

Strategic Personal Branding: Stories, Values, and Decisions

This course teaches students to think like strategists, communicate like professionals, and build a brand that actually means something.

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Office: 202 HIT Building

Credits: 3

Course Code: TBA

Schedule: 4pm - 7pm 3 hours Daily)

Textbook: All materials compiled and provided by the instructor

More details can be found at: <https://careercomms.com/international-courses/>

Course Description

Strategic Personal Branding: Stories, Values, and Decisions is about more than how to look good online. It is about understanding who you are professionally, making deliberate decisions about how you present yourself, and learning to communicate that identity with clarity, credibility, and purpose.

Rather than teaching platform-specific tactics, this course focuses on the strategic and theoretical foundations of professional identity: how it is constructed, communicated, and adapted across industries and cultural contexts. Students explore storytelling, rhetorical analysis, self-awareness frameworks, and cross-cultural communication theory to build a brand that is grounded in authentic values and built to last.

Through case analysis, presentations, comparative research, and a comprehensive portfolio project, students develop the ability to justify their decisions, communicate their identity with confidence, and present a professional brand that reflects both strategic judgment and genuine character.

By the end of the course, students will have produced a Strategic Brand Portfolio that demonstrates analytical thinking, theoretical application, and the kind of professional clarity that employers and collaborators actually notice.

Why This Course Matters

Building a personal brand is not about being famous. It is about being **known for the right things, by the right people, in the right contexts.**

This course helps students develop the ability to:

- Think strategically about professional identity before worrying about content or platforms
- Understand how storytelling, rhetoric, and self-presentation theory shape how others perceive you
- Apply cross-cultural frameworks to adapt your brand for different professional environments
- Analyze real branding strategies critically, not just admire them
- Make informed, defensible decisions about your professional presence
- Build a portfolio that reflects genuine strategic thinking, not just aesthetic choices

The course prepares students to move beyond self-promotion toward self-architecture: designing a professional identity with intention, evidence, and purpose.

Course Objectives

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

1.	Develop an authentic, theoretically grounded professional brand by identifying and aligning values, traits, and aspirations with clear career goals
2.	Apply storytelling and narrative frameworks to craft compelling professional narratives that reflect personal and professional identity
3.	Use the rhetorical triangle – ethos, pathos, and logos – to enhance credibility, emotional resonance, and logical appeal in professional communication
4.	Critically analyze branding strategies using frameworks including Goffman’s self-presentation theory, SWOT analysis, AIDA, and Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions
5.	Navigate complex branding challenges including digital footprint management, professional boundary-setting, and cross-cultural adaptation
6.	Tailor professional narratives and branding materials for diverse audiences, industries, and cultural environments
7.	Produce a Strategic Brand Portfolio that synthesizes all course elements into a coherent, actionable professional strategy

These objectives emphasize judgment, self-awareness, and strategic communication – not just content production.

Evaluation Breakdown

Component	Weight	Description
Attendance	15%	Regular attendance and punctuality across all 15 days
Participation	10%	Active contribution during discussions, workshops, and peer critique sessions
Theoretically Grounded Self-Analysis	15%	Written analysis grounding a personal brand statement in course frameworks
Storytelling Presentation	20%	Live 3–4 minute professional narrative evaluated on rhetorical criteria
Comparative Brand Audit	25%	Analytical written report comparing two professionals using course frameworks
Strategic Brand Portfolio	15%	Comprehensive final portfolio synthesizing all course elements

Major Assignments

1. THEORETICALLY GROUNDED SELF-ANALYSIS (15%) — DUE DAY 5

This is the foundation of everything that follows. Rather than writing a general reflection about who you are, you will produce a structured analytical document that does three specific things.

First, you will apply a personality framework – MBTI, DISC, or StrengthsFinder – to identify and interrogate your core professional traits. The goal is not to accept the results uncritically but to use them as a starting point for genuine self-analysis. Second, you will apply Goffman’s self-presentation theory to examine the gap between your private identity and the professional persona you project or wish to project. Third, you will produce a values-aligned personal brand statement that is grounded in and supported by that analysis.

The statement itself should be concise and compelling. But the justification behind it is what earns the grade. Personal narrative without framework application will not receive full marks.

Key Deliverables:

- Written self-analysis applying at least one personality framework
- Application of Goffman’s self-presentation theory to your professional identity
- A concise personal brand statement supported by the analysis

2. STORYTELLING PRESENTATION (20%) — DAY 6

This is where the analytical work you did in the Self-Analysis becomes a live performance. You will deliver a 3 to 4 minute narrative presentation that introduces your professional identity to the class. This is not a speech about your resume. It is a deliberate, structured narrative that applies the rhetorical triangle to create real impact.

Presentations are evaluated on how effectively you establish credibility (ethos), create emotional resonance (pathos), and construct a logical, coherent narrative arc (logos). Your classmates will complete peer evaluation forms using the same criteria, and instructor and peer scores are weighted at 60% and 40% respectively.

You will also submit a brief written reflection the same day explaining the deliberate rhetorical choices you made during delivery. This reflection is part of your grade.

Key Deliverables:

- 3-4 minute live narrative presentation
- Written rhetorical reflection submitted the same day
- Peer evaluation forms completed for classmates

3. COMPARATIVE BRAND AUDIT (25%) — DUE DAY 11

This assignment develops your ability to analyze professional branding strategies critically rather than just describe them. You will select two professionals working in the same industry and conduct a rigorous comparative analysis of how they have built, communicated, and differentiated their brands.

The audit must apply at minimum three course frameworks. For example, you might use SWOT analysis to evaluate strategic positioning, the rhetorical triangle to assess communication effectiveness, and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions to examine cross-cultural adaptability. You are looking for patterns of best practice, strategic gaps, and the specific decisions that separate one brand from another within the same competitive space.

The deliverable is a written analytical report, not a descriptive summary. Groups may complete this collaboratively, but each student must include an individual reflection section connecting the audit findings to their own brand development.

Key Deliverables:

- Comparative written report applying a minimum of three course frameworks
- Identification of best practices and strategic gaps
- Individual reflection section connecting findings to personal brand strategy

4. STRATEGIC BRAND PORTFOLIO (15%) — DUE DAY 15

The portfolio is the capstone of the course. It brings together everything you have produced and learned across the 15 days into a single, cohesive strategic document that you could realistically share with a future employer, mentor, or collaborator.

The portfolio must include: a refined personal brand statement that has evolved from your Day 5 analysis; a professional biography written for a clearly defined target audience; a cross-cultural branding strategy informed by Hofstede's dimensions; a platform strategy with explicit justification for every platform choice using course frameworks; and a one-page future-proofing section identifying one emerging trend in professional identity and explaining how your brand would adapt.

Every section must be strategically justified. A portfolio that lists decisions without explaining the reasoning behind them will not receive full marks. You are being assessed on judgment, not just completion.

Key Deliverables:

- Refined personal brand statement with theoretical grounding
- Professional biography tailored to a defined target audience
- Cross-cultural branding strategy using Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions
- Platform strategy with justified framework-based rationale
- One-page future-proofing section on an emerging professional identity trend

Attendance and Lateness Policy (15%)

Students must attend at least 2/3 (two thirds of the total number of class days) of the class to pass the course.

Attendance points will not be deducted for excused absences accepted by Hanyang University Attendance Regulations Article 35(3) and Article 23(3) (e.g., military obligation, family death, female menstruation, teaching practicum, participation in sports tournaments for student athletes, early employment, other unavoidable circumstances approved by the student's College Dean).

Excused absence will be accepted ONLY when students submit the 'Confirmation of Absence (공결확인서)' form and related documents. The form is issued by the student's department, and approval is determined by the department, not by the CEEC professor.

Please submit it signed and stamped before the next class. It will not be accepted after one week. Do not email it to the professor. Share it after class.

Unexcused absence will lose 2 points from attendance and 1 point from participation. Excused absence will lose 1 point from participation.

Lateness:

Up to 5 minutes late will lose 0.5 point from attendance. After 20 minutes, you will be considered absent and lose the full 2 points. If you are late, it is your responsibility to inform the professor at the end of class. Failure to do so will result in an absence (0) for that day.

Menstruation excuses are not applicable on presentation days. They will not be accepted during the first day, the last day, or any university festivals due to past misuse. You must present the documentation in the next class, signed and stamped, and not by email.

Participation (10%)

Active and consistent participation is essential in this course, especially during peer critique sessions and workshops. Students are expected to contribute ideas, share feedback, and take an active role in all group discussions and collaborative tasks.

Participation will be assessed based on your engagement in class activities, your contribution to your team's project, and your professionalism during sessions. Lack of participation, limited effort in teamwork, or failure to bring required materials will affect your grade.

Not participating or speaking, speaking anything other than English, missing materials such as your laptop, tablet, or pen, using your phone during class, or sleeping will each result in a deduction of 1 point per issue.

Students who consistently fail to contribute to their team or neglect assigned responsibilities may lose additional points. At the end of the course, a peer evaluation will be conducted to ensure that grades reflect individual contribution. Students who do not participate meaningfully in their team's work will not receive full credit for the group assignments or participation score.

15-Day Intensive Course Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change based on class progress and needs. Any modifications will be communicated in advance.

Day	Topic	Objectives	Key Deliverables
1	Foundations of Professional Identity	Examine Goffman’s self-presentation theory; distinguish private identity from professional persona; understand the course framework	Personality assessment with written reflection linking results to professional identity
2	Values, Self-Awareness and Identity Frameworks	Apply MBTI, DISC, and StrengthsFinder critically; construct a theoretically grounded personal values statement	Personal values statement with theoretical justification
3	Professional Contexts and Strategic Self-Analysis	Analyze industry norms, generational expectations, and cultural context; apply SWOT analysis to personal brand positioning	SWOT analysis of personal brand positioning
4	Narrative Theory and Storytelling as a Professional Tool	Examine narrative frameworks and rhetorical structure; align values with a structured professional storytelling arc	Draft 3–4 minute personal narrative for Day 6 presentation
5	Rhetoric, Persuasion and Professional Communication	Apply ethos, pathos, and logos to professional narratives; analyze tone, formality, and audience alignment	Theoretically Grounded Self-Analysis due
– Day Off –			
6	Storytelling Presentations	All students deliver 3–4 minute narrative presentations; peer and instructor critique using rhetorical criteria	Reflective written response to feedback received
7	Digital Identity and Platform Theory	Critically evaluate digital footprints and persona construction; analyze Korean platforms (Naver, JobKorea, Saramin) alongside LinkedIn	Written digital persona audit of a public figure

8	Cross-Cultural Professional Identity	Apply Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions to branding strategy; adapt professional narratives for defined cultural audiences	Cross-cultural narrative draft tailored to a specific audience
9	Industry Research and Branding Analysis	Apply the AIDA framework to professional communication; conduct comparative industry and platform norm analysis	Industry research outline with preliminary findings
10	Professional Branding Strategy and Integration	Synthesize course frameworks (SWOT, rhetorical triangle, AIDA, Hofstede, Goffman) into a unified strategic brand position	Strategic branding brief integrating all major frameworks
11	Structured Work Session and Audit Submission	Instructor check-ins; finalize and submit Comparative Brand Audit; begin preparing portfolio	Comparative Brand Audit due
— Day Off —			
12	Group Presentations Part 1	First half of groups present Comparative Brand Audit findings; analytical depth, theoretical application, and actionable insight assessed	Peer evaluation forms
13	Group Presentations Part 2	Remaining groups present; class discussion synthesizes key findings across industries and cultural contexts	Final discussion and peer reflection
14	Integration, Reflection and Future-Proofing	Synthesize all course frameworks into a cohesive portfolio strategy; analyze emerging trends in professional identity	Portfolio draft review and instructor feedback session
15	Strategic Brand Portfolio Submission	Submit final portfolio; peer showcase and course reflection	Strategic Brand Portfolio due; Reflection paper

Class Policies

A Note on Summer Intensives and Absences

This is a summer intensive course. If you have travel plans, personal commitments, or any scheduling conflicts, please communicate with your team and the instructor before the course begins or as early as possible. Do not wait until you have already missed class.

Because this course runs on a compressed schedule, a single absence has a much greater impact than it would in a regular semester. Your team depends on your presence, input, and follow-through every day. If your absences or lack of engagement become a problem for your group, you will be removed from your team and will be responsible for completing all remaining course materials independently. This includes the Comparative Brand Audit and the Strategic Brand Portfolio, which you will complete and submit alone.

Missing class because of travel is not an excused absence. Plan accordingly.

Grade Appeals

Stay organized and keep track of your grades and assignments throughout the course. Review all grading rubrics provided for each task.

You may appeal an assignment grade within one week of receiving your evaluation during office hours. After this period, the grade is considered final.

Final grades are binding. It is the student's responsibility to maintain scholarships and meet academic obligations. Please do not request reconsideration of grades at the end of the course.

Your scholarships and employment are your responsibilities. Learn how to balance them professionally.

AI Policy

This course uses the AI Assessment Scale (AIAS) to define how and when artificial intelligence tools may be used across different assignments. Each level represents a different degree of permitted AI involvement. Read the levels carefully and follow the one assigned to each task.

Each assignment in this course will be assigned a level. That level will be stated clearly in the brief. When in doubt, ask before submitting.

Disclosure is required at every level above 1. If you use AI tools, you must document how, where, and why. Undisclosed AI use will result in a rewrite opportunity within 2 days at a 20% penalty, or a zero for a second offense.

Level	Name	What It Means
1	No AI	AI is not permitted at any stage. You must demonstrate knowledge and skills entirely on your own.
2	AI Planning	AI may be used for brainstorming, outlining, and initial research only. Your final submission must reflect your own thinking and development.
3	AI Collaboration	AI may assist with drafting, feedback, and refinement. You must critically evaluate and meaningfully modify any AI-generated content.
4	Full AI	AI may be used throughout the task. Focus is on how effectively you direct AI to achieve your goals and demonstrate strategic thinking.
5	AI Exploration	AI is used creatively and experimentally. You may co-design your approach with the instructor.

Final Note

Strategic Personal Branding is a course about building something real. Not a polished-looking profile or a carefully curated feed, but an actual professional identity that reflects who you are, where you are going, and why that matters.

You will be challenged to think analytically, communicate persuasively, and make decisions you can defend. That is what professional life requires. Treat this course the way you would treat the work: with commitment, intellectual honesty, and a genuine willingness to develop.

By the end of the 15 days, your Strategic Brand Portfolio will be a document you can actually use. That is the goal..