

PUR4203: Ethics and Professional Responsibility in Public Relations

Spring 2022

Tuesday, 12:50 p.m.-1:40 p.m. & Thursday, 12:50 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Instructor: Jeannie Clary

Email: jclary@ufl.edu

Phone: 727.278.8216

Credits: 3

Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom or before in-person class. Please let me know ahead of time if you would like to meet before an in-person class and I will come to Gainesville earlier.

*Meeting primarily by Zoom, except for the following dates:**

- January TBD – 3215 Weimer
- 02/17/22 – 3215 Weimer
- 03/15/22 – 3215 Weimer
- 04/12/22 – 3215 Weimer

*There is a possibility that I will add one or two more in-person dates to the calendar. If I do, I promise to give you significant notice. Please note that I will also be in Gainesville on 3/14 and 3/15 for the PR Advisory Council annual meeting. If you need to meet in person, I'd be happy to carve out some time while I'm there.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/92003120138?pwd=SjQ4WDJDckF1V2dBOGVuZ09yY3VNQT09>

Meeting ID: 920 0312 0138

Passcode: 474906

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course will provide an understanding of the role of ethics in public relations, both in historical and current perspective. Based on a number of real life scenarios, we will explore the history of ethics and PR, ethical dilemmas for communicators, the business relevance of ethics, ethics and leadership, and the interesting evolving dynamic between ethics and technology. The growing lack of trust in institutions has moved ethical considerations of public relations to center stage. Now more than ever, it is critical that we understand the possibilities and responsibilities for professional communicators.

COURSE PURPOSES:

- 1) To enhance your awareness of the ethical responsibilities of public relations professionals and of the social responsibilities of corporations and other organizations;
- 2) To increase your ability to identify the moral dimensions of issues that arise in the practice of public relations;
- 3) To enhance your ability to employ reason as a tool for dealing with moral issues;
- 4) To provide you the knowledge and skills necessary to reach and justify ethical decisions;
- 5) To elicit within you a sense of personal and professional responsibility; and 6) to teach you leadership theories and principles to enhance ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

This class requires your full engagement. It is essential that you keep up with the assignments and complete all weekly activities in a timely manner. Not all of the materials that you read will be discussed or explained in the lectures, therefore, if you need further explanations or clarifications please reach out to me as soon as possible. You should come to class each week prepared to justify/defend your own perspectives about ethics situations. Please be aware that while it is important that you absorb and process the provided material, learn about background and history, models and frameworks, etc. I am primarily interested in *your* perspective of what you are hearing and learning. Put it in context with your own experience, and in discussions, express your own thoughts, make your own voice heard (rather than just repeat the learned material).

Expectations include the following:

- Read the assigned materials before the class meeting
- Submit a reaction papers based on the readings *as assigned*
- Share your reactions to the readings and/or relevant issues in the news in our class discussions
- Case Study:
 - Research a case study approved by the instructor
 - Give a short *oral* report summarizing the case and the public relations strategies used by the organization
 - Submit a final report that discusses the case, describes the public relations strategies used in the case and recommends an ethics communication program

As most students taking this class are only a short time from graduating, I believe it's important to prepare for the non-academic world of PR. As such, we will approach this course as we would approach client work in a PR agency. We will view case studies from the practitioner-to-client perspective. All work should be written in AP Style and PR formatting: single-spaced, with the following fonts – Times New Roman, Garamond, Arial or Calibri.

COURSE CONTENT

Course content not already listed will usually be published 1-2 weeks in advance. We will occasionally have guest speakers. As such, the dates and corresponding work – such as discussions and assignments – on the syllabus might change. I will give you plenty of notice so you can adjust as needed, as we firm up guest speakers' schedules.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Introduction (5%)

Write an introduction, telling me who you are, where you're from, your major, what you're hoping to do in PR, what you're hoping to learn in this class. In bullet points, please list any questions you have about PR and PR/communications careers – this could be anything, from questions about how agencies work, negotiating salaries, work life balance, being a working parent, etc.

Reaction Papers (15%)

Students are expected to submit 5 two-page reaction papers. Reaction papers are due before class on the assigned date. The first paper is due 01/18/22.

- The first page of the paper must *summarize or outline the main points of the week's readings* and the second page should be *your personal reaction to or interpretation of the readings*.
- All papers must be submitted via Canvas by 12:50 p.m. on the due date. Late papers will not be accepted, unless I was made aware and gave an extension BEFORE the deadline. Please see "Deadlines" re: extensions.
- Reaction papers will be graded with the following scale:
 - Minimally Adequate = 4.0-4.2 points
 - Average = 4.3- 4.6 points
 - An Average reaction paper will have an accurate summary of the readings and will respond thoughtfully to the issues raised in the readings.
 - Good = 4.7-5 points
 - A Good paper (in addition to summary) will integrate the readings for that week with what you have learned previously about public relations in other classes.
 - Very Good = 5.1-5.5
 - A Very Good paper will summarize, integrate the readings and bring in new information from what you're learning about public relations and ethics in this course.
 - Excellent = 5.6-6.0 points.
 - An Excellent paper will go beyond summary, reaction, and integration and will develop a new idea beyond what you are learning in class. Excellent papers will be rare.

Case Study Final Report (30%)

Each student will select a case study after consultation with Professor Clary. You will research this case and the public relations implications. Case studies may be selected from a variety of sources, such as “Understanding Business Ethics” by Peter Stanwick and Sarah D. Stanwick, PRSA’s archive of ethics case studies, [Media Ethics Initiative](#), Institute for Public Relations, etc.

- **Final Report:** Your final report will a) summarize the case and b) provide your recommendations for a successful, ethical PR program. You should describe your program and the process the company should have used to develop the program. Program elements should include recommendations for:
 - Formative research
 - Planning and design steps
 - Implementation and execution phases
 - Evaluation

Discussion Leadership (20%)

Each week, two or three students will be assigned to take a class leadership role for the online discussion (via Canvas) of the readings and the lecture. You have complete freedom in how you elect to approach that leadership role. Here are some ways to approach this:

- Summarize own reaction paper (or share it in its entirety) and then direct discussion around paper.
- Prepare questions to generate thought-provoking discussions
- Lecture on the topic and bring additional readings or other materials to the lecture
- Take a critical position on the authors’ perspectives and bring evidence as to why you think an author is wrong
- Show the class current event examples that illustrate the week’s readings.

These are just examples. There’s no one “right” way to lead; you will be evaluated in terms of how creative you were and how much impact your leadership had on the breadth and depth of the class discussion. This isn’t a team “presentation,” so it doesn’t have to be perfectly coordinated. However, as you will have a partner, it’s best to discuss how you plan to share the discussion.

Attendance (15%)

Class attendance is expected, whether we meet in-person or via Zoom. There are two non-penalized absences. If you are ill or have a conflict and can’t make it to class, please let me know *beforehand* via text or email. Also, being habitually late to class will impact your attendance. Five minutes will be considered “late.” Punctuality is particularly important in an online class so we can begin on time.

Religious Observances: If one of our class dates falls on the date of religious holiday you observe, please let me know in advance. You will be excused and it will not count against your absences. As you can turn them in virtually, assignments will still be due by the deadline. If there is a multi-day observance that conflicts with turning the assignment in, please let me know ahead of time. I will only accept late assignments if you have discussed it with me ahead of time.

Covid-Related Absence: As this course is primarily online, we will not have as many Covid-related concerns as an in-person class. However, if you have been exposed to a positive case and there’s any question you might have Covid when we are scheduled to meet in-person, please stay home. We can set up a link and have you join by Zoom or will figure something else out without attendance penalty if you let me know ahead of time. As with any illness, if you have Covid and are symptomatic and cannot attend class online, please just let me know ahead of time.

In-Class Participation (15%)

You will participate in the weekly discussions in both small group assignments and with the entire class. In addition to taking a leadership role in your assigned week, you will be graded on how thoughtfully and respectfully you take part in class discussions. I will be making this summary judgment--not on how often you talk--but on the quality of that contribution.

- To aid your participation grade, you may conduct news searches and look for any news items that might involve ethical considerations for an organization or government. Send to Professor Clary by 10:30 a.m. each Thursday and we will add the item to our Thursday class discussion, time permitting. You might not have something to send every week, so you won't be graded weekly. However, this will be taken into consideration as part of your overall class participation score.

DEADLINES

I will not accept late papers. "Late" is considered anything submitted after 12:50 p.m. on the due date. Please let me know ahead of time if you have a scheduling conflict for your discussion leader and oral case study report assignments and make your own arrangements to change dates with someone else. Make sure you tell me about the agreed upon change so I can update the syllabus for the remainder of the term.

If for any reason, you 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 makeup 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. As your assignments will all be turned in via Canvas or email, please be mindful of possible technical difficulties and plan accordingly. (I strongly encourage NOT waiting until the last minute to submit.) It is your responsibility to complete assignments by the deadlines. If you experience any technical difficulties, first contact the UF HelpDesk at (352) 392- HELP. If they cannot resolve the problem, then please contact me directly.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This is a hybrid course: we will meet in-person 4 times, but primarily via e-learning in Canvas/Zoom. A learning module will be set up for each online 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.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, 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.

Online Course Administration

e-Learning in Canvas <http://elearning.ufl.edu/> will be used to administer the course communication, materials, and grades

Grading Scale

The grading scale for the course follows current UF policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

A 94-100
A- 90-93
B+ 87-89
B 84-87
B- 80-83
C+ 77-79
C 74-76
C- 70-74
D+ 67-69
D 64-66
D- 61-63
E < 63

Availability

Please feel free to speak with me during the semester about any questions or concerns you have. You can also reach me by email and I'll do my best to get back to you within 24 hours. If it's urgent, you may text me, but please don't text after 8 p.m.

Required Reading

Legal and Ethical Considerations for Public Relations, Karla K. Gower, Waveland Press, 2018, 3rd Ed. (LECPR)

Understanding Business Ethics, Peter Stanwick and Susan Stanwick, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2016, 3rd Ed. (UBE)

Useful Web Sites

[PRWeek](#)
[PRovoke](#)
[IPR Research Letter](#)
[PRNEWS](#)

- Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship: <http://www.bccccc.net/>
- Business Ethics: The Magazine of Corporate Responsibility: <http://www.business-ethics.com/>
- Business for Social Responsibility: <http://www.bsr.org/index.cfm>
- Compliance Week:
<http://www.complianceweek.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Article.AdvancedSearchResults>
- CSRwire: CSR news and press releases: <http://www.csrwire.com>
- Ethical Corporation Online: <http://www.ethicalcorp.com>
- Global Reporting Initiative: <http://www.globalreporting.org/Home>
- The Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability: <http://www.accountability21.net/default.aspx?id=54>
- World Bank--Business Ethics and Corporate Accountability: The Search for Standards:
http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/corpgov/csr/pdf/bizethics_econference.pdf
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development: <http://www.wbcscd.org/>

CLASS CALENDAR

Please note dates might change as we add guest speakers and readings may be added, but any deadlines or discussion weeks will be pushed back rather than ahead.

Week	Date	In-Class Discussion	Assignments
1	Thurs. 1/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction & Class Overview • Understanding ethics for communications 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction: Write an introduction, telling me who you are, where you're from, your major, what you're hoping to do in PR, what you're hoping to learn in this class. Please include the phonetic spelling of your first and last names. In bullet points, please list any questions you have about PR and PR/communications careers – this could be anything, from questions about how agencies work, negotiating salaries, work life balance, etc. DEADLINE: 01/11/22 2. Read “The Revolution of Ethics in Public Relations” by Shannon Bowen, Institute for Public Relations and IPRA Code of Athens—The first international code of public relations ethics.” 3. Review the PRSA Code of Ethics and the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management Code of Ethics. Keep a print out or screenshot with you for our class as these will be important to your participation and understanding. Have read by 01/11/22. No reaction paper due. 4. Weekly News Search: Conduct news search for any news items that might involve ethical considerations for an organization or government. Send to Professor Clary by 10:30 a.m. each Tuesday and we will add the item to our Thursday class discussion, time permitting. DEADLINE: 10:30 a.m. each Tuesday if you have any submissions. It's OK to not submit something every week.
2	Tues. 1/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Codes of Ethics 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read and React #1: Read Chapter 1, “Doing the Right Thing,” of Legal and Ethical Considerations for Public Relations (LECPR) by Karla K. Gower, and blog post “Ethical Dilemmas: Knowing Where Your Loyalties Lie,” from PRSA. Write reaction paper.

			<p>DEADLINE: 1/18/22</p> <p>2. Weekly News Search</p>
	Thurs. 1/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Codes of Ethics News items sent from weekly news search 	<p>1. Begin looking for a case study to choose for final report. Submit 3 choices in ranked order to Professor Clary. DEADLINE: 2/10/22</p>
3	Tues.1/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLASS DISCUSSION LEADERS BEGIN Social Responsibility & Ethics 	<p>1. Read and React #2: Read LECPR Chapter 2, "Defining Public Relations Speech." Write reaction paper. DEADLINE: 1/25/22</p> <p>2. Weekly News Search</p>
3	Thurs.1/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Responsibility & Ethics (continued) Ethical Decision-Making News items sent from weekly news search 	
4	Tues.1/25	<p>1. Read and React #3: Read LECPR Chapter 3, "Regulating Public Relations Speech." Write reaction paper. DEADLINE: 2/1/22</p> <p>2. Weekly News Search</p>	
4	Thurs.1/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Relations and the Ethics of Speech (continued) News items sent from weekly news search 	
5	Tues. 2/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Relations and Libel 	<p>1. Read and React #4: Read LECPR Chapter 4, "Harming Others" & Chapter 5 "Protecting Creative Property." Write reaction paper. DEADLINE: 2/8/22</p> <p>2. Weekly News Search</p>
5	Thurs. 2/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Relations and Libel (cont.) News items sent from weekly news search 	
6	Tues.2/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GUEST SPEAKER: Kevin Camps, Sr., Director of Creative Media & Branding for Florida Football 	<p>1. Read The Moral Development of Public Relations Practitioners, Article in Journal of Public Relations Research, May 2009, Renita Coleman & Lee Wilkins. NO REACTION PAPER DUE</p> <p>2. Weekly News Search</p>
6	Thurs. 2/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Relations and Harm; and PR and Protecting Creative Property News items sent from weekly news search 	<p>DUE DATE: Submission of 3 ranked case study options for your final report are due to Professor Clary today.</p>
7	Tues. 2/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Moral Development of Public Relations Practitioners, 	<p>1. Read and React #5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "PRSA's Ethics & Social Media" "Ensuring the Ethical Use of Social Media in PR" Michelle Ewing, <i>Strategies & Tactics</i>, September 2021. "One Does Not Simply Create a Meme," Scott R. Stroud, <i>Media Ethics Initiative</i>, Jan 14, 2019 Write reaction paper

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEADLINE: 2/22/22
			2. Weekly News Search
7	Thurs. 2/17 (In person meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro PR Advice Day 1 News items sent from weekly news search 	
8	Tues. Feb. 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics & Social Media 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly reading TBD Weekly News Search
8	Thurs. Feb. 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics & Social Media, Ethics of a Meme News items sent from weekly news search 	
9	Tues. March 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Ethics 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly reading TBD Weekly News Search
9	Thurs. Mar 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Ethics News items sent from weekly news search 	
10	Tues. Mar 8	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK	
10	Thurs. Mar 10	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK	
11	Tues. Mar 15 (In person meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Social Responsibility 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly reading TBD Weekly News Search
11	Thurs. Mar 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Social Responsibility & Transparency News items sent from weekly news search 	
12	Tues. Mar 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics in Crisis Management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly reading TBD Weekly News Search
12	Thurs. Mar 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics in Crisis Management News items sent from weekly news search 	
13	Tues. Mar 29	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly reading TBD Weekly News Search 	
13	Thurs. Mar 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional Draft Check Day 	Optional Draft Check Day – If you have your first draft ready, bring to class and review with your peers, give/get constructive feedback, see there are any changes you want to make.
14	Tues. April 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly reading TBD Weekly News Search 	
14	Thurs. April 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Framing & Ethics News items sent from weekly news search 	
15	Tues. April 12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> NO WEEKLY READING Weekly News Search 	
15	Thurs. April 14	N/A	
16	Tues. April 19 (In person meeting)	Pro PR Advice Day 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> LAST CLASS FINAL REPORT DUE BY 11:59 P.M.

COURSE PROFESSIONALISM

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Carefully consider how you participate and the assignments you submit. You can use humor and demonstrate creativity, but

think ahead to how it will reflect on you. Use your best professional judgment. Students are expected to arrive on time via Zoom, not leave early, and wait for the class to end before signing off. Cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used during class, unless they're being used for the class. In the event of an emergency, notify me at the start of class.

Discussion Demeanor: I want this class to be fun and energetic with great discussions, and we will cover 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. *Any form of disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.*

COURSE EVALUATION

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](http://uf.computinghelpdesk.com) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the [Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

CAMPUS RESOURCES

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

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 (sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-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 or TA in this class.