

COM 390
Introduction to Public Relations
Spring 2014
M 3:00-5:45 p.m. – Cabrillo 202

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Learning Outcomes:

- Trace the historical development of the public relations profession
- Analyze ethical and legal issues associated with public relations practice
- Apply an understanding of the steps in public relations plan development by researching and writing a plan book for a non-profit organization
- Evidence collaborative abilities by working in a public relations project development team

Required Text:

Guth, D. W., & Marsh, C. (2012). *Public relations: A values-driven approach* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Course Requirements:

- Written assignments must be submitted to Canvas before the beginning of class on the date they are due. Late assignments will not be accepted. Assignments not submitted according to instructions will not be accepted. All assignments must be typed, double space. Grammar, sentence structure, format, and spelling will be included in the grading of all written work.
- Students are expected to complete assigned readings by the dates they are due and to be prepared to discuss those topics. Readings outside the textbook are available through Canvas links.
- At the beginning of the semester, students will be assigned to project development teams. All team members must contribute to all elements of the plan book, including research, writing and the client presentation. Please do not make agreements that enable members of the team to not fulfill this requirement. Concerns about participation should be directed to the professor early in the process. Do not wait until the end of the semester to tell me there was a problem with one or more team members. Students who fail to meet their obligations at any point in the process will be removed from the team and be required to individually complete an entire plan book for a different client. Team members will receive the same score for client projects.
- Teams must present their final plan books to the class and provide a bound copy of the book to the client. The client must be invited to attend the presentation (attendance is not required).
- You must take exams at the days and times listed in the syllabus.

Attendance:

- Attendance will be taken in all classes. Students will be allowed, without penalty, absences equal to one week's class sessions. Students participating in programs representing the university, which will require exceeding the allowed number of absences, are to make arrangements at the beginning of the semester or as soon as the student is aware of any conflict with class meetings. Medical excuses and excuses from other faculty members will not affect the absence, but will be used to allow makeup work for tests, quizzes, etc. Since this class only meets once a week for three units, students exceeding the allowable absences will be penalized 3% point for each extra absence. These points will be deducted from the student's final grade percentage.

- Please plan accordingly and use your absences wisely (this includes doctor appointments or employment issues). There are no exceptions to this policy, so please do not ask.
- Students are expected to attend all class sessions (except for illness or emergency situations) and to be on time to class. Students who enter the classroom after attendance is taken will be counted as absent.
- Attendance in class means that you are fully attending to the course. Students who choose to read the paper, engage in irrelevant and disruptive conversations, study for other classes, use cell phones or other technologies, etc... will be counted as absent for that day.
- Students who will miss class because of a required university activity must submit any due assignments prior to the date missed.
- As noted in the university catalog, students who miss 10% of class sessions will be reported to the Vice Provost of Academic Administration. Missing 20% of class sessions may result in the student being de-enrolled from this course. This policy relates to all absences for any reason and is separate from the course absence policy noted above.
- In the event that you miss a session, you will be expected to get notes, handouts, and assignments from another student in the class. **Do NOT ask me for those materials.**
- It is the student's responsibility to maintain his/her class schedule. Should the need arise to drop this course (personal emergencies, poor performance, etc.), the student has the responsibility to follow through (provided the drop date meets the stated calendar deadline established by the university), not the instructor. Simply ceasing to attend this course or failing to follow through to arrange for a change of registration (drop/add) may result in a grade of F on the official transcript.

Technology Policy

Computers may be used during class, but only for taking notes and conducted course-related research. Texting is never permitted during class. Remove your cell phone from the desk. Set the phone to vibrate or turn off the sound. Students who use their cell phones when not permitted will be counted as absent. Making audio or video recordings of class sessions are not allowed. Students may not mass distribute any course materials or content in any form (print or online) without permission of the instructor.

Notice to Students with Disabilities

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students requesting academic accommodations must file documentation with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual learning needs of the student. This policy assists the University in its commitment to full compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990, and ADA Amendments Act of 2008, all of which prohibit discrimination against students with disabilities and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities.

Academic Dishonesty

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. As stated in the university catalog, "Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. Such acts include plagiarism, copying of class assignments, and copying or other fraudulent behavior on examinations. Essentially, if you turn in work that is another

person's work, without giving credit to the original person, it is plagiarism and is punishable by an automatic failing grade in this class (see PLNU's Academic Policies for more details).

FERPA Policy

In compliance with federal law, neither PLNU student ID nor social security number should be used in publicly posted grades or returned sets of assignments without student written permission. This class will meet the federal requirements by distributing all grades (except team projects) and exams individually. Also in compliance with FERPA, you will be the only person given information about your progress in this class unless you have designated others to receive it in the "Information Release" section of the student portal. See Policy Statements in the undergrad student catalog.

Changes to Syllabus:

The instructor reserves the right to make amendments, additions or deletions to this syllabus. It is each student's responsibility to stay current and be aware of any changes.

Grading

Grades are based on a point system (listed below) that makes it easy for students to estimate their grade throughout the semester.

PR plan book (points as noted)	225 pts.
Case studies and reports (5 @ 15 pts.)	75 pts.
Client presentation (individual score)	25 pts.
Team participation evaluation	25 pts.
Midterm exam	75 pts.
Final exam	75 pts.
Total points possible	500 pts.

Grading Scale			
470-500	A	370-384	C
450-469	A-	350-369	C-
435-449	B+	335-349	D+
420-434	B	320-334	D
400-419	B-	300-319	D-
385-399	C+	0-299	F

Course Calendar

Jan 14

Topic: Syllabus; Introduction to course; Public relations defined; PR plan process; Writing a prospectus

Jan 20

MLK Day – No class

Assignment: Prospectus due (15 pts.)

Jan 27

Topic: Values-driven PR; Client research; Real State/Ideal State; SWOT

Reading: Text chap. 1 & p. 101 (coorientation)
Corporate value statements (Canvas links)

Assignment: Corporate value statement analysis (15 pts.)

Feb 3

Topic: Public relations history; Defining publics; Audience segmentation; Force Field Analysis

Reading: Text chap. 3 & 4

Assignment: Introduction and client profile due (30 pts.)

Feb 10

Topic: Guest speaker; Communication theory, persuasion and public opinion

Reading: Text chap. 5

Assignment: Problem analysis with Real State/Ideal State due (25 pts.)

Feb 17

Topic: Research methods; Planning; Setting goals and objectives
Reading: Text chaps. 7 & 8
Assignment: Audience segmentation and Force Field Analysis due (30 pts.)

Feb 24

Topic: Meet in Hughes computer lab -- Scheduling and organization methods; Budgets; Ethics
Reading: Text chaps. 6; Ethics case study on Canvas
Assignment: Background research design due (25 pts.)

Mar 3

Topic: Exam #1

Mar 10-14

Spring break

Mar 17

Topic: Media relations; Traditional tactics; Multimedia messages
Reading: Text chaps. 9 & 10
Assignment: Goals and objectives due (20 pts.)
Ethics case study response (15 pts.)

Mar 24

Topic: Cyber relations; Plan evaluation techniques; PR marketing
Reading: Text chaps. 11 & 13

Mar 31

Topic: Crisis communications; Law
Reading: Text chaps. 12 & 15; Law case study on Canvas
Assignment: Tactics, timeline and budget due (30 pts.)
Law case study report (15 pts.)

Apr 7

Topic: Client presentation instructions; Corporate PR
Reading: Online annual reports (Canvas links)
Assignment: Annual report analysis (15 pts.)

Apr 14

Topic: Future of PR; PR jobs
Reading: Text chaps. 2 & 16
Assignment: PR employment analysis (15 pts.)
Evaluation plan due (25 pts.)

Apr 21

Easter break – No class

Apr 28

Exam #2

Week of May 5

Topic: Client presentations
Assignment: Final plan books due. Bring a printed copy for the professor and upload the PDF file to Canvas. (25 pts.)

NOTE: It is important that you support your classmates' presentations. Students are expected to attend all team presentations. Absences during these days will be counted as double. Please make sure your vacation travel plans accommodate this schedule.