



**College of Journalism and Communications – Department of Public Relations  
Summer 2018 - PUR 3801 Section 0946, PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY**

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**Instructor:** Patrick Thelen  
**Office:** G044 Weimer Hall  
**Office hours:** 3:20 pm – 4:20 pm on Monday and 3:20 pm – 4:20 pm on Wednesday  
**Phone:** 352-316-9053 (I respond within 24 hours Monday through Friday)  
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**Class Hours:** Monday, Periods 3-5 (11:00 am – 3:15 pm), Wednesday, Periods 4-5 (12:30 pm – 3:15 pm).  
**Location:** Weimer 1078.

If office hours are inconvenient, feel free to contact me by email, phone, or in person at my office.

### ABOUT THIS COURSE

#### **Course Description:**

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

#### **Course Format:**

This learner-centered course will primarily use class discussions, experiential learning projects, presentations, and hands-on instruction to engage in the learning process. We will rarely just recount what is stated in the 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 collaboration that operates 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 documents. Not all of the materials that you read will be discussed or explained in class, therefore, if you need further explanations or clarifications please take advantage of the posted office hours.

#### **Prerequisites**

To enroll in this course, you must have received a grade of C or better in PUR 3000 (Principles of Public Relations).

## **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

This course is designed to educate students in the strategic management of public relations through a systematic problem-solving process that is based on theory and research. Through readings, lectures, exercises, and discussions, students will study in-depth the essential steps of the process. Using case studies, students will analyze and evaluate actual public relations situations related to the various sub-functions of public relations.

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

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of public relations and its strategic process.
2. Identify and explain the concepts and theories on which strategic public relations is based.
3. Apply the knowledge and experience gained in this course as well as from course prerequisites, to the development of a public relations strategic plan.
4. Define publics appropriate for specific client organizations and appreciate differences that affect formative and evaluative research in public relations practice.
5. Demonstrate understanding of conceptual foundation and professional skills competency related to strategic management process of the public relations function.
6. Demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communications.

The course specifically supports seven of the 11 professional values and competencies required of graduates by the Accredited Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC):

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to public relations.
2. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles, and work ethically.
4. Think critically, creatively and independently.
5. Conduct research and evaluate information by appropriate methods.
6. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the public relations profession.
7. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

## **Required Book**

- Smith, R. D. (2013). *Strategic planning for public relations* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.

While there is only one required text for the course, additional readings will be assigned regularly.

## COURSE EVALUATION

### **Assignment Weighting**

Attendance and class participation .....	10%
Case study presentation .....	10%
Social media content analysis .....	20%
Exam .....	20%
Team project .....	40%

- Situation analysis: 15%
- Strategic plan: 20%
- Presentation: 5%

Grading for the course follows current UF grading policies for assigning grade points (see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

### **Grading scale**

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. For further information about grades and grading policy, please consult: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>*

### **Evaluation**

#### **Attendance and class participation**

Because what we do in class meetings is so integral to the course, prompt attendance at all class meetings is required. Attendance will be taken at every class. One unexcused absence will be allowed without penalty. Participate in the class discussion. You can only earn full credit if you consistently contribute to the class.

## **Social media content analysis**

Minimum 3 single-spaced pages, Times New Roman 12, margins 1". This social media content analysis will summarize the Facebook or Twitter message strategies used by two competing brands or organizations as identified by the student and approved by the instructor. Students will supplement their written analysis with a 15-minute oral and visual presentation. Public speaking and visual communication skills will be evaluated.

## **Case study presentation**

A 15-minute oral and visual presentation of an assigned case study will briefly discuss the following: situation analysis, research, planning, execution and evaluation. Public speaking and visual communication skills will be evaluated.

## **Situation analysis**

Minimum 6 single-spaced pages, Times New 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. The analysis should include a variety of reliable sources and corporate information. The references must follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 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.

## **Strategic plan**

Minimum 10 single-spaced pages, Times New Roman 12, margin 1". 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.

## **Final presentation**

The presentation of the strategic plan 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. Following the presentation, group members will complete a peer evaluation of their group members.

## **Exam**

The exam will be held 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, handouts, presentations and class discussions as specified in the syllabus. The exam will include multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. Exam grades will be posted on Canvas.

### **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 should be discussed with the instructor. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### **Course Professionalism**

The College of Journalism and Communications is a professional school and professional decorum is expected at all times. Therefore, both the instructor and students adhere to workplace norms for collegial and respectful interaction. Students are expected to arrive on time and not leave early unless prior permission is sought and granted.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest, ethical, and courteous manner – with classmates, and the professor. Eating and privately chatting in class do not demonstrate professional behavior. Talking while the instructor or another student is talking is unacceptable behavior; such actions can result in being asked to leave the classroom and will result in a lowering of your class participation grade.

**Please restrict the use of electronic devices to taking notes.** Put away your cellphone and ignore social media while in class. Surfing the Internet, checking or creating email, playing games, and other online activities not related to class are strictly prohibited.

### **Academic Honesty**

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 (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-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.

I will handle any incident of academic dishonesty in accordance with the University of Florida policies that address cheating and unethical behavior, specifically the UF Honor Code and the Academic Honesty Guidelines.

Any case of academic dishonesty will result in an “E” for the course. I will follow University Guidelines for any offense.

## Diversity Statement

All discussions will be ruled by mutual respect for people and their opinions. Effective **public relations practice relies on the ability to recognize and embrace diversity in all its forms, including viewpoints.** Furthermore, professionalism requires an appreciation for the multicultural society and global economy in which students plan to work. Throughout the course, students will have opportunities to see how different life experiences and cultural perspectives influence public relations. You are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities in your own work and to learn from the information and ideas shared by other students.

### OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES

- The instructor reserves the right to make changes, if necessary, to the syllabus.
- Students are not permitted to bring guests to class unless special arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to class.
- If you notice yourself having trouble in the course, it is crucial that you see the instructor immediately. Please feel free to approach the instructor about any concerns or comments you might have about this class. I will be happy to meet with you during office hours, or by appointment.
- You are expected to arrive promptly for class, fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Anyone arriving more than 10 minutes late for class will be noted as absent, and his or her class participation grade will suffer as a result.
- Attendance policy: Attendance is mandatory. Absences count from the first class meeting. You are responsible for signing the attendance sheet every class period as well as 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>).
- Do not submit the same work to more than one class without prior written permission from both instructors. Do not adapt work from another class for this class without my prior written permission.
- All work submitted for this course must be coherent, logical, and carefully edited. Misspellings, syntax and grammar errors, and other writing problems are unacceptable in upper-division college writing, especially in work by public relations students.
- An assignment turned in passed the deadline will be penalized one letter grade for each weekday it is late.
- In addition to the required readings, you are expected to maintain comprehensive class notes because class lectures often contain information that is not included in the readings. You will be tested on this information on examinations.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### **Online course administration – Canvas**

Canvas (<http://lss.at.ufl.edu/>) will be used to administer the course communication/announcements, materials and grades. For instance, an electronic file of this document will be posted on Canvas. You can access the site by using your GatorLink username and password. Please check the site regularly for announcements and/or threads of comments from either your course colleagues or the instructor.

### **Students with Special Needs**

We are committed to helping students with special challenges overcome difficulties with comprehending the subject matter, while abiding by the standard code of confidentiality. In order to address academic needs, we must be informed of the student's circumstance at the beginning of the semester *before* performance becomes a factor. This is not to imply that standards of fairness will not be generally applied when evaluating student work; only that reasonable and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that officially recognized challenges do not become a hindrance to a student's ability to succeed in this course.

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (Disability Research 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 that must be presented to the instructor or teaching assistant when requesting accommodation. Students with challenges 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 based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online 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 at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

### **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/Default.aspx>, 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.

University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).  
<http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

### 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>.

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.  
<http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week	Class Discussion	Readings	Assignment Due/Notes
Week 1 (May 14)	Course introduction. Nine steps of strategic planning.	Syllabus Smith, Introduction (pp. 1-18)	<b>Select case study (May 14).</b>
Week 1 (May 16)	Formative research: Analyzing the situation.	Smith: Step 1 (pp. 19-40).	<b>Select social media content analysis organizations (May 16).</b> <b>Select organization for project (May 18).</b>

Week 2 (May 21)	Analyzing the organization and analyzing the publics.	Smith: Steps 2 & 3 (pp. 41-92).	
Week 2 (May 23)	Media relations and crisis communication.	Smith: Appendix D (pp. 443-463)	
Week 3 (May 28)	MEMORIAL DAY (NO CLASSES)		
Week 3 (May 30)	Case study presentations and discussion  Establishing goals and objectives.	Smith: Step 4 (pp. 93-112).  6 case studies	<b>Case study presentations (May 30).</b>
Week 4 (June 4)	Exam  Formulating action & response strategies: Proactive strategies.	Review notes and Smith: Introduction; Steps 1-4; Appendix D.  Smith: Step 5 (pp. 113-145).	<b>Exam (June 4)</b>
Week 4 (June 6)	Social media content analysis presentations and discussions  Formulating action & response strategies: Reactive strategies.	Smith: Step 5 (pp. 145-171).	<b>Social media content analysis presentations (June 6).</b>  <b>Situation Analysis (June 8).</b>
Week 5 (June 11)	Selecting communication tactics: Interpersonal communication and organizational media	Smith: Step 7 (pp. 225-263).	

	Selecting communication tactics: News media and advertising and promotional media.	Smith: Step 7 (pp. 264-303).  <b>Smith: Step 6 (pp. 172-224).</b>	
Week 5 (June 13)	Implementing the strategic plan  Evaluating the strategic plan.	Smith: Step 8 (pp. 304-328).  Smith: Step 9 (pp. 329-358).	
Week 6 (June 18)	Team Project.		<b>Strategic Plan (June 18).</b>
Week 6 (June 20)	Team presentations.		<b>Team presentations (June 20).</b>