

# SYLLABUS: PUR 4932.2E59 (19982) Corporate Reputation (☀)

Professor: Patrick Ford, Professional-in-Residence, Department of Public Relations

Office: Weimer 3115

Term: Spring 2020

Office Hours: T 1:00-4:30 p.m.\*

Course Time: M 3:00-3:50 p.m.; W 3:00-4:55 p.m.

Course Location: Weimer 2050

*\*Appointments recommended and may also be possible outside office hours.*

**Contact Information:** Email: [fordp@ufl.edu](mailto:fordp@ufl.edu); phone: 352-294-0493; text: 703-966-8138

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Messages via Canvas are accepted

**(☀) This syllabus is subject to change as the professor deems appropriate and necessary.**

## Course Description

**Corporate Reputation** focuses on key elements of corporate reputation – one of the most important and yet least understood aspects of any company’s overall success and value. In today’s digital, global, highly interactive business ecosystem, where a company is subject to instant, vivid, unfiltered, and global scrutiny, the need for effective, proactive reputation management is greater than ever. Warren Buffett’s two famous quotes on corporate reputation, with which every senior corporate executive is familiar, have never been more relevant:

*"Lose money for the firm, and I will be understanding. Lose a shred of reputation for the firm, and I will be ruthless."*

*"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently."*

Over the course of this semester, we will delve into how corporate reputations are built and sustained, and also how they can be damaged or even ruined. We will examine a wide range of specific case studies and, in some cases, hear from senior communications executives on how they and their companies engage with all their key stakeholders (employees, retirees, investors, customers, communities, governments, media, social media influencers and other key opinion leaders) on reputation. We will explore best practices in corporate sustainability, corporate governance, corporate purpose, corporate social responsibility, ethical behavior, and issues and crisis management. Our group project will require the development of an original, comprehensive case study suitable for entry in the national case study competition sponsored by the Page Society and Institute for Public Relations.

## Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Learn what constitute the key factors in corporate reputation management
- Develop a strategic reputation management plan
- Understand how to monitor and measure a company’s reputation
- Identify and address the ethical issues affecting reputation
- Write comprehensive case studies on best and worst examples of corporate reputations
- Understand the importance of opinion/attitudinal research in reputation management
- Recognize risks to corporate reputation and how to manage them through corporate communications and stakeholder engagement

**Prerequisite: PUR 3000 Principles of Public Relations**

## **Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes**

### College of Journalism and Mass Communications Objectives

Contributes to learning outcomes required by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications for all students by the time they graduate:

- 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.

## **Readings**

### **Required Book**

*The New Era of the CCO: The Essential Role of Communication in a Volatile World*, edited by Roger Bolton, Don W. Stacks and Eliot Mizrachi. Business Expert Press, 2018. ISBN:

- 978-1-63157-535-8 (paperback)
- 978-1-63157-536-5 (electronic)

### **Recommended Reading (not required)**

*Reputation Management: The Key to Successful Public Relations and Corporate Communication* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by John Doorley and Helio Fred Garcia. Routledge, 2015. Available in UF bookstore and on Amazon and as an Apple e-book.

ISBN:

- 978-0-415-71628-4 (paperback)
- 978-1-315-87998-7 (e-book)

### **Additional Readings as Assigned**

Students will be expected to be regular readers of free updates from *PRWeek Daily Breakfast Briefing* and *The Holmes Report*. **PRWeek IS accessible to UF students through the UF George A. Smathers Libraries online database system.** The professor will provide or assign additional reading materials (e.g. media articles or book chapters) over the course of the semester, mostly for additional information but, in some cases, these may be included in quiz. Generally, assigned reading (book chapters or other articles) in the syllabus should be read in advance of the class for which they are listed. Be prepared for the professor to call on you in that class to discuss the assigned readings.

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

<https://elearning.ufl.edu> will be used to administer the course communication, materials (e.g., PowerPoint files, additional readings, handouts, assignment guidelines, evaluation forms), and grades. For instance, an electronic file of this document is posted on Canvas. 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.

## **Course Professionalism**

- The College of Journalism and Communications is a professional school and professional decorum is expected at all times. Therefore, the students, and the professor, adhere to workplace norms for collegial and respectful interaction. Students are expected to arrive on time, not leave early unless prior permission is granted, and wait for the class to end before packing to leave. *Please note the significant impact of attendance and active participation in your final grade (25% of grade) and be sure to show up and speak up.*
- 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. Chatting while the professor 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.
- **Cell phones and other electronic devices must off or silent during class**, unless authorized by the professor. In the event of an emergency situation, notify the professor at the start of class. Laptops may be used as a note-taking device. Unless otherwise authorized by the professor, surfing the Internet, checking or sending email, playing games, and other online activities not related to class are strictly prohibited.

## **Course Grades**

The evaluation of coursework will be based on the student's performance in three areas, each of which constitutes a proportion of the final grade. These include: attendance and active participation; individual assignments (which will include developing case studies related to corporate reputation); and one group experiential learning project. The group project will involve developing comprehensive case studies, including teaching notes and a PowerPoint presentation, that would be suitable for submission in the national Page Case Study competition, which is sponsored each year by the Page Society and the Institute for Public Relations (see the 2019 winning case studies at this link: [https://page.org/study\\_competitions](https://page.org/study_competitions)). The allocations for each are as follows:

### **Active Participation: 25%**

- Attendance and active participation are mandatory. Students will be expected to participate in various interactive exercises and to be fully engaged at all times. Absences count from the first class following the drop/add period. After due warning, the professor may prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a lower or failing grade for excessive absences; more than two absences during the semester will be considered "excessive absences." You are responsible for **notifying the professor in advance of the cause of your absence** and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider. For further information on attendance policy, please consult: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>.

### **Individual Assignments / Case Study 25%**

- Individual assignments will provide an opportunity for you to explore various aspects of corporate reputation management. The most important will be to prepare a case study on a specific company's reputation. You will select the company (subject to the professor's approval and it must not be the company/case being analyzed by your group for the group project). The

grade will be based on: the case selection – how compelling is the situation and its business impact on the company; a company overview that puts the case in context and provides data and analysis on the company’s reputation; a comprehensive analysis of how the company engaged with primary and secondary stakeholders through direct engagement, media relations and social media interaction; style and quality of writing; and quality of a presentation deck accompanying the case study, which may be used in class presentations to illustrate and bring the case to life.

### **Quiz: 20%**

- One test will be scheduled. This will be a short-answer quiz designed to test the students’ understanding of key concepts of reputation management addressed in the course textbook and discussed in class by the professor and/or guest lecturers.

### **Group Project and Presentation: 30%**

- This is a semester-long group project that will require you to work collaboratively with fellow students to develop a comprehensive corporate reputation case study that follows the requirements for submission in the national Page Case Study competition (see the guidelines for this national competition as well as the 2019 winning case studies at this link: [https://page.org/study\\_competitions](https://page.org/study_competitions)). Directions and team assignments will be provided early in the semester.

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

*The grading scale for the course is as follows:*

93-100 = A  
 90-92 = A-  
 88-89 = B+  
 82-87 = B  
 80-81 = B-  
 78-79 = C+  
 72-77 = C  
 70-71 = C-  
 68-69 = D+  
 60-67 = D  
 Below 60 = E

*For further information about grades and grading policy, please consult:*

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

### **End of Course Evaluations**

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 <https://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 <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

## **The Honor Pledge**

The University of Florida Honor Code applies to all work related to this class. All students are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. Students are expected to attend every class, arrive on time, and participate in class discussions. Assigned readings should be completed prior to class, and students should be prepared to discuss the assigned material. Any material discussed in class and/or covered in the assigned readings may be included on examinations. Students will not be allowed to make up quizzes. Exceptions to this policy will be limited to documented exceptional (as defined by the professor) circumstances and at the discretion of the professor. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late to a quiz may be prohibited from taking the quiz.

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 or TAs in this class.

## **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.

## **Campus Resources**

### **Health and Wellness Resources**

*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:* <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 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](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu). <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

*Career Connections Center,* Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://career.ufl.edu/>

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

## Other Important Notes

- The professor reserves the right to make changes, if necessary, to the grading system, schedule, or other matters pertaining to the class.
- The professor may be reached via email (fordp@ufl.edu), telephone (352-294-0493) or text (703-966-8138). Please be aware that the professor may not be able to respond immediately to your communication. As a rule, allow up to 24 hours for a response. Therefore, barring an emergency situation, it is advisable to contact the professor well in advance of a quiz or a deadline in order to give the professor adequate time to respond.
- Students are not to consume food in the classroom or to use laptop computers other than to take class notes or follow PowerPoint presentations. Use of mobile telephones or other electronic devices is not allowed during class.
- Students are not permitted to bring guests to class unless special arrangements have been made with the professor prior to class.
- If you notice yourself having trouble in the course, it is crucial that you see the professor immediately. Please feel free to approach the professor about any concerns or comments you might have about this class. Ideally, every student in the class should plan to have at least one 1:1 meeting with the professor in his office during the course of the semester.
- You are expected to arrive promptly for class, fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings. While we understand the problems created by a large campus, it is your responsibility to arrive in class in a timely manner.
- Any evidence of plagiarism or cheating will result in an "E" for the course and possible disciplinary action.
- Do not submit the same work to more than one class without prior written permission from both professors. Do not adapt work from another class for this class without my prior written permission.
- Do not adapt someone else's work and submit it as your own. This course requires original work, created at this time, for this purpose.
- Spelling counts, as do grammar, punctuation and professional presentation techniques. If you need extra help with presentation skills, arrange an appointment with the professor.
- An assignment turned in past 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.
- In addition to the required and recommended readings, you are expected to maintain comprehensive class notes because class lectures often contain information that is not contained in the readings. You will be quizzed on this information. *If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get briefed by another student on the content covered in the class.*
- Misspelling company or agency names during exercises will result in a letter grade deduction. Check your work!

