Ethics and Professional Responsibility – PUR 4203

Online Course Syllabus

Spring 2018

Professor: Darlena Cunha

Office hours: By appointment or via Skype

Phone number: (860) 335-6944

E-mail: dcunha@ufl.edu, darlena.cunha@gmail.com (I will check ufl once or twice a day, but I am always available on my personal email.)

Twitter: @parentwin

About me: I'm a former television news producer in large markets, and a current freelancer for national publications like TIME, The Washington Post, The Atlantic, The Boston Globe, The New York Times, Salon, The Guardian, and scores more. I write both straight journalism and opinion about politics, health, science, technology, parenting, feminism / "women's issues", business, money, food and social justice. And everything else. I have taught multiple media courses, including several that hinge on ethical considerations from both a journalism standpoint and a public relations standpoint.

Course Description and Student Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to provide an understanding of the role of ethics in public relations. Both historical and current trends will be highlighted, with examples stemming from all areas of business, including but not limited to response pr, pr initiatives, advertisements as they pertain to pr, and pop culture and branding as they relate to pr. We will also investigate the advantages and challenges that come with digital media and the 24/7 news cycle in terms of public relations.

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Recognize the ethical responsibilities of public relations professionals and the social responsibilities of corporations and other organizations.
- increase your ability to identify the moral issues that arise in the practice of public relations and your understanding of how to deal with them transparently, quickly and well to preserve your organization's name and reputation.
- use reason, logic, empathy and transparency as tools for dealing with moral issues

- quickly and professionally reach and justify ethical decisions to many different audiences whose main goals are different from your own and from each other.
- use leadership theories and principles to enhance ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility.
- Understand the importance of the Internet and social media in the modern information age and the profound effect it has public relations and ethical issues within public relations.

Required Readings:

Understanding Business Ethics, Peter Stanwick and Susan Stanwick, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA 2014, 3rd Ed. (UBE)

Legal and Ethical Considerations for Public Relations, Karla K. Gower, Waveland Press, Prospect Heights, Illinois, 2008, 2nd Ed.

Useful Web Sites:
Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship http://www.bcccc.net/
Business Ethics: The Magazine of Corporate Responsibility http://www.businessethics.com/
Business for Social Responsibility http://www.bsr.org/index.cfm
CSRwire: CSR news and press releases http://www.csrwire.com
Ethical Corporation Online http://www.ethicalcorp.com

You will be expected to read the assigned chapters/pages and be prepared to apply them to online discussions and assessments. These readings are crucial to understanding what you will be doing in this course. *So do NOT neglect to do the readings.*

Course Structure:

This is a web-only course. A learning module will be set up for each section containing a lecture, readings and activities/assignments for the week. You will be required to read the assigned chapters/pages, go through the lecture slides and do each week's assigned work. It is your responsibility to follow and adhere to the schedule. Six assignments and a final exam will evaluate your knowledge and understanding of the material. Here are descriptions of each of the assessments in this course:

Your papers must meet the following requirements:

o Use proper grammar, spelling and 12-point Times New Roman font.

o Double space your paper with one-inch margins all around.

o Have your name and date on the first pages as well as an appropriate title.

o Follow APA style with in-text citations and a reference page.

Final Grade Breakdown:

Your final grade in the course will be arrived at through the following combination:

Introduction: 5 points

Reaction papers: 10 points (5 points each)

Two quizzes: 20 points (10 points each)

Group essay question: 5 points

Hypothetical Public Relations Game-plan pitch: 10 points

Pitch edits: 5 points

Revised Hypothetical Public Relations Game-plan: 15 points

Case study rough draft: 10 points

Case study: 20 points

Total Possible: 100 points

Grading Scale:

A	100%	to	92.5%
A-	< 92.5%	to	89.5%
B+	< 89.5%	to	86.5%
B	< 86.5%	to	82.5%
B-	< 82.5%	to	79.5%
C+	< 79.5%	to	76.5%
C	< 76.5%	to	72.5%
C-	< 72.5%	to	69.5%
D+	< 69.5%	to	66.5%
D	< 66.5%	to	62.5%
D-	< 62.5%	to	59.5%
F	< 59.5%	to	0%

Class Policies:

1. **Deadlines:** All of the deadlines are strict in this course. But if, for any reason, you do think you will miss a deadline or exam, please discuss it with me at least 24 hours in advance. Under legitimate extenuating circumstances, such as a documented/known illness, family emergency or if you have some other situation you think may constitute a reason for an extended deadline, like a legal or military obligation, athletic participation or religious holiday, I may agree to let you schedule a make-up exam or turn in an assignment late. However, if I have not agreed to an extension or make-up exam before the deadlines, your assignment or exam grade will be a zero if not turned in on time.

For the assessments to be completed on Canvas, please be mindful of technical difficulties and plan accordingly, as it is your responsibility to complete assessments by the deadlines. If you experience any technical difficulties, your first line of defense will be to contact the UF HelpDesk at (352) 392-HELP. If they cannot resolve the problem, then please contact me directly.

2. **Discussion Demeanor:** I want this class to be fun and energetic with great discussions, but we will be covering sensitive topics and ones about which some students may have strong feelings. Therefore, I expect you to be courteous and respectful to your fellow classmates. Please be polite to others while both expressing opinions and responding to them. Racism, ableism, and misogyny will not be tolerated.

3. **Academic Integrity:** University of Florida students live by an honor code that prohibits academic dishonesty such as (but not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of sources or information from sources, reusing a paper from another class, writing a similar paper for two classes, drawing too heavily on another's work for your own and having someone else complete your work for you. If you're unsure of whether something constitutes a violation of academic integrity, ask me before turning in an assignment. Also, please refer to the University of Florida's guidelines regarding academic honesty at http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/studentconduct-honor-code/. Ignorance is not an excuse.

An academic integrity violation will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly the entire course, and the instance will be reported to the university's office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

4. **Disability Assistance:** Students with disabilities who seek reasonable accommodations in the classroom or other aspects of performing their coursework must first register with the University of Florida's Disability Resource Center. The center will provide documentation, and then you must meet with me, so appropriate accommodations can be made. The

center is in Reid Hall, and you can contact them by calling (352) 392-8565. For more information, visit http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/.

5. **Student Success and Seeking Help:** All of your instructors have high expectations of you, including myself. We are responsible for conveying those expectations to you. You are responsible for ensuring you meet your course obligations. Sometimes it will be draining and frustrating like it is in the communications field. But ultimately, it should also be enjoyable and purposeful. You are always encouraged to come to me both inside and outside of class with questions or concerns about this class and your assignments or the communications field in general.

Also, the UF Counseling and Wellness Center is a terrific, free resource for any student who could use help managing stress or coping with life. The center, at 3190 Radio Road on campus, is open for appointments and emergency walk-ins from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To make an appointment or receive afterhours assistance, call (352) 392-1575. For more information, visit http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/.

6. **Online Course Evaluation Process:** Just as I give feedback on your work throughout the semester, I would also like to get feedback from you on the quality of instruction in this course. Because of this, students are expected to complete online evaluations at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results.

Course Schedule:

Module 1

Monday, Jan. 8 – Friday, Jan. 12

Introduction

DELIVERABLE: post an introduction to yourself in the discussion section. Who are you? Where are you from? What is your major? Something you'd like to share about yourself. **DUE FRIDAY, JAN. 12**

Module 2

Tuesday, Jan. 16 – Friday, Jan. 19

What does doing the right thing mean, personally, professionally, and beyond?

In a world of dizzying news cycles and stories, how can you be a responsible advocate for the organization you represent and inform a public debate? How do you serve the public interest while advancing the interests of those you represent? How do you maintain relationships with the media, the government and the public?

Assignment: Read: Introduction to Social Responsibility & Ethics Ethics from the Public Relations Practitioners' View
LECPR, Ch.1 Doing the Right Thing (pp. 1- 24)

PRSA: About Ethics: https://www.prsa.org/aboutprsa/ethics/codeenglish#.WAqxa5MrJZo

Module 3

Monday, Jan. 22 – Friday, Jan. 26

Public relations and ethics of speech.

Assignment:
Read: LECPR, Ch.2 Defining Public Relations Speech (pp. 25-42),
Read: Ch.3 Regulating Public Relations Speech (pp. 43-62)

DELIVERABLE: Reaction paper 1: **DUE MONDAY, JAN. 29**

Students are expected to submit a total of two one-page reaction papers. Summarize or outline the main points of the week's readings and give your personal reaction to or interpretation of some point in the readings. Reaction papers are due each Monday for the previous week's readings (unless noted otherwise).

Module 4

Monday, Jan. 29 – Friday, Feb. 2

Public Relations, libel and protecting organizations' products

PR practitioners often create content for publication across multiple media as well as build and protect the reputation of their organizations, therefore they must understand libel and defamation law.
They also have to monitor and analyze content about their organizations and their competition. They have to do this without violating copyright, so it's important to understand copyright issues and law in the internet age.

Assignment: Read LECPR, Ch.4 Harming Others (pp. 63-94),
Ch. 5 Protecting Creative Property (pp. 95-106)

DELIVERABLE: Quiz: MONDAY, FEB. 5

Quiz on chapters 1-5 of LECPR, study lectures and read chapters. Open book, open note.

GROUP ESSAY: Due FRIDAY, Feb. 9

Each group will answer a hypothetical ethical situation covered in the text. Work out your answer together in the discussion section, and through whatever other means you like, and have one coherent essay posted to the discussion board by the Friday after the quiz.

Module 5

Monday, Feb. 5 – Friday, Feb. 9

Ethical Frameworks:

What is the basis for public relations and how do corporations, public figures, and organizations use them? What is the ethical groundwork that is set and for what purpose is it there?

Assignment: Read: UBE Ch. 1 The Foundation for Ethical Thought (pp. 1-18)

DELIVERABLE: PR pitch: Start work on hypothetical public relations game-plan. Pick a business, entity, organization, public figure or agency to "work for." Research current news trends about them, and compile data on a pr media campaign you would like to put in motion for them based on the themes outlined in the lecture, in assignments**. DUE MONDAY, FEB. 12**

I will then send you an anonymous random PR pitch to edit and send back to me next week.

Recommended reading for game plan assignment:

[Creating a PR game plan](#)

[Developing a PR plan](#)

[Brand Reputation Management: Your seven-point game plan](#)

Don't forget: GROUP ESSAY: Due FRIDAY, FEB. 9

Each group will answer a hypothetical ethical situation covered in the text. Work out your answer together in the discussion section, and through whatever other means you like, and have one coherent essay posted to the discussion board by the Friday after the quiz.

Module 6

Monday, Feb. 12 – Friday, Feb. 16

Business Ethics Today

Today's ethical issues range from very simple to extremely complex. Technology has provided much good, but it has also provided new simple ethical decisions our business leaders now face on a daily basis. With the globalization of business, simple things like modes of communication are morphed into difficult decisions with complex outcomes, and social implications.

Assignment: Read UBE, Ch. 2 The Evolving Complexities of Business Ethics (pp. 19-35).

DELIVERABLE: Edit classmate's PR pitch. Each of you received a classmate's assignment, anonymously. Hand in your suggestions for their hypothetical campaign, in assignments. DUE: **MONDAY, FEB. 19**

Module 7

Monday, Feb. 19 – Friday, Feb. 23

Stakeholders, Publics and CSR

Assignment: Read UBE, Ch. 3 CSR Stakeholders and Corporate Social Responsibility (pp. 36- 58)

DELIVERABLE: Reaction paper 2: **DUE MONDAY, FEB. 26**

 Students are expected to submit a total of two one-page reaction papers. Summarize or outline the main points of the week's readings and give your personal reaction to or interpretation of some point in the readings. Reaction papers are due each Monday for the previous week's readings (unless noted otherwise).

Module 8

Monday, Feb. 26 – Friday, March 2

Leadership and Ethics

"Leadership is a nested influence in an organization that affects organizational culture, structures, communication climates, systems, and the attitudes and behaviors of employees. Many effective leadership behaviors and styles have ethical elements; for instance, *authentic* leadership involves a positive moral perspective that guides decision-making, like honesty, altruism, kindness, fair treatment, accountability, and optimism."

Assignment: Read UBE, Ch. 5 Ethical Leadership and Corporate Governance, (pp. 79-94)

Read: The Institute for Public Relations: http://www.instituteforpr.org/ethical-leadership-communication-engage-employees/

DELIVERABLE: Final Hypothetical PR game-plan. A five-page public relations campaign for the business of your choice, incorporating the revisions of your classmate. Should have an introduction, background on the business, person, organization, etc., design of campaign including multimedia components and time tables for component rollouts. What will this campaign do to forward the brand? What message will it send the public and how? Why should they invest in this plan? **Most importantly, address the ethical points and quandaries we've learned about thus far.** Persuade and convince your potential client to go for your campaign. Recap all the points in a conclusion. **DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 2**

Module 9

Monday, March 12 – Friday, March 16

Strategic Planning and Ethical Decision Making:

Ethical decision-making refers to the process of evaluating and choosing among alternatives in a manner consistent with ethical principles. In making ethical decisions, it is necessary to perceive and eliminate unethical options and select the best ethical alternative. How can we use this for public relations?

Assignment: Read UBE, Ch. 6 Strategic Planning, Corporate Culture and Corporate Compliance (pp. 95- 113)
Read UBE, Ch. 7 Decision Making and Human Resources (pp. 114- 132))

 DELIVERABLE: Choose a case study for your final project. Due FRIDAY, MARCH 16

{Each student will **select one of the cases covered in the textbook, pp. 257-455**. You will research this case and the public relations implications Your final report (no more than 15 pages) will summarize the case and your recommendations for a public relations program including description of the program and the process the company should have used to develop the program.}

Module 10

Monday, March 19 – Friday, March 23

Ethics and the Environment

The field of environmental ethics concerns human beings' ethical relationship with the natural environment. The two fundamental questions that environmental ethics must address are: what duties do humans have with respect to the environment, and why?

Assignment: Read UBE, Ch. 8, Ethics and the Environment

Work on your case study.

Module 11

Monday, March 26 – Friday, March 30

Information Technology and PR Ethics

Information and communication technology have changed public relations, as pr follows people's changed habits with regard to media consumption online. Thus, new ethical principles must be evolved to handle this new type of information sharing. What are the ethics of framing?

Assignment: Read UBE, Ch. 9, Ethics and Information Technology (pp. 154- 174)

DELIVERABLE: Quiz 2. UBE -19, Friday, MARCH 30

Module 12

Monday, Apr. 2 – Thursday, Apr. 6

Communication Functions and Ethics, and Global Issues

Globalization has the potential to create a network society common values emerge worldwide. What about the emerging common values in the public relations industry across the globe?

Assignment: Read UBE, Ch. 10, Marketing and Advertising (pp. 174- 193)

DELIVERABLE: Rough Draft of Case Study, DUE MONDAY, APRIL 9

{Each student will **select one of the cases covered in the textbook, pp. 257-455**. You will research this case and the public relations implications Your final report (no more than 15 pages) will summarize the case and your recommendations for a public relations program including description of the program and the process the company should have used to develop the program.}

Module 13

Monday, Apr. 9 – Friday, Apr. 13

Developing Programs:

Assignment: Read: UBE, Ch. 11, Ethical Issues in the Developing World, (pp. 194-212)

Module 14

Monday, Apr. 16 – Friday, Apr. 20

Evaluation and wrap up:

Assignment: Read UBE, Ch. 12, Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines (pp. 213-232)
UBE, Ch. 13, Evaluating Corporate Ethics (pp 233-256)

DELIVERABLE: Final Case Study, DUE: MONDAY, APRIL 30.

{Each student will **select one of the cases covered in the textbook, pp. 257-455**. You will research this case and the public relations implications Your final report (no more than 15 pages) will summarize the case and your recommendations for a public relations program including description of the program and the process the company should have used to develop the program.}