

Department of Communication & Theatre

COM 390 – Introduction to Public Relations

Instructor: Karen Hutchens
Office Hours: By appointment
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Course Description:

This course is introduction to the theory and practice of public relations. This includes public relations roles, publics, research, media relations, special events, and an introduction to cases and campaigns of public relations. This course considers the process of public information dissemination in business, educational, and nonprofit organizational settings.



Learning Objectives:

- Understand the role of values and ethics in public relations
- Understand the key theories that underlie the practice of public relations
- Understand and apply the standard processes of the practice of public relations
- Work with a group to present a proposal that addresses a public relations problem and/or opportunity for a client

Required Text:

- 📖 Guth, D. W., & Marsh, C. (2012). *Public relations: A values-driven approach* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- 📖 Guy Kawasaki, *The Art of Social Media* (buy online)
- 📖 PR Daily Online: Students **will** subscribe to PR Daily



All students will join the twitter account “Intro to PR” by PLNU. Daily texts to announce class issues will be on twitter.

Course Assignments:

- ⌚ **Current Events Quizzes** (50pts): Each week students will have a current events quiz based off news stories from the website PR Daily.
- ⌚ **Quick-Fire Challenges** (50pts): Each week during class students will be asked to complete a public relations challenge. This will involve a quick writing or verbal pitch on the spot in class.

- ⌘ **Ethical Movie Analysis** (25pts): As a class we will watch a movie on Public Relations and Ethics. Students will be asked to write a short guided paper on the ethics of the film.
- ⌘ **Public Relations Plan** (150pts): Students will work in teams of 3-4 to prepare a comprehensive public relations plan.
- ⌘ **Public Relations Plan Presentation** (50pts): Students will present and pitch their final public relations plan to the class and the client. This will be a 20 minute interactive presentation.
- ⌘ **Mid-Term & Final Exams** (200pts): There will be two exams - a mid-term and final covering textbook and lecture material. These exams will be objective in nature with some short answers as well.

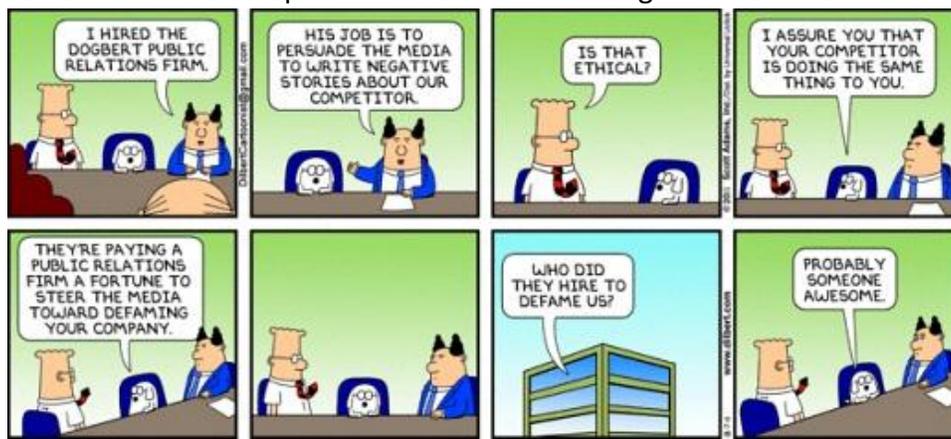
Group Project and Proposal

Because public relations professionals often work in teams, each student will participate in a group of four to six people. Each group will prepare a public relations plan for a client that I'll assign. I'll give you specific instructions for the project at the time of its assignment. Each student will be required to submit an evaluation of both his or her contributions as well as every other group member's contributions to the group project. It is important that every group member make a substantial contribution to each group's effort. Each student in the group will receive the same grade for group assignments. However, each individual's grade is subject to a performance adjustment based on student evaluations and, potentially, conversations with me and other measures of evaluation.

Assignments:

All assignments must be typed. Hand written work will not be accepted. Please note that standard font and margins are expected of one inch and 12 point font (Times New Roman). All papers should be double-spaced. **There should be no grammatical errors or misspelled words in your assignments. Always proofread your assignments and have someone else proof them too.**

All assignments are due on the day and time as specified. Please submit online. Late assignments will not be accepted. Please submit all assignment on line.



Grading:

	Point Possible	Your Score
Current Events Quizzes	50 pts.	
Quick Fire Challenges	50 pts.	
Ethical Analysis	25 pts.	
PR Plan	150 pts.	
PR Presentation	50 pts.	
Mid-Term Exam	100 pts.	
Final Exam	100 pts.	
Total Points	525 pts.	

Grading Scale:

Grade	Percent	Points	Grade	Percent	Points
A	93-100	486 - 525	C	73-76	381 - 401
A-	90-92	470 - 485	C-	70-72	365 - 380
B+	87-89	455 - 469	D+	67-69	350 - 364
B	83-86	434 - 454	D	63-66	329 - 349
B-	80-82	418 - 433	D-	60-62	313 - 328
C+	77-79	402 - 417	F	0-59	0 - 312

Grading Standards:

“A’s”are awarded for work that is highly exceptional and goes beyond all minimal requirements.

“B’s”are awarded for work that is above average and goes beyond minimal requirements.

“C’s”are awarded for work that meets basic standards and requirements.

“D’s”are awarded for below average work that usually lacks minimal requirements.

“F’s”are awarded for work that clearly does not meet minimal standards, or is not completed.

Grade Concerns:

If you feel that you were unjustly evaluated on any assignment, please talk with me within 2 weeks after the assignment has been returned. An appeal is welcome by scheduling an appointment or coming to my office hours. DO NOT approach me immediately after a class! Please come with a well reasoned and written explanation of why the grade should be changed, and I will be happy to discuss it with you. Asking for an appeal and defending your case does not secure, nor imply a change of grade. If at any point during the course you are concerned with your overall class grade or other issues in the course, please feel free to make an appointment or stop by my office. I want to help you learn and succeed in this course.

Attendance Policy:

This course is a course in communication and persuasion. In order to do both you must be present in class regularly. Therefore, attendance will be taken. Each student is allowed 1 excused or unexcused absences. The only absences excused after that will be university approved absences. This means not feeling good, or taking a friend to the airport, does not count as excused absences. Upon the 2nd absence the **FINAL grade** will be drop a half step (if you have a B it will drop to a B-). For every subsequent absence the FINAL grade will continue to drop a half step each time. Furthermore, it should be noted that attendance means attending to the class. Students who choose to sleep through class, engage in disruptive conversation, or excessive texting will be counted absent for that day.

In the tragic event that you do miss class please get notes from someone in the class. **Do NOT ask me for notes.** You will be expected to get notes, handouts, and assignments from someone in class. Please do not ask me for my lecture notes!! You are responsible for missed material and should try to make a friend or two in this class that you can count on. In addition I do not post lecture material or power point presentations on canvas.

Make-up’s:

All assignments are due on the date specified in the syllabus. Please be responsible and figure out how you will get the assignment done and turned into me. In the event of an unexpected and unavoidable scheduling conflict, it is your responsibility to make prior arrangements (well in advance) with me to resolve problem. Excuses after the assignment dates are unacceptable with the exception of extreme circumstances.

Classroom Demeanor:

While I enjoy a relaxed classroom atmosphere, with lots of discussion and jokes, disrespect will not be tolerated. Please respect both your peers and instructor!! This simply means that you need to pay attention and participate in class. Challenging ideas in class is welcome, but personal attacks are not! While the course will encounter lots of opinions and views, it is everyone’s responsibility to keep an open mind, and avoid character attacks, stereotypes, and racist or sexist language.

Technology:

The use of electronic devices during class is NOT permitted. This includes cell phones, i-pods, and laptops! This means you should bring something else to take notes on! Students are not permitted to listen to music while taking a test or to use their cell phones during tests.

Presentations:

Presentations can be a nervous experience for some. Please NEVER walk in on a presentation under any circumstances. Do not leave either, but simply wait until you hear applause and then enter the classroom quietly and quickly. Furthermore, when presentations are occurring this is not the time to talk with your neighbor, read the paper, or rearrange your backpack.

Appearance:

Your physical appearance on presentation days is important. You should be neatly groomed and dressed in a way that suggests you expect to be taken seriously. **At a minimum** this means a dress shirt and dress slacks for men, and dress skirt or dress slacks and blouse for women. Please do not wear hats, tennis shoes, shorts, jeans, or chew gum during your presentations. Physical appearance has been shown to affect the credibility of public speakers and as a result will also affect yours in this class!

Daily Syllabus

Date	Discussion/Activity	Readings
T Jan. 12	Introduction to Public Relations	
M Jan. 25	What is Public Relations	Chp. 1

M Feb. 1	Parts of a Public Relation Plan Quick Fire Challenge #1	
M Feb. 8	Publics Quick Fire Challenge #2	Chp. 4 & 5
M Feb. 15	Research in a PR Plan	Chp. 7
M Feb. 22	Strategies of PR	Chp. 8
M Feb. 29	Tactics of PR Quick Fire Challenge #3	Chp. 9

Daily Syllabus

Date	Discussion/Activity	Readings
M Mar. 4	Mid-Term Exam	
M Mar. 7	Spring Break – No Class	
M Mar. 14	Multi-Media & PR Quick Fire Challenge #4	Chp. 10
M Mar. 21	Crisis Communication Quick Fire Challenge #5	Chp. 12
M Mar. 28	Easter Break	Chp. 6
M Apr. 4	Ethics in PR	
M Apr. 11	PR & Marketing/Advertising Guest Speaker	Chp. 13
M Apr. 18	PR Presentations <i>PR Plans Due!</i>	
M Apr. 25	PR Presentations	
M May 2	Final Exam	

