

COM 253: Introduction to Public Relations
Fall 2005-08-19
MWF 1:30-2:20; WTHR 104

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Purpose

The focus of this class will primarily be on understanding what public relations is. We will examine the nature and role of public relations, activities of public relations professionals, the major influences that affect organizational behavior, the ethics of public relations and professional development of public relations professionals. This course is an overview of the functions, practices and growing application of public relations in private industry and the public sector. Emphasis is placed on the planning, writing, and management functions, working with the media and developing effective public relations strategies.

At the end of this course you should be capable of performing the following public relations activities: analyzing public relations problems and opportunities; understanding and developing concise and targeted public relations messages; understanding the terminology and theoretical concepts associated with public relations; track a complex issue and develop a strategy for managing it; conduct secondary research on corporate and agency activities.

Because I want this to be a useful, relevant class, examples of PR will abound. I guarantee at least one current example of public relations in every class meeting, and I invite you to look for examples of good and bad PR to bring in for discussion.

The class also fulfills the first requirement in the public relations concentration for communication majors.

Objectives

By the end of the semester, you will be able to
*identify public relations in the world around you
*develop an understanding of the public relations process

- *understand what a situation analysis is and the role it plays
- *understand the role of public relations strategy and write a strategy statement
- *dissect public relations cases and make decisions about strategy based on cases
- *learn to develop tactical public relations materials
- *understand ethical implications of public relations practice
- *understand what it is to be a public relations professional

Attendance

Your attendance at each class meeting is expected but not required. Remember, the profession of public relations is built upon the demonstration of timeliness, creativity and effectiveness. Therefore, it is your choice to come to class. However, once a week, an unannounced quiz will be given for some of the "Test Your Knowledge" points. These quizzes **cannot be made up**. You can drop two of your lowest scores on these quizzes.

Also, your contribution is pivotal to the success of this course. You are expected to be an active learner in your educational process. You are suggested to bring real life examples that connect to the topic discussed in the previous class. We will discuss concrete relevant examples in the "REAL LIFE" section (such as the ENRON case), assigned the first five minutes of every class period.

Required textbooks

Cutlip, S. M., Center, A. H., & Broom, G. M. (2005). Effective Public relations. Upper saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Course policy

In general, you can expect that I will strive to maintain my primary ethic in evaluating student performance in the course: **FAIRNESS**. My adherence to this standard guarantees that I will not extend special opportunities for extra credit, award extra points on exams, or give any other special grading treatment to some members of the class without also extending them to you. It also guarantees that if you make such requests of me in your own behalf, I will be unable to grant them without making them available to every class member. Please do not request extra credit opportunities, extra points on exams, or any other special treatment that I am unable to give to you without also giving to EVERY CLASS MEMBER.

Daily lectures will be delivered by Professor Mohan Dutta-Bergman. Assigned readings from the text should be completed **BEFORE** the related lectures (see attached class schedule). You are responsible for understanding materials covered in the readings and lectures. You may be examined on text material **EVEN IF IT IS NOT MENTIONED IN CLASS**. Also note that there is lecture material that is frequently not covered in the text. This material **WILL APPEAR ON EXAMS**.

Deadlines are critical in public relations. The situation analysis and strategy statement grades will be reduced by one letter for each day they are late (except for university excuses that are officially documented). Participatory assignments and case studies will not be accepted late under any circumstance.

Plagiarism

Do your own work honorably and well, giving credit to your sources. A plagiarized assignment will receive an F and will result in failure of the course.

Exams & Quizzes

There will be three exams during the course. Each exam is required. No student may pass the course without answering at least TWELVE QUESTIONS (12) correctly on each of the three exams. Each exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions.

During the semester, there will be twelve (12) UNANNOUNCED quizzes. **Quizzes will deal with the reading material listed on the syllabus for the given week in which the quiz is taken—plus the class material that has been covered during the TWO CLASS SESSIONS prior to the quiz.** Each quiz will consist of FIVE (5) multiple-choice questions and the quiz might be given any time during the class. The quiz questions will not be repeated and cannot be made up. No student may pass the course without answering at least EIGHT (8) QUESTIONS CORRECTLY OF THE 50 TOTAL QUIZ QUESTIONS. Each quiz question will be worth TWO (2) points. Each of the quizzes that are counted will provide an opportunity to earn ten (10) points. You can drop your two lowest scores and will be counted for your performance on 10 quizzes.

Assignments

Take-home assignments must be typed while in-class assignments will be hand-written. Also, you must turn in a hard (paper) copy of the assignment at the end of class on the scheduled date (refer to your syllabus for details). Emailed assignments will not be entertained.

Participation Assignments (150 points)

You will be assigned fifteen participatory assignments throughout the semester. Each of these assignments can earn you a maximum of TEN (10) points for a complete answer, SIX (6) points for a partial answer and zero (0) points for not turning in the assignment. Class discussions will often build on these assignments. While some of these assignments will be assigned for you to complete at home, others will be assigned for class work. Home assignments should be turned in the following class and must range between one and two double-spaced pages (depending upon the nature of the questions). Your take home participation assignment will not be accepted unless you are present in class. Class participation assignments can't be made up.

Case Study (50 points)

One case study will be assigned in class and will introduce you to the case study method of solving public relations problems.

One Press Release (50 points)

Writing a press release is a critical element of a beginning PR job. You will probably be expected to write a press release at that first internship you take up in your coveted hometown baseball team. You will be assigned two press release assignments.

Grading

This class will be based on a system of 1000 points.

Exam 1: 200 points

Exam 2: 200 points

Final exam: 250 points

Daily quizzes: 100 points

Participatory Assignments: 150 points

Case Study: 50 points

Press Release: 50 points

Your final grade assignment will be based on your total score and the standard criterion will be used for this grade assignment. 90% and above will be assigned an "A," 80% to 89% a "B," 70% to 79% a "C," 60% to 69% a "D," and 59% and below a "F."

Course Schedule

Monday, August 22: Introduction to the course—what is public relations? Current Trends; Participation Assignment One (Home)

Wednesday, August 24: Nature of public relations
READING: Chapter One

Friday, August 26: History of public relations
READING: Chapter Four

Monday, August 29: Public relations theory
READING: Chapter Seven; Participation Assignment Two (Home)

Wednesday, August 31: Law
READING: Chapter Six

Friday, September 2: Ethics and Professionalism
READING: Chapter Five

Monday, September 5: Holiday

Wednesday, September 7: Situation Analysis & Problem Statement
READING: HANDOUT; Participation Assignment Three (Home)

Friday, September 9: Public relations research; Review Exam One
READING: Chapter 11

Monday, September 12: Qualitative and Quantitative research

Wednesday, September 14: Public Opinion
READING: Chapter 8; Participation Assignment Four (In class)

Friday, September 16: Evaluation research
READING: Chapter 14; Participation Assignment Five (In class)
Monday, September 19: EXAM 1

Wednesday, September 21: Strategy
READING: Chapter 12; Participation Assignment Six (Home)

Friday, September 23: Strategy continued
READING: Chapter 12; Participation Assignment Seven (Home)

Monday, September 26: Action; Participation Assignment Eight (In class)
READING: Chapter 13

Wednesday, September 28: Communication
READING: Chapter 13

Friday, September 30: Summarizing the RACE Model

Monday, October 3: Media relations
READING: Chapter 10

Wednesday, October 5: Media relations continued
READING: Chapter 10; Participation Assignment Nine (In Class)

Friday, October 7: Employee communication
READING: Chapter 9

Monday, October 10: HOLIDAY

Wednesday, October 12: Employee relations continued

Friday, October 14: Organizational Elements of Public Relations
READINGS: Chapter 3; Participation Assignment Ten (Home)

Monday, October 17: Practitioners of Public Relations

READINGS: Chapter 2

Wednesday, October 19: Corporate Public Relations; Review Exam 2

READING: Chapter 15

Friday, October 21: Community relations

Participation Assignment Eleven (Home)

Monday, October 24: Public relations and social capital

Wednesday, October 26: EXAM 2

Friday, October 28: Introduction to Case-based Approach to Public Relations; Download Case Study

Monday, October 31: Public Relations and Health Communication; Participation Assignment Twelve (Home)

Wednesday, November 2: Nonprofit Public Relations

READING: Chapter 17

Friday, November 4: Using Public Relations to Reach Underserved Populations (Case Study Due)

Monday, November 7: Public relations in government

READING: Chapter 16

Wednesday, November 9: Written public relations

Assign Press Release Assignment

Friday, November 11: Public relations and the Internet; Participation Assignment Thirteen (In Class)

Monday, November 14: Spoken tactics in public relations

Wednesday, November 16: Visual tactics in public relations

Friday, November 18: Event Planning & Management

Monday, November 21: Consumer Relations; Participation Assignment Fourteen (In Class)

Wednesday, November 23- Friday, November 25: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Monday, November 28: Image Management

Wednesday, November 30: Integrated Marketing Communications; Participation Assignment Fifteen (In Class)

Friday, December 2: Introduction to Crisis

Monday, December 5: **Crisis Communication**, Part 1 (Training)

Wednesday, December 7: **Crisis Communication**, Part 2 (Training)

Friday, December 9: Final exam review; LAST CLASS DAY

Week of December 12--FINAL EXAM