area of health communication and how this information can be used to improve public health as well as individual behavior.

In 1964, the Surgeon General of the United States issued his report based on 7,000 articles in which the Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health concluded that cigarette smoking is a cause of lung cancer in men and a probable cause of lung cancer in women and called for appropriate remedial action. Ever since, public health organizations and government agencies around the world have launched campaigns aimed at decreasing the prevalence of smoking. Still, it took forty-five years for the Canton Ticino to institute a smoking ban in public buildings, and in 2006, it was still the case that 29 percent of Swiss males and 23% of Swiss females were regular smokers. Clearly, the success of the anti-smoking communication campaigns have enjoyed mixed success. In order to design effective health campaigns, we leverage our understanding of human cognition and behavior. However, we can speculate endlessly about the causes of behavior and how we can use communications to change it. Only through systematic study and evaluation can we learn whether or not our speculations are correct. In this course, we will introduce a variety of tools you can use to design and conduct communication research to gain behavioral insights.

Research Methods in Health Communication

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the principles, practices, and evidence in social marketing. Social marketing focuses on creating social change and social innovation through behavior change communication, policy, and environmental changes. It addresses health, environment, political, sustainability, and other social issues. In this course, students gain understanding of social marketing from a theoretical perspective. Students also learn to apply what they learned, moving from theory to practice, gaining experience and competences in doing social marketing research and practice. Key concepts, conceptual frameworks, and theories in social marketing and their implications on social issues will be examined through a problem-centered approach to learning. Students will be faced with real-life social issues and will learn to use social marketing to address them. They
will learn from theory and case histories to understand problems, identify strategies for improving these issues and develop critical thinking on social marketing principles and practices. Students will work both individually and in groups to critically analyze problems and potential solutions. Teams will share processes, challenges, changes in thinking, and outcomes throughout the course, and receive feedback from instructors and peer groups.

Data analysis
This seminar focuses on the statistical analysis of social scientific data sets. The course is especially designed to provide students with the ability to:
- Demonstrate knowledge of various data-analytical objectives and techniques;
- Critically consume empirical research findings presented in scholarly journals and popular culture reports;
- Assess the appropriateness of various data-analytical techniques in response to questions asked by communication researchers;
- Select appropriate data-analytical strategies based on certain variables of interest;
- Conduct basic statistical analyses on their own empirical data sets.

Corporate Strategy
This course focuses on business strategy, examining issues central to long and short-term competitive position. We will explore a variety of conceptual frameworks and models to analyse and gain insight into how to achieve or sustain competitive advantage. This journey starts by analysing the impact of the internal context (resources and capabilities) on firm performance and subsequently analysing the external environment influence on a firm’s performance. After covering both the external and internal perspectives, we bring these concepts together to discuss firm level competitive advantage. This first part of the course focuses on single business or business unit strategy and will take up the first ten weeks. The final weeks explore corporate or multi-business strategy and international strategy.

Accounting
The course develops around three main topics:
- Financial accounting and financial statements;
- Financial statements analysis;
- Performance management.
The teaching methods include formal lectures as well as discussions of cases. The course provides the theoretical foundations and the main concepts of accounting together with opportunities of applying them to case discussions and exercises.

At the end of the course, students will:
- Master the techniques and main principles of financial accounting;
- Understand and interpret financial statements;
- Know how to design performance measurement and control systems according to strategic and organisational choices;
- Understand the logic and development of profit planning;
- Know the role and relevance of multidimensional performance measurement systems.

Second semester
USI

Core courses

Corporate Identity and Image
The identity of a firm can be considered as important a resource as its financial, human or technological resources. In fact today organizations often offer the same products and services and often even communicate in the same way. Therefore, what the organization is – its “raison d’être” – becomes the ultimate differentiating factor, which makes the company unique. Managing company identity is thus a necessity. In this regard, identity and image are closely connected making corporate communications an evolved corporate function which contributes to the defining of strategies and to the alignment of resources. The purpose of this course is to help students understand how and why management of identity and image are an important part of corporate strategy, and to give students the theoretical and analytical tools necessary to the task.

Health Communication Law
The course will present the background, the objectives and the real impact of most legal norms (and leading judicial decisions) relevant to health communication. Starting with fundamental principles like freedom of expression, protection of privacy or the right to information, it will then deal with more specific topics like advertising for medicaments and medical services, medical confidentiality or the informed consent of the patient. As modern communication does not stop at national borders and as regulations change more and more quickly, the relevant rules will not be described and discussed from a purely legalistic perspective (as would be the case with lawyers), but from an international and dynamic one, with a focus on current and future Swiss and EU regulations.

Global Corporate Communication
Despite the increased interaction among countries of the world, there is a paucity of systematic research on the way public relations (communication management) is conducted by organizations of different types (corporations, NGOs, government agencies) in different parts of the world. Although this course is titled “Global Corporate Communication”, the class shall assess international communication management not just by corporations but by governments and non-profits as well. Although public relations scholarship started at least in the early part of the 20th century in some of the Western developed nations, and public relations like activities can be traced back to pre-biblical times,
it is only in the past few years that public relations practitioners and scholars have begun to emphasize the importance of viewing public relations practice from an international perspective. This has been greatly necessitated by the rapid globalization that has taken place since the final decade of the previous millennium. In the past 15 years or so, a few studies have emanated from different regions of the world focusing attention, among other things, on the inadequacies of an ethnocentric approach to public relations practice and scholarship.

The starting point for this course is that consumers define themselves by what they buy, and, vice versa, they buy based on how they define themselves. We build on cognitive and social psychology to understand better the processes underlying this conundrum. We do this primarily to influence what consumers buy, so as to make informed decisions as marketers in a business (for profit) context. The emphasis is on linking deep theoretical insight with practical application, and as such the course provides both the tools and the context for exercising these tools.

The role of corporations in society has been discussed for many decades. In the light of globalization corporations are becoming more and more transnational and the question of their responsibilities has been raised and discussed. In addition, climate change and unethical behavior (even if not against the law) as well as human rights discussions have influenced the debate. Along with the shift from a mere shareholder point of view to a more integrative stakeholder point of view social and environmental responsibilities and the idea of sustainable development have entered the scene. On the one hand the rule of thumb is: "Do no harm". On the other hand, corporations are seen also as answer to the problems by living up to their social and environmental responsibilities. The overarching concept to address the role of businesses in society is called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The course discusses – with a particular focus on communication – latest trends in standardizing and reporting CSR, in implementing CSR e.g. in supply chains, the role of the consumer and the thread of greenwashing and last but not least the philosophical foundations of CSR and business ethics.

Organizational behavior is a course in applied behavioral and social science that examines the factors influencing individual, group, and firm behavior. Topics covered include preferences, motivation, incentives, social networks, social influence, inter-group collaboration and conflict, and organizational structure and change. The general objective of the course is to provide the conceptual tools for enhancing managerial judgment and for supporting strategic thinking about a wide variety of individual and team decisions within organizations.

The role of this course within the Master in Communication Management and Health programme is to build a bridge between theoretical and practical knowledge and help the transition university studies and future career. This will be made possible by presenting to the students particular challenges healthcare professionals had to face and by providing frame for meeting the very same professionals in person. Since the scope of the healthcare sector is quite broad, professionals will represent different entities: from companies to NGOs, from public institutions to hospitals etc. Students will learn how to take into account interests and viewpoints of the many stakeholders in the healthcare sector. Before meeting the health care professionals, student groups will work on a particular challenge and propose ways to meet it. Professionals will then report how they met this challenge, and the case will be discussed in depth.

Interpersonal Communication and Health introduces the key concepts and theories that guide our understanding of interpersonal human interactions in the context of health. The course integrates the most relevant theories of interpersonal communication with existing scholarship in health communication with the primary goals of developing students’ abilities to

- Understand and speak the language of the interpersonal communication discipline;
- Define and describe the complex nature of health communication;
- Define key terms used by interpersonal health communication researchers and practitioners;
- Connect theoretical concepts of interpersonal communication to health contexts, and
- Generate theory-driven research by applying interpersonal communication frameworks to areas of health.
For a long time, interpersonal face-to-face communication has been the only means to discuss health-related issues, e.g., during the doctor-patient encounter or among family members and friends. With the diffusion of mass media – print, radio, and TV – this has changed and it became possible to convey health-related topics via the media to a broader audience at the same time. Eventually, the development of new technologies such as the Internet enabled yet another possibility of both mass and interpersonal mediated health communication. This scenario makes media knowledge and competence to deal with diverse media fundamental for delivering effective health communication messages, from traditional public health campaigns to eHealth and mHealth interventions. This course provides students with both theoretical and practical knowledge of the role played by the media in the context of health, alternating front lectures, student presentations and group discussions.

In Miles and Huberman’s 1994 book Qualitative Data Analysis, quantitative researcher Fred Kerlinger was quoted as saying: “There’s no such thing as qualitative data. Everything is either 1 or 0”. To the extreme opposite lied Donald Campbell’s argument that: “All research ultimately has a qualitative grounding”. Taking as a starting point the “inextricably intertwined” (rather than competing) nature of the two major approaches to research, this course will illustrate the ways that qualitative inquiry—especially when used in conjunction with quantitative inquiry in multi-methodological designs—can contribute to the current challenges of health communication research. Students will acquire the knowledge and skills needed for “thinking qualitativel”, that is, focusing on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings and attempting to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Most importantly, students will gain hands-on experience in various techniques of qualitative data collection and analysis, while designing and conducting their own qualitative research project related to a health communication topic of their preference.

This course introduces the basic concepts of epidemiology and biostatistics as applied to public health problems, clinical issues and areas of health services such as genetic counseling. Emphasis is placed on the principles and methods of epidemiologic investigation, appropriate summaries and displays of data, and the use of classical statistical approaches to describe the health of populations. Topics include the use of conditional probability theory in biostatistics including screening and diagnostic tests, ROC curve; how to design an experiment in public health frameworks. Various epidemiologic study designs for investigating associations between risk factors and disease outcomes are also introduced, culminating with criteria for causal inferences. Applications of epidemiological issues in SPSS are part of the course.

The course first of all provides a critical analysis of market failures in the health care sector and describes in what spheres government action is required. The seriousness and empirical relevance of market failures and the capacity of government action to correct them will be ascertained by referring to both international and Swiss experience. The course then explores the tensions associated with the desires to increase access to care, improve quality, and limit rising costs. It examines alternative approaches to structuring a nation’s health system, develops an analytic framework for the comparative analyses of health systems and for the evaluation of reform proposals. Based on the understanding of the social determinants of health, the final part of the course highlights the links between policies within the health care sector and policies that affect other relevant areas like education, economic development and the environment.

Public health is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society. A unifying principle of public health is its essentially “public” nature and the fact that it is mainly focused on the health of the population. While personal health services are focused on the individual, public health is focused on population needs. The goals remain the same: to reduce the amount of disease, premature death, and disease-produced discomfort and disability in the population. Public Health influences the health system and other system of the society as well.