

PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Kalyca Becktel, MA

Office: Weimer 2040

Office hours: Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. or by appointment

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Class: Tuesdays 11:45 a.m. – 1:40 p.m. and Thursdays 12:50 p.m. – 1:40 p.m.

Schedule number: 20352

The syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the professor may be necessary. Class lectures are the property of the professor.

> COURSE DESCRIPTION

Practical applications of public relations techniques with emphasis on writing and media usage. News releases and media relations, print and electronic communications production, multi-media techniques, speeches, other audio-visual presentations and special events. Field and laboratory practice.

> TEXTS

Required:

- “Cutlip & Center’s Effective Public Relations” (11th edition), by Glen M. Broom and Bey-Ling Sha (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2013).
- “Associated Press Stylebook” (Seventh edition), published by the Associated Press.

> MATERIALS

Each student must have the following -- there will be no exceptions:

- **UF email** access to be checked often
- Use of a **printer**, as all products, unless otherwise noted, are required to be typed, printed and stapled
- **Access to Canvas** for grades – reconcile all bonus and incorrect grades by April 24.

> OVERVIEW

This course provides an introduction to the principles of public relations. Students will learn about the four-step strategic public relations process and have an opportunity to work with a client on a public relations plan. Discussion of the practice, theory, history and industry specializations will also be covered. Though this is an introductory class, as an upper division course it will be challenging and often require students to synthesize their book learning with real-world scenarios.

- √ Understanding of major theories relating to public relations
- √ Understanding of the role of strategic management in public relations
- √ Understanding of historical facts and trends in public relations
- √ Familiarity with current issues in public relations theory and practice
- √ Ability to apply theories and principles to the analysis of public relations problems
- √ Ability to conduct informal research in preparation for designing a public relations program
- √ Ability to develop a public relations program proposal
- √ Ability to write all four components of an appropriate public relations program
- √ Ability to justify the selection of strategies and tactics using theory and research results
- √ Ability to design and execute sample tactical elements
- √ Ability to work with others to achieve group goals

ACEJMC’S 11 COMPETENCIES

1. Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications.
4. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
6. Think critically, creatively and independently.
7. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
8. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
9. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
10. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
11. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

> STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the UF Disability Resource Center at 352-392-8565. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact UF Disability Resource Center as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from the UF Disability Resource Center. Your cooperation is appreciated.

> ACADEMIC HONESTY

All academic work must meet the Student Honor Code explained in the UF 4.040 Orange Book of Accountability Expected. Students are responsible to inform themselves about UF standards before performing any academic work. Students who break the university's honor code, are found to be cheating or fraudulently use another student's ideas/work will fail this course. Find out more about student responsibilities at UF at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>. Students who are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty should consult the University's Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (sccr.dso.ufl.edu).

The best way to avoid academic honesty violations is to maintain integrity when preparing work to be turned in for the class and properly citing ideas and passages when appropriate. The fine for plagiarism in this course is, at minimum, a zero on the assignment at hand. The school or the university may determine the bigger-picture fine for additional repercussions. Just say no.

> ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students should arrive to class on time, prepared and ready to participate or work as required. Just as in the fast-paced world of PR, there will be unannounced events in class that result in production. Students who miss class – for whatever reason – forfeit the right to make up graded elements that occur during class or lab time. Students who are planning on missing **do not** need to email the instructor.

> LATE WORK OR MAKEUPS

Work is only accepted when it is due in the method prescribed for turning it in. As such, late work is not accepted nor are missed in-class graded assignments, exams or quizzes. Students arriving after a homework assignment is being turned in will not be able to participate in that graded element. In the real world, late work can mean a missed public relations opportunity.

> GRADE

This class employs multiple forms of evaluation to maximize the learning and evaluation experience while allowing for differences among learning types for students. There is an emphasis on real-world professionalism. All work will be evaluated based on the ability to meet the assignment objectives, clarity, professionalism, technical skill and quality. The following breakdown explains how the grade is to be computed; note this class uses a weighed formula to compute the grade, not raw points:

| Graded Item | Date | Percentage of the Grade |
|---|----------|-------------------------|
| Exams (4) | Ongoing | 40 percent |
| Assignments | Ongoing | 25 percent |
| PR Planning Competency | TBD | 30 percent |
| Sona Research Participation | April 21 | 5 percent |
| | | 100 percent |

All grades on assignments, projects and quizzes are based on the following +/- grading scale:

| | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 95 – 100 = A | 86 – 92.9 = B+ | 76 – 79.9 = C+ | 66 – 69.9 = D+ | below 59.9 = F |
| 93 – 94.9 = A- | 83 – 85.9 = B | 73 – 75.9 = C | 63 – 65.9 = D | |
| | 80 – 82.9 = B- | 70 – 72.9 = C- | 60 – 62.9 = D- | |

The instructor does not round up (not even 0.1 point). Graded items will not be dropped or weighted. Grades are based on the final product and the student's ability to meet the requirements set by the professor.

Each product is graded against the same criteria and the student's ability to show mastery of the objective. All graded materials must meet specific standards for professionalism and quality. Effort does not equal an "A." Only those who show mastery of the graded material will earn such a grade for that item. No one is given grades; one earns the grade based on the quality of the product.

Students are to keep track of their own grades and progress in the course. Monitor Canvas to compute your grade.

Any student wishing to dispute a grade must have the graded material when pleading the case. Students have the right to dispute a grade within one week of the material being returned; after one week all grades are final.

The deadline to reconcile grades in Canvas grades is May. 1. Adjustments will not be made after this date so keep on top of your grade (i.e., monitor frequently).

Grades will not be discussed via email or the telephone. If a student has a question about a grade and would like to discuss it, then the student must meet with the instructor in person. This policy protects the student.

> GRADED PRODUCTS

All out of class work must be typed in a word processing program and printed. Use Times New Roman font in size 12, 1-inch margins all around and double-space. All items that are more than one page **must be stapled**. All work must apply rules from the AP Stylebook, proper grammar and punctuation. Unless otherwise specified, all items are due at the start of class; late work after class begins is not accepted.

RUBRIC: All written assignments are graded according to a grading rubric for technical skill, in addition to the style and content considerations. Students can rely on the following rubric throughout the semester:

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|--|---|
| AP Stylebook error – one point each time | Incorrect grammar – five points each time |
| Misspelled name – 10 points each time | Fact error – 10 points each time |
| Misspelled word – five points each time | Failure to follow directions – 15 points for assignment |

STRATEGIC PLAN: Every student must demonstrate comprehension of the public relations strategic planning process to meet the PR planning competency requirement. This will be demonstrated through a group project of 10 students conducting research and producing a proposal for a public relations program for a client. The client will meet with the student team during class once during the semester. Teams will present at the end of the semester. Students who fail to attend 75 percent of their team's meetings or otherwise do not contribute to their group project will not receive their group's grade and will take a solo essay exam to determine campaign competency instead.

INDUSTRY INTERVIEWS: During the semester, each student will individually identify and interview a PR practitioner in the student's area of interest. The industry options are featured in *Part IV* of *EPR* (chapters 15 – 21): (1) business and industry, (2) government and politics, (3) military public affairs, (4) nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations, (5) health care, (6) education and (7) associations and unions. There is a limit as to how many students are allowed to cover each industry, and industry slots are filled on a first-come first-serve basis with the deadline to commit no later than Feb. 1. Practitioners interviewed for any student project in the past 12 months are not eligible. Multiple practitioners from the same organization across all student interviews are not authorized. Students will not be permitted to interview practitioners from UF or Santa Fe College. Students are encouraged to sign up for an industry well before this deadline so as to ensure the desired industry slot is still available. After industry assignments are made, students will propose a particular practitioner for the interview, which must be approved by the professor. After approval, students may interview the practitioner at any time before the industry interview due date. All interviews must be done either face to face, over videoconference or via the phone; email interviews are not permitted under any circumstances. After the interview is conducted, students are required to handwrite a thank you note to the practitioner and turn in the addressed envelope with the note inside to the instructor, who will stamp and mail the note herself. Turn in the thank you note with the interview worksheet. Email thank you notes are not permitted. See the syllabus calendar for specific industry interview due dates.

EXAMS: There are four exams in this course. Exams are administered via Canvas and are individual efforts. Late exams submitted after the exam closes at 11:59 p.m. on the day administered will not be accepted.

ASSIGNMENTS: Students should expect additional general assignments – both announced and pop-up assignments – throughout the semester. All work must be professional, typed and spell checked. Assignments will be both group assignments and individual.

SONA RESEARCH PARTICIPATION: UF is one of the nation's premier urban research universities, and the College of Journalism and Communications is a leader in those efforts. As part of this course, you will be required to earn at least one full Sona credit through the UF College of Journalism and Communications Research Participation Pool (<https://ufl-cjc.sona-systems.com>) Typically, this amounts to participating in two different studies. You should activate your account early for the semester, understanding that every semester may require reactivating the account. Throughout the semester you'll see many different studies you can participate in and how many credits each study earns participants. In lieu of participating in a research study, you may complete an alternate assignment through Sona consisting of a written report on a recent academic related journal article (email the instructor for details). If you need help resetting your account password please email the CJC Sona team at ufl-cjc-sonasystems@jou.ufl.edu. Sona research opportunities end April 21. Sona points are not loaded into Canvas until the end of semester. This is a pass/fail portion of your grade.

> COURSE POLICIES

BE NICE. Disrespect in any form in the classroom is not permitted. If a student is deemed disrespectful by the instructor, then the student may be asked to leave (and receive an absence). Disrespect is conveyed in many forms, both face to face and online. None will be tolerated. Respect your class members' privacy and do not post comments, photos or other information online without permission.

COMMUNICATE PROFESSIONALLY. As this is a respected legacy school in public relations, the ability to communicate in a professional and courteous manner via email is important. Students are expected to display their top-level PR communication skills each time they send an email to the professor. Students who fail to use a professional greeting, sign one's full name or use proper AP Style in an email will have one point deducted from the final (overall grade) for the course for each infraction. Ask the professor for examples of proper and improper email communication so as to not make this mistake.

KNOW WHEN YOU NEED HELP. The college experience is stressful. If a student feels the need for professional services to assist in coping with stress related to school or other life's events, please contact U Matter We Care (www.umatter.ufl.edu). Locations and services are located throughout the university campus. Students who need assistance beyond their business hours should call the Alachua County Crisis 24-hour Hotline at 352-264-6789. Other campus emergency services include UF Emergency Management at 352-273-2100 or University Police at 352-392-1111.

INCOMPLETES UNAVAILABLE. Incompletes will rarely, if ever, be given for this class. Only students who are already operating at a satisfactory level prior to a medical or other serious circumstance beyond one's control will even be considered for an incomplete. Incompletes are not a way to skirt responsibility and work around lost opportunities in major course assignments.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION. Assuming you have been an active part of the class and visited the instructor during office hours, the instructor is willing to consider signing a positive letter of recommendation about you. Any requests for letters of recommendation should be made at least four weeks prior to the letter deadline. Students requesting the letter of recommendation should write the text of the letter as if the instructor were not going to add anything to it (though 99 percent of the time she will!) and submit that as a final suggested draft to the instructor. As a professional courtesy, students should discuss the request to write a letter of recommendation in person, preferably during office hours. The instructor reserves the right to refuse to write a letter or will advise students of potentially adverse material that would be discussed in such a letter prior to agreeing to submit such a letter.

GRADE THE INSTRUCTOR. The instructor worked hard on this syllabus and thinks it is perfect. It probably isn't. Being perfect is really important to her. If a student finds an AP Stylebook error in this document, the student should kindly notify the instructor immediately. The first student to report that specific error will be rewarded with one bonus point on top of the student's final grade. These syllabus error bonus points are awarded one point per error on a first-reported basis. Multiple bonus points can be earned by a single student if that student is able to find multiple errors and report them before others discover them. Errors must be reported by the deadline to reconcile Canvas and students are limited to five bonus syllabus error bonus points. This bonus opportunity is only extended to the syllabus, not other handouts in the semester.

> TENTATIVE READING ASSIGNMENTS AND SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change at professor's discretion

| Day | Topic | Reading | Items Due and Class Notes |
|-----------|---|-------------|---|
| Jan. 7 | Introduction and definitions or PR | EPR 1 | Students absent first day of class will be dropped |
| Jan. 9 | PR roles | EPR 2 | |
| Jan. 14 | Organizational settings | EPR 3 | Sign up for industry interview category https://doodle.com/poll/9a93k5s426ksg2pg |
| Jan. 16 | Strategic PR plan project Introduction | | Submit team members via Google Form |
| Jan. 21 | Group Meetings In Class | | |
| Jan. 23 | Exam 1 covering EPR 1-3 | | <i>Note: no offices hours today</i> |
| Jan. 28 | Step 1: Research | EPR 11 | Propose practitioner for industry interview (Google Form Link) |
| Jan. 30 | Step 2: Planning | EPR 12 | PR plan problem statement (group assignment) |
| Feb. 4 | Step 3: Implementation | EPR 13 | Due: LinkedIn Profile |
| Feb. 6 | Step 4: Evaluation | EPR 14 | PR plan objectives (group assignment) |
| Feb. 11 | Exam 2 covering EPR 11-14 | | <i>Note: no offices hours today</i> |
| Feb. 13 | Ethics and legal issues | EPR 5-6 | |
| Feb. 18 | Theory & communication models | EPR 7-8 | |
| Feb. 20 | History & Evolution | EPR 4 | |
| Feb. 25 | Project Work Day | | PR plan research proposal (group assignment) <i>Note: no offices hours today</i> |
| Feb. 27 | Exam 3 covering EPR 4-8 | | |
| March. 3 | Spring Break | | |
| March. 5 | Spring Break | | |
| March. 10 | Industry roundtable: Government, politics, military | EPR 16 – 17 | Industry interviews and thank you notes due for this section only |
| March. 12 | Industry Guest Speaker: Government, politics, military; Maj. Stanton, APR+M, MA | | |
| March. 17 | Industry roundtable: Business | EPR 15 | Industry interviews and thank you notes for these sections only <i>Bonus:</i> Thank you note for Maj. Cassandra Stanton Due prior to start of class. |
| March. 19 | Industry Guest Speaker: TBD | EPR 15 | |
| March. 24 | Industry Guest Speaker: Miss Miya Lawrence from Netflix Internal & External Public Relations | EPR 9-10 | |
| March. 26 | Industry roundtable: Nonprofits, NGOs, associations and unions | EPR 18, 21 | <i>Bonus:</i> Thank you note to Miss Miya Lawrence due prior to start of class Industry interviews and thank you notes for these sections only |
| March. 31 | Industry roundtable: Health, education | EPR 19 - 20 | <i>Bonus:</i> Thank You note due prior to start of class Industry interviews and thank you notes for these sections only |
| April. 2 | Industry Guest Speaker: TBD | | |
| April. 7 | Industry Speaker: Cassandra Kaawaloa | | <i>Bonus:</i> Thank You note due prior to start of class Industry interviews and thank you notes for these sections only |
| April. 9 | Exam 4 Covering EPR 9-10 & Industries | | <i>Bonus:</i> Thank You note due by noon. |
| April. 14 | Team Presentation Day | | |

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| April. 16 | Team Presentation Day | PR plans (email PDF to professor, printed book due in class) |
| April. 21 | Team Presentation Day | Deadline to reconcile Canvas |
