



**Department of Communication &
Theater**
COM 390 – Intro to Public Relations
3 Units

Fall, 2017

Meeting days: Monday	Instructor title and name: Sarah Witmer, M.A.
Meeting times: 3:00– 5:40	Phone: N/A
Meeting location: C 104	E-mail: switmer@pointloma.edu
Final Exam: 7:30 p.m. Monday, December 12	Office location and hours: by appointment

PLNU Mission
To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is introduction to the theory and practice of public relations. This includes public relations roles, publics, research, media relations, social media, and an introduction to cases and campaigns of public relations. This course discussed the public relations for in business, educational, governmental and nonprofit organizational settings.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- 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 develop and present a public relations plan that addresses public relations problem and/or opportunity for a client.
- Understand the role of values and ethics in public relations.

COURSE TEXTBOOK:

Guth, D. W., & Marsh, C. (2017). *Public relations: A values-driven approach* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

COURSE FORMAT:

Over the semester, we will study an introduction to public relations and current issues. In-class discussions and exercises will draw on readings from the textbook, case studies, and current events and require students to apply the knowledge

learned in the readings to various activities and group work. Students will form study groups of 4-6 in order to develop a public relations plan for a client utilizing the information provided in lectures, guest speakers and readings. Every week we will have roundtable discussions on current events of the week and quizzes on class materials. Therefore, it is crucial that students complete all assigned readings before class and more importantly, attend and participate in every class session.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

GROUP MOVIE ANALYSIS:

Description: This first assignment will help you to get acquainted with the group with which you will work for the remainder of the semester. In groups of 4-6, students will choose a PR themed movie. After watching the movie as a group, students will decide how accurate of a representation the depiction of PR was in the film.

Requirements: The following class session, groups will present their findings to the rest of the class. This analysis includes:

1. A brief description of the movie
2. How PR was represented
3. How accurate to the field the students believe the film to be.

Style Standard: Each student in the group must speak. Students may show one clip from the film if they so desire, but the clip must be no longer than 2 minutes. Groups have 5-10 minutes to present their film analysis to the class. Visual aid tools are not *required* but are encouraged.

MIDTERM & FINAL EXAMS:

Description: The midterm and final exams will be in-class.

Requirements: Students must attend class on the exam date No exceptions will be made. Holiday travel plans must be made with these dates in mind Exams cannot be taken early to accommodate flights or train schedules.

Style Standard: The exams will each consist of 50 multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank and matching questions, as well as 5 essay responses. The essay questions will be weighted as 50% of the total grade. The multiple chose, fill-in-the-blank and matching questions represent the other 50% of the grade. Essay questions will be graded for: insight, analysis, clear connections to course content, and a sophisticated writing style.

GROUP PR PLAN PROJECT:

Description: Because public relations professionals work in teams, each student will participate in a group of 4-6 people in order to develop a public relations plan for a client of your choice, within certain guidelines. Students will be given specific instructions for the project at the time of its assignment.

GROUP PEER EVALUATIONS:

Description: Students will receive forms with which they provide an honest assessment of what their peers were like to work with in the group speech project. This ensures that all students put in equal amounts of work, and if a student did not do their part, that their team members can be honest about it in an anonymous manner.

Requirements: Students must attend class on their specified day to speak and fill out peer evaluation forms.

Style Standard: Non-Applicable.

GROUP PR PLAN PEER GRADES:

Description: Students will be given forms that they will fill in with an honest assessment of how they think the other duo speeches should be graded. This form will allow students to experience what it is like to thoughtfully critique a public speech according to fair grading practices.

Requirements: Students must attend class on speech days. No exceptions will be made.

Style Standard: Non-Applicable.

QUIZZES/ CASE STUDIES:

Description: Over the course of the semester, we will have seven (7) case study analyses and/or current events quizzes in class. Each of these will be graded (5 pts. each).

Requirements: Students must attend class on the date the quiz or case study is given in order to receive points. No exceptions will be made.

Style Standard: Non-Applicable.

PARTICIPATION:

This is a hands-on, student-centered course. Therefore, you will be graded on your participation. Those who are energetic, contributory, and consistent with attendance will receive a high participation grade. As contribution to and involvement with the class goes down, will the grade. Contributions to our roundtable discussions and group projects will be considered when calculating the participation grade.

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES:

- 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.
- 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!

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

	Point Possible	Your Score
Group Movie Analysis	25 pts.	
Classroom case studies/quizzes	35 pts.	
Mid-Term Exam	100 pts.	
PR Plan	100 pts.	
PR Presentation	50 pts.	
Group Peer Evaluations	15 pts.	
PR Plan Peer Grades	25 pts.	
Class Participation	50 pts.	
Final Exam	100 pts.	
Total Points	500 pts.	

GRADING SCALE:

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	0-59

GRADING STANDARDS:

“A’s”...are awarded for work that is **highly exceptional, shows insight and analysis** in submittals and class discussion 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. 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.

ASSIGNMENTS

- All assignments must be typed and submitted on Canvas before the start of class.
- Please note that standard APA 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.
- Hand written work from class must be completely legible or it will not be accepted.
- All assignments are due on the day and time as specified. Please submit online. Late assignments will not be accepted.

INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. 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. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

COURSE CALENDAR

Date	Discussion/ Activity	Chapters Due	Chapters Assigned
Tuesday, Aug. 29 Week #1 Tuesday as a Monday Schedule	Syllabus Review Intro to PR final project Groups Chosen Movie Analysis Assigned		Ch. 1 & Ch. 2
Monday, Sept. 11 Week #2	Movie Analysis Presentations Chapter 1: What Is Public Relations? Chapter 2: Jobs in Public Relations Case Study Discussion #1	Ch. 1 & Ch. 2	Ch. 3 & Ch. 4
Monday, Sept. 18 Week #3	Chapter 3: A Brief History of Public Relations Chapter 4: The Publics in Public Relations Case Study Discussion #2	Ch. 3 & Ch. 4	Ch. 5 & Ch. 6

Monday, Sept. 25 Week #4	Chapter 5: Communication Theory and Public Opinion Chapter 6: Ethics and Social Responsibility Case Study Discussion #3	Ch. 5 & Ch. 6	Ch. 7 & Ch. 8
Monday, Oct. 2 Week #5	Chapter 7: Research and Evaluation Chapter 8: Planning Case Study Discussion #4	Ch. 7 & Ch. 8	Ch. 9
Monday, Oct. 9 Week #5	Chapter 9: Communication Case Study Discussion Midterm Review Session	Ch. 9	Ch. 1-9
Monday, Oct. 16 Week #6	MID-TERM EXAM: Chapters 1-9	Ch. 1-9	
Monday, Oct. 23 Week #7	Group Project Assigned Group Work Session		Ch. 10 & Ch. 11
Monday, Oct. 30 Week #8	Chapter 10: Multimedia Message Development Chapter 11: Cyber-Relations in the Digital Age Case Study Discussion #5	Ch. 10 & Ch. 11	Ch. 12 & Ch. 13
Monday, Nov. 6 Week #9	Chapter 12: Crisis Communications Chapter 13: Public Relations and Marketing Case Study Discussion	Ch. 12 & Ch. 13	Ch. 14 & Ch. 15
Monday, Nov. 13 Week #10	Chapter 14: Cross-Cultural Communication Chapter 15: Public Relations and the Law Case Study Discussion #6	Ch. 14 & Ch. 15	Ch. 16
Monday, Nov. 20 Week #11	Chapter 16: Public Relations in the 21 st Century Case Study Discussion #7 Group Work Session	Ch. 16	Final PR Plans
Monday, Nov. 27 Week #12	Group presentations	Final PR Plans Due!	
Monday, Dec. 4 Week #13	Group presentations Final Review Session		Chapters: 10-16
Monday, Dec. 11 Week #14	FINAL EXAM	Chapters: 10-16	

