



PUR 3801
Public Relations Strategy (#2660)
Fall 2014

Department of Public Relations
College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida

Class Meeting: T 4 (10:40-11:30 a.m.) & TH 4-5 (10:45-12:35 p.m.), Weimer Hall G037

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Office Hours: T & TH 6-7 (12:50-2:45 p.m.) or by appointment

Course Description

Welcome to Public Relations Strategy! This course will develop your understanding of the strategic management of public relations through a systematic problem-solving process based on theory and research. Using case studies, you will become acquainted with the strategy and tactics used by public relations professionals in areas of public relations specialization such as crisis public relations and international public relations, and in the primary public relations functions of media relations, employee relations, community relations, government relations, investor relations, consumer relations, etc. As a result of the course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of public relations and the process through which it is practiced strategically;
- Apply the problem-solving process of ROPES to diverse organizations and situations;
- Identify and discuss concepts and theories relevant to effective public relations practice;
- Think critically, creatively and independently about public relations problems;
- Write and formulate fundamental components of a public relations campaign plan, including objectives and budget;
- Define publics appropriate for specific campaigns and appreciate differences that affect programming;
- Recognize the importance of formative and evaluative research in public relations practice; and
- Demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communication.

Required Textbook

- Smith, R. D. (2013). *Strategic planning for public relations* (4rd ed.). New York: Routledge. ISBN 9780415506762
- Patricia, Swann (2010). *Cases in Public Relations Management: The Rise of Social Media and Activism* (2nd ed.) New York: Routledge. ISBN 9780415517713

Course Website

- All announcements, assignments, and grades will be posted on Canvas (<https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>).
- Be sure you have a valid email address connected with Canvas. It is your responsibility to check Canvas regularly.

Expectations

Students have a responsibility to actively participate and engage in the work presented in this course. Successful course completion is heavily contingent on your ability to work effectively in a small group setting. The bulk of class time will focus on discussion of readings and case presentations. Come prepared and ready to take an informed stand. **A lively discussion among colleagues is the objective.** You should be prepared to state and defend your position, as well as refute the position of others in a cogent manner. Ask questions. *There are no wrong questions.* Throughout your academic career you've heard this phrase. But in this class, it is imperative that you believe it.

Evaluation

Grades will be determined from a range of tasks that reflect different types of learning. Consequently, your evaluation in this course will be based on the following components:

Individual case brief assignments (3)	150 points	30%
Written team case analysis and presentations (2)	150 points	30%
Individual assignment: Agency assessment	50 points	10%
Participation (current PR event & in-class discussion)	50 points	10%
Exam	75 points	15%
<u>Team peer evaluation</u>	25 points	5%
Total	500 points	100%

Final grades will be assigned based on your semester average as follows:

Letter Grade	100 Scale (100%)	500 Scale (total points for this class)
A	94-100%	470-500 points
A-	90-93.9%	450-469 points
B+	87-89.9%	435-449 points
B	84-86.9%	420-434 points
B-	80-83.9%	400-419 points
C+	77-79.9%	385-399 points
C	74-76.9%	370-384 points
C-	70-73.9%	350-369 points
D+	66-69.9%	330-349 points
D	64-66.9%	320-329 points
D-	60-63.9%	300-319 points
F	Below	0-299 points

To be fair to all students, **all numbers are absolute and will not be rounded up at any stage** (e.g., a B+ will be inclusive of all scores of 435 through 449.999).

My hope is that you will focus on learning rather than grades in this class. If you are not doing as well as you had anticipated, please don't hesitate to come talk to me so that we can discuss how you might improve your performance on the remaining assignments. I am happy to discuss study tips, explain assignments and grading criteria. **What I won't do is negotiate grades.** My goal is to be fair to everyone in the class, which means I will hold everyone to the same standards.

1. Individual case brief assignments (10% × 3)

This grade is based on your format, statement of the problem, list of critical factors, definition of alternatives, a pro/con discussion, and conclusion/additional comments. The grade rubric will be available on the class Canvas website.

2. Written team case analysis and presentations (15% × 2)

You are on agency account team (of approx. 3-4 team members depending on enrollment). The grade is a team grade, meaning that each team member receives the same grade, as in the “real world.” The grade is divided evenly between the team case analysis grade and the team presentation grade.

Every week four groups will analyze each new case. Two of those groups will present the case to the class and turn in a group paper. The members of the non-presenting groups will prepare individual papers on that same case. The presentation grade is based on your professionalism, introduction, teamwork, delivery, visual aides, statement of the problem/critical factors, definition of alternatives, a pro/con discussion, conclusions, and how you handle Q&A. Grading sheets to be used in evaluating presentations and papers will be available on Canvas for review.

Note that this format ensures that one half of the class is very well-prepared to discuss each formally presented case. However, the rest of the class should come prepared, because comments and questions posed on presentation days are important opportunities to earn participation points.

There will be one presentation on each presentation day. Each presenting group should plan on talking for approximately 20-25 minutes, with an additional 5-10 minutes for questions from the class. The question and answer sessions at the end of each presentation are a very important part of this course. Be prepared for questions. Have responses planned – maybe even supplementary slides.

As you work your way through these cases, immerse yourself fully in the data and details provided. If you have questions that can't be answered by the data, feel free to look outside the case for additional information. However, I expect this paper to be your own writing and not a collection of quotes from outside sources. You should use your outside sources to back up your claims, but not to replace your own voice.

Case papers (group and individual) are single-spaced (12 pt.), around three pages, and follow the format covered in class. These must be professionally written, with complete sentences and fully explained ideas. When you are writing an individual case, you can talk with your group members, but your resulting ideas and paper must be entirely your own.

3. Individual Assignment: Agency assessment (10%)

Through the semester, take your time going through the websites of the top grossing public relations agencies in the U.S. After going through the PR agencies, choose what you think is: 1) the most strategic agency, and 2) the agency you would most like to work for and why. These should be two different choices. Support your choices with evidence and examples in **a one page single-spaced typed (12 pt.)** individual writing assignment. Prepare for discussion. This grade includes the justification of your choices and class discussion.

4. Participation (10%)

Current PR event participation:

We keep it current in this class. Lively participation on current topics is key to the success of this course. You are assigned one day to pick an article from public relations resources (e.g., PR Week) matching the week's topic and lead a lively discussion. On your day, introduce the topic and summarize the article (do not read the article verbatim). Come up with 5 interesting open-ended discussion questions for the class. Type these and turn them in on your assigned day. **Your grade is based on both the day you lead, and the constant participation of others' events during the semester.** Thus, be ready to talk and share and express your views.

In-class discussion:

Because this class relies heavily on your ideas, your reactions, and your questions, your participation is critical. **Attendance and participation are completely two different things.** Attendance is not part of participation. This means that you will not receive full credit just because you attended each and every class.

At the end of the semester, I will consider the fullness of your answers, your motivation, and overall contribution to class discussion. I will be keeping track of in-class participation, specifically looking for not just the quantity of comments/questions, but also the quality of your participation.

Attendance is expected at all classes, presentations, and account team meetings. Given the nature of the class, wherein ad account teams make up an essential portion of the course, absence from class, team, and other meetings will reduce your final grade in the course via the participation grade and peer evaluation grade. You will be asked to display your nametag (I will bring these) each class.

5. Exam (15%)

Exam is designed to test your knowledge and application of the main ideas covered in the assigned readings, lecture material, class discussions, team presentations, videos, and guest lectures. **You are responsible for everything covered** in the previously stated areas.

Throughout the semester there will be **one exam**, which will be held in class during the regularly scheduled class period (**November 13th, Thursday**). The exams will be primarily made up of multiple-choice questions and short answer/essay-type questions.

NO make-up opportunities will be offered unless valid excuse is presented and approved **in advance** by me.

6. Team peer evaluation (5%)

Your peers on your team will grade your performance; this includes your attendance and participation in group meetings and effort and contributions towards your group papers and presentations. While your presentation and paper grade is the same for all team members, your peer evaluation grade differs. The peer evaluation sheet will be posted on the class website. We respect your right to privacy, so you may print out the form, fill it out in private, and bring it to hand in on the day it is due in class. We will have a sealed envelope and these forms are confidential. Not turning one in on the due date is a letter grade deduction.

Course Policies

1. Absences

Attendance is mandatory. Each student is allowed three excused absences for the semester. **Absences beyond three—for any reason—will result in a reduction of a letter course grade.** Students are responsible for all class work missed. Students are responsible for any information missed during an absence.

2. Assignments

All assignments are to be typed. Team analyses, individual case briefs, assignments, and peer evaluations are due at the beginning of class on the due date. **This means a HARD copy must be turned in; e-mailed assignments will not be accepted.** If you have a conflict with the deadline, alert me and turn it in early.

Late work policy:

Public relations is a deadline business. All due dates for assignments, once set, are final. If an assignment or activity is not received by the instructor prior to the deadline, **a grade of ZERO** will be assigned unless PRIOR arrangements are approved by me. If prior arrangements are not possible due to the circumstances of the absence, an excused absence must be requested in writing and documentation provided for verification. If an excused absence is granted, late work may be accepted with penalties assessed for late submission.

3. E-mail Policy

As e-mail has become a favored way to communicate in academia and industry, you must learn to use it appropriately. People have been fired from their jobs for misuse of this communication tool. Thus, when e-mailing me, address it formally. Always provide your full name. Write professionally. I will generally return it within 24 hours of receiving it on weekdays or by Monday evening if I receive it on the weekend. If you need to discuss something in length, come see me during office hours or we can schedule an alternative time.

4. Professional Courtesy

- You are preparing to enter the professional world, so I expect you to conduct yourself as a professional. This is the time to establish good work habits. What are good work habits for a student? Here are a few: arriving to class on time, refraining from personal conversations during class, staying for the entire class period (or until dismissed), meeting deadlines, having your assignments printed, stapled, and ready to turn in on the date due, and being respectful of your classmates, giving your full attention to guest speakers and carrying your share of the load in group projects.
- Any behavior that disrupts class will not be tolerated. You will be directed to leave class and considered absent for the day. Students who have been asked to leave the classroom are required to meet me before attending any future classes.
- **Cell phones:** As a courtesy to your instructor and to your classmates, please make sure at the beginning of each class period that your cell phones are turned **OFF**.
- **Laptops:** In-class laptop usage is restricted to taking notes about this particular class. Inappropriate use of a laptop—using the internet for reasons not related to this class—will result in one warning; a second offense will result in loss of the privilege of using your laptop in this class for the remainder of the semester.
- When you are in class, pay attention to what we're doing. It is inappropriate, unprofessional, and rude to read the paper, text to your friends, surf the Web, checking e-mail or working on material for other classes. If you are too disinterested in the material to give it your full attention, please do not come to class. Or, don't take the course. Take something that you will give your full attention.

5. Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Please read more information on academic dishonesty at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

6. Students with Disabilities

I am committed to help students with any type of challenges, while abiding by the standard code of confidentiality and fairness. In order to address special academic needs, please let me know at the beginning of the semester, if you have a medical, psychiatric or learning disability and require accommodations in this class. Requests should be made at a private meeting during my office hours. You will be requested to provide documentation to the Dean of Students Office (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) in order that the most appropriate accommodations can be determined.

7. Tentative Nature of the Syllabus

I reserve the right to change and/or add readings throughout the semester. Furthermore, I reserve the right to change and or move around scheduled lectures in order to facilitate for potential unplanned events (cancellations or guest speakers). If changes in the schedule are necessary, students will be held responsible for such changes, which will be announced in class ahead of time.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course outline is subject to change

Week 1:

Tues., 08/26: Welcome & Course Intro
Thur., 08/28: Strategic Public Relations Process

Smith Intro

Week 2:

Tues., 09/2: Delivering Effective Presentations & Writing Workshop
Thur., 09/4: Analyzing the Situation

Smith Step 1

Week 3:

Tues., 09/09: Team Presentation (Conflict Management)
Thur., 09/11: Team Presentation (Conflict Management)

Swann Chap.5
Swann Chap.5

Week 4:

Tues., 09/16: Analyzing the Organization
Thur., 09/18: Team Presentation (Consumer Relations #1)

Smith Step 2
Swann Chap.7

Week 5:

Tues., 09/23: Team Presentation (Consumer Relations #1)
Thur., 09/25: Analyzing the Publics

Swann Chap.7
Smith Step 3

Week 6:

Tues., 09/30: Team Presentation (Cultural and Other Considerations)
Thur., 10/2: Team Presentation (Cultural and Other Considerations)

Swann Chap.10
Swann Chap.10

Week 7:

Tues., 10/7: Establishing Goals and Objectives
Thur., 10/9: Formulating Action and Response Strategies

Smith Step 4
Smith Step 5

Week 8:

Tues., 10/14: Team Presentation (Corporate Social Responsibilities)
Thur., 10/16: Team Presentation (Corporate Social Responsibilities)

Swann Chap.3
Swann Chap.3

Week 9:

Tues., 10/21: Team Presentation (Media Relations)
Thur., 10/23: Team Presentation (Media Relations)

Swann Chap.4
Swann Chap.4

Week 10:

Tues., 10/28: Developing Message Strategies
Thur., 10/30: Team Presentation (Consumer Relations #2)

Smith Step 6
Swann Chap.7

Week 11:

Tues., 11/4: Team Presentation (Consumer Relations #2)
Thur., 11/6: Selecting Communication Tactics

Swann Chap.7
Smith Step 7

Week 12:

Tues., 11/11: **No Class - Veterans' Day**

Thur., 11/13: Exam

Week 13:

Tues., 11/18: Team Presentation (Activism)

Swann Chap.6

Thur., 11/20: Team Presentation (Activism)

Swann Chap.6

Week 14:

Tues., 11/25: Implementing the Strategic Plan

Smith Step 8

Thur., 11/27: **No Class- Thanksgiving**

Week 15:

Tues., 12/2: Evaluating the Strategic Plan

Smith Step 9

Thur., 12/4: Team Presentation (Entertainment and Leisure)

Swann Chap.8

Week 16:

Tues., 12/9: Team Presentation (Entertainment and Leisure)

Swann Chap.8