



## SYLLABUS – PUR3801 (19702) PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY\*

**Fall 2020 – Wednesday 8 - 9 (3:00 PM - 4:55 PM)**

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**Office hours:** virtual office hours are available by appointment. Email to set up.

### **Course Description**

The development of skills in strategic public relations management based on an analysis of current and historical case studies.

Prerequisites: PUR 3000 Principles and PUR 3500 Research with minimum grades of C. If you do not have these prerequisites, you are advised to drop this class. Failure to do so or to obtain the instructor's permission to remain in the course may mean the departmental office will drop you.

*\* This syllabus is subject to change as the instructor deems appropriate and necessary.*

### **Method of Instruction**

This learner-centered course will primarily use discussions, service-learning projects, presentations, and hands-on instructions to engage in the learning process. We will rarely simply recount what is stated in the videos/readings, but rather use them as a springboard for expanded discussion. We will emphasize *interactivity* and *collaboration* and classes will move in a seminar format much like the collaborations that operate in the professional world. This course is outcomes-based, and you will be evaluated primarily on your ability to transfer the theory and knowledge shared in class into workable solutions.

### **Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes**

As a result of the course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of public relations and its strategic process.
- Identify and explain the concepts and theories on which strategic public relations is based.

- Apply the knowledge and experience gained in this course as well as that from course prerequisites to the development of a service-learning project for a client organization, which should become part of students' professional portfolios.
- Write and formulate fundamental components of a public relations strategic plan, including situation analysis, objectives, and selection of strategies and tactics.
- Define publics appropriate for specific client organizations and appreciate differences that affect programming.
- Recognize the importance of primary and secondary research in public relations practice.
- Demonstrate understanding of conceptual foundation and professional skills competency related to strategic management process of the public relations function.
- Demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communications.

**The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications** requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the US;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

### **Required Books**

Smith, R. D. (2013). *Strategic planning for public relations* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.

**Additional Materials** – will be available on Canvas.

### **Course Policies**

**Attendance:** We will meet via Zoom during our scheduled class time, and I do expect that you are there and ready to participate. Attendance is mandatory. After due warning, I may prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a lower or failing grade for excessive absences; more than three absences during the semester will be considered “excessive absences.” You are responsible for notifying me of the cause of your absence for a class meeting (for further information on attendance policy, please consult:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>).

We will use our class time to present and discuss individual cases, deal with course updates and questions, and most importantly you will have time to work with your group members which will have a large impact on your grade. Professionalism is important as a public relations student, and I expect a professional demeanor in our course Zooms (i.e., camera on, fully clothed, sitting up, in a quiet environment and/or using headphones, etc.). These course Zooms will not be recorded. Straight lecture material will be pre-recorded for you to view on your own schedule. However, you are required to finish assigned readings and videos **prior** to a class meeting in Zoom. As in all courses, **unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.**

**Late Work/Make-up Work:** All written assignments must be turned in to Canvas by 11:59pm the day the assignment is due. Canvas will automatically mark assignments as late if they are uploaded even one second after 11:59pm. An assignment turned in passed the deadline will be penalized one letter grade for each weekday it is late. This is a business where deadlines count. You can’t make excuses to your boss or a client if your work is late. It is your responsibility to make sure you properly uploaded your paper, blaming a group member doesn’t work as it is the group’s joint responsibility.

**Professionalism:** As PR students I expect you to maintain a high level of professionalism in all of our interactions. This includes being courteous and respectful to all members of the course. Being respectful includes making sure you are not distracting to others via your cell phone or computer usage, talking with others during lecture, or arriving late. Treat our Zoom meetings as if they were interviews – practice your professionalism now!

### **How You Get Points**

- **Discussion posts 6% [30 points]**
- **Individual case presentation 10% [50 points]**
- **Service-learning (group) project 44% [220 points]**
  - Situation analysis 14% [70 points]
  - Strategic plan 20% [100 points]
  - Presentation to the “client” 10% [50 points]
- **Examinations 40% [200 points]**
  - First exam 20% [100 points]
  - Second exam 20% [100 points]

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

A 92-100%

A- 90-91%  
B+ 88-89%  
B 82-87%  
B- 80-81%  
C+ 78-79%  
C 72-77%  
C- 70-71%  
D+ 68-69%  
D 62-67%  
D- 60-61%  
E below 60%

*Letter grades for this course will be based on the total points earned over the term. I don't round up. I will keep grades posted on Canvas - it is your responsibility to check it and make sure you know where you are at. For further information about grades and grading policy, please consult: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>*

### **Overview of Course Components**

- **Discussion Posts (30 points)**

You will be expected to participate in **weekly online** discussions through Canvas. Your contributions to online discussions are a major part of this course.

- **Individual Case Presentation (50 points)**

Each student will conduct a case study and present the case in class. Students should consult with the instructor about a possible topic and date for presentation during the first week of the semester. This 20-minute oral and visual presentation will summarize public relations strategy use of a selected organization as identified by the student and approved by the instructor. Students are encouraged to supplement their presentations with a variety of sources and to emphasize the use of digital public relations in their selected cases. Public speaking, visual communication, and research skills will be evaluated.

- **Service-learning Project: [Group project]**

- **Situation analysis – 70 points**

Minimum five (5) **single-spaced** pages, Times Roman 12, margins 1". This is a summary of the analysis of the client organization, its main challenges, its existing communications, and its targeted publics. It should be supported by secondary research and productive exchanges with your client. The analysis should include a variety of reliable sources and corporate information. The main components of this analysis are: problem/opportunity statement, background of the situation, background of the organizations (internal and external environments/impediments and public perceptions), existing communication techniques and efforts (strategic key messages), and the

description of targeted publics. A SWOT analysis is encouraged. In addition to the outline in *Smith* (2013), it is highly recommended to reach the internet for good professional examples of situation analysis. Your paper will be submitted through Turnitin to check for plagiarism or improper attribution.

- **Strategic plan – 100 points**

The situation analysis should be the base for this second written assignment. It must include a central theme, goals and objectives, the formulation of action and response strategies, messaging, and the selection of tactics. *Smith* (2013) should guide these parts of the assignment. Minimum five (5) **single-spaced** pages, Times Roman 12, margins 1”. Your paper will be submitted through Turnitin to check for plagiarism or improper attribution.

- **Final presentation – 50 points**

The presentation of the strategic plan to the client will last 20 minutes. This presentation includes the analysis of the organization, challenge/opportunity, and target publics, as well as the planned objectives, strategic messaging, and tactics.

- **Exams (200 points)**

The two exams of the term will be held online during the regularly scheduled class periods. Exams are designed to test the student’s knowledge of the main ideas covered in each of the readings, videos, handouts, and class discussions as specified in the syllabus. The exams will be multiple-choice and **non-cumulative**. There are no make-up exams. If you miss an exam you will receive a grade of zero for that test. Documented exceptions for extreme circumstances will be considered and must be discussed with the instructor. Honorlock will be used to proctor the exams.

### **APA Style**

All references must follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA Style). The following webpages might be helpful:

- [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) to check grammar rules
- [Citation Machine](#) to assist with APA style source citing
- [Grammarly](#) to act as an additional check of your spelling and grammar

### **Online Course Administration — e-Learning in Canvas**

Canvas (<http://elearning.ufl.edu/>) will be used to administer the course communication, materials (e.g., video lectures, PowerPoint files, additional readings, handouts, assignment guidelines, evaluation forms), and grades. You can access the site by using your GatorLink username and password. Please check the site for announcements and/or threads of comments from classmates and the professor.

Zoom Conferences ([https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406851/external\\_tools/166364](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406851/external_tools/166364)) will be used to hold weekly class meetings. Make sure to get access to Zoom before our classes start.

### **Technical Help**

In the event that you have technical difficulties with your course, please contact the UF Help Desk at <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/> or by calling (352) 392-4357 - select option 1. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If your technical difficulties will cause you to miss a due date, you **MUST** report the problem to the Help Desk and then email your instructor. Include the ticket number that you are given from the Help Desk in an e-mail to the instructor to explain the late assignment/quiz/test.

### **Tentative Course Schedule\***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class Discussion</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignment Due/Notes</b>
<b>Week 1 September 2</b>	Course Introduction; overview of the projects	Syllabus & other course materials	
<b>Week 2 September 9</b>	The strategic process	Smith, Introduction	Assign individual cases; Assign team project and groups
<b>Week 3 September 16</b>	Analyzing the situation	Smith, step 1	
<b>Week 4 September 23</b>	Analyzing the organization; Analyzing the publics	Smith, steps 2, 3	
<b>Week 5 September 30</b>	Establishing goals and objectives	Smith, step 4	Review for Exam 1
<b>Week 6 October 7</b>	<b>Exam 1</b>	Smith, introduction, steps 1 - 4	
<b>Week 7 October 14</b>	Formulating action and response strategies	Smith, step 5	
<b>Week 8 October 21</b>	Developing the message strategy	Smith, step 6	<b>Situation analysis due!</b>
<b>Week 9 October 28</b>	Selecting communication tactics	Smith, step 7	
<b>Week 10 November 4</b>	Implementing the Strategic Plan	Smith, step 8	
<b>Week 11</b>			<i>Enjoy!</i>

<b><i>November 11 (no class meeting)</i></b>			
<b>Week 12 November 18</b>	Evaluating the strategic plan	Smith, step 9	Exam 2 review <b>Draft Strategic plan due – not graded</b>
<b><i>Week 13 November 25 (no class meeting)</i></b>			<i>Thanksgiving break</i>
<b>Week 14 December 2</b>	<b>Exam 2</b>	Smith, steps 5-9	
<b>Week 15 December 9</b>	<b>Final group presentations</b>		<b>Strategic plan due</b> <i>Group presentations</i>

\*This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Changes to the schedule will be discussed in class. You are responsible for attending all classes unless it is marked as a holiday.

## **Standard UF Policy Information and Links**

**College of Journalism and Communications.** The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications defines journalism and mass communications to be among the most vital forces in the maintenance of society and to be fundamental to a democratic government and a free society. These forces transmit and interpret culture and bind society together; they seek to protect the rights of citizens and to inform and enlighten them as they pursue their public and private interests; and they embody the values of free inquiry, dissent and expression.

**Students Requiring Accommodations.** Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**Course Evaluation.** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing 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/>.

**Respect for Diversity.** It is my intent that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this class and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. Class assignments and activities have been designed to encourage individuality and creative expression. You are encouraged to not only take advantage of these opportunities in your own work, but also, learn from the information and ideas shared by other students.

**Materials and Supplies Fees.** There are no additional fees for this course.

**University Honesty Policy.** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conducthonor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

**Software Use.** All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also

against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

## **Campus Resources**

### ***Health and Wellness***

#### **U Matter, We Care:**

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc> (Links to an external site.), and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

#### **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)**

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

### ***Academic Resources***

**E-learning technical support,** 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml> (Links to an external site.).

**Career Resource Center,** Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://www.crc.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

**Library Support,** <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask> (Links to an external site.). Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

**Teaching Center,** Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

**Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall,** 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> (Links to an external site.)

**On-Line Students Complaints:** <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process> (Links to an external site.).