

COURSE SYLLABUS
PUR4932: Public Relations for Social Change

Date/Time: Tuesdays, periods 7-9 1:55 p.m. – 4:55 p.m.

Location: Weimer 1076

Instructor: Vanessa Wakeman

Email: vdalton1@ufl.edu

Office hours: 3103 Weimer – Tuesdays from 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. and
Wednesdays from 12:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Course Description:

With more than 1.5 million registered nonprofits in the United States, many organizations find public relations as a valuable tool to position their organization and stand out in a crowded market place. This course will explore the many ways in which nonprofit organizations use public relations to raise awareness and catalyze audiences into action. From traditional public relations methods to influencer engagement and social media, students will build upon their existing public relations skills as we explore the world of social change. Students will hear from guest speakers at nonprofit organizations to learn what it takes to gain the attention and trust of the public and accelerate progress on pressing social issues.

We will take a deep dive into the ecosystem of social change, examining the role of public relations in catalyzing action. Students will learn how to shape their communications to drive desired behaviors by audiences. This class is interactive and students will be responsible for staying up to date on social issues so that we can discuss them in class. The course is designed to help students think critically about real issues in real-time, to build confidence and fluency in raising the visibility of important causes.

Course Objectives:

In this course, you will gain an understanding of how public relations strategies and tactics are used to advance social causes. By the end of the course, students should:

- Be able to assess the viability of specific public relations actions to achieve desired outcomes.
- Have a fundamental knowledge of how to tap into public sentiment to advance an organization's mission.
- Be comfortable providing insights and feedback on communications strategies and tactics related to social issues.
- Understand how organizations can leverage public relations to build influence and generate revenue for important causes.
- Be able to apply best practices in positioning nonprofit organizations.

Course Schedule and Assignments*	
1/7	Course overview and introductions
1/14	Public relations for social change
1/21	The eco-system of social change
1/28	Guest speaker
2/4	Issues, awareness and action
2/11	Guest speaker
2/18	Issues, awareness and action
2/25	Issues, awareness and action
3/3	Spring Break
3/10	Fundraising communications
3/17	Guest speaker:
3/24	Thought leadership and building influence
3/31	Guest speaker
4/7	Review
4/14	Group discussions
4/21	Group discussions

*This schedule may change at the discretion of the Professor. Any updates will be added to Canvas.

Course Evaluation

The evaluation of coursework will be based on the student's performance in four areas, each of which constitutes a proportion of the final grade. These include: attendance; pitching development; individual and group assignments; and analytics. The allocations for each are as follows:

Attendance and Class Participation - 20%

Your presence and participation will allow you to receive the full benefit of the course curriculum and best prepare you for a professional role in a nonprofit or agency, representing nonprofit clients.

Individual Assignments - 40%

At the beginning of the semester, you will select a social issue and perform a series of activities to engage stakeholders and shape the narrative about your cause. Details will be shared in Canvas. While there is no textbook for the class, you will receive periodic reading assignments and expected to come to class prepared to discuss what you've read.

Group Discussions and Assignments - 40%

You will have group discussions and assignments to exhibit your mastery of the concepts you have learned in class, and their practical application. These discussions and assignments will be connected to topics shared by guest speakers and from current events and breaking news stories. These interactions are designed to help you refine your thinking to prepare strategies and tactics for different causes. Details will be shared in Canvas.

The grading scale for the course is:

A 92-100%	C 72-77%
A- 90-91%	C- 70-71%
B+ 88-89%	D+ 68-69%
B 82-87%	D 62-67%
B- 80-81%	D- 60-61%
C+ 78-79%	E: Below 60%

More information on grades and grading policies is here:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Availability

I am excited to get to know you and support you in your learning journey. I welcome you to come speak with me at any time during the semester about questions or concerns you have. I have weekly office hours and am also available by appointment.

Class Attendance and Make-Up Policy

Class attendance is expected. Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog

(<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) and require appropriate documentation. Late essay response papers will not be accepted. A makeup midterm and makeup final exam will be provided for students who miss either exam due to extreme, documented circumstances. A cumulative make-up quiz will be provided at the end of the semester for any and all quizzes missed. This score will replace all missing quiz grades. Students should arrange with the instructor for makeup material, and the student will receive one week to prepare for any makeup assignment, if circumstances permit.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://gatorevals.aa.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 to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>.

Course Professionalism

The College of Journalism and Communications is a professional school, and professional decorum is expected at all times. You must conduct yourself in an honest, ethical and courteous manner with other students and me, abiding by the UF Student Conduct & Honor Codes.

You are expected to:

- Arrive on time and remain in class for its duration unless I dismiss the class early.

- Not speak when another student is speaking or the instructor is speaking
- Not use cell phones, laptops, tablets or other electronic devices, except as part of in-class assignments. All cell phones and electronic devices must be set on silent during class time.

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 (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conducthonor-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.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the 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.

Campus Resources Health and Wellness Resources U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact 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.

<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.