

**SYLLABUS**  
**PUR 3801 (SECTION 4922): PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY**

**INSTRUCTOR**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course, you will master the core elements of strategic public relations through case studies and the application of concepts and theories. I will teach this course from the perspective of a practitioner and make use of extensive real-life examples. Lessons will be relevant to the contemporary practice of public relations and communications management. This course represents an opportunity to learn the fundamental and critical functions that are part of effective communications and that will be critical to you as a public relations practitioner. We will emphasize interactivity and collaboration and classes will move in a seminar format much like the collaborations that occur in the professional world.

This course is designed to educate students in the strategic management of public relations through systematic problem-solving process based on theory and research. Through readings, lectures, exercises, handouts, and discussions, students will study in-depth the essential steps of the process: research, objectives, programming, evaluation, and stewardship. Several guest speakers will join the class to demonstrate how scholarly principles are related to the professional public relations practice.

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 solutions. Using case studies, students will analyze and evaluate actual public relations campaigns related to the various sub-functions or key aspects of public relations, such as activist engagement/management, equitable engagement, media relations, and employee relations. It is essential that you keep up with the reading schedule and come to class with the assigned reading's concepts in your memory and in your written notes.

**Student Learning Objectives**

This course will exercise and refine your ability to think critically. Each assignment and task that you complete in this course requires you to collect, analyze, and apply information to benefit your client.

As a result of this course, students will 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

- Define publics appropriate for specific campaigns and appreciate differences that affect programming
- Recognize the importance of formative and evaluative research in public relations practice
- Demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communication
- Understand how to counsel a client on strategic public relations campaign development

The course specifically supports 7 of the 12 professional values and competencies required of graduates by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (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 TEXT**

There is no single, required textbook. There will be readings assigned during the semester. All readings must be **read in advance** of the class dates for which they are assigned. Your instructor will identify these in the semester reading list and will communicate any new readings assigned in class and through Canvas.

**ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS, AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION**

Attendance, participation, and assignments for the basis for course grades. Each student will work independently to complete the required assignments. The course grade will be determined on a 100-point scale as follows:

<b>Criteria for Grading/Assignment</b>	<b>Percent of Grade</b>
Attendance and Class Participation	10%
Student Discussion Leadership	10%
Four Case Study Written Reports	60%
Final Exam	20%

**Attendance and Class Participation (10%)**

This course requires you to be present and engaged!! Attendance and class participation comprise 10 percent of your final grade. Whether online or in-person, students are expected to arrive to class on time. Class participation is determined by such efforts as discussion of assigned readings and participation in class discussions.

Arriving late or leaving early will result in the lowering of the student’s grade. There are two excused absences for this class. Beyond the first two, each unexcused absence will result in a loss of one percentage grade for the total attendance/participation grade. However, perfect attendance does not ensure that the student will receive the full 10 percent for class participation. Students must be fully present during class, contribute to discussions, and demonstrate through their comments that they have read and understood assigned readings and benefited from previous class discussions.

**Student Discussion Leadership (10%)**

Each student will conduct research, prepare a slide deck (presentation), and lead the discussion of a topic during class at some point during the semester. Students will engage the class in a brief discussion of the topic. Students will discuss their topic with the instructor at least one week prior to presenting. The topic will align to the topic to be discussed during that class session. Specific elements to cover and a grading rubric will be posted to Canvas. Details of this assignment will be discussed in class.

Knowledge of these events is critical to the successful practice of public relations. Your future clients will expect you to understand the issues and multiple perspectives cast upon them. Students are expected to read news periodicals (local, national, and international) and communication-related professional and academic journals regularly.

#### **Four Case Study Written Reports (60%)**

Students are required to develop, write, and submit four case studies throughout the semester. Students will select a current topic and critically assess key elements of strategy. The case studies will center around the public relations subtopics and involve an organization or situation that has been addressed relating to this subtopic. Students will analyze the strategy undertaken by an organization in response to a situation or issue. Instructions on the contents and requirements for the case studies will be posted to Canvas. The deadlines for each case study are noted in the Weekly Course Plan.

#### **Final Exam (20%)**

There will be one exam that will occur at the end of this course. Students will be asked to identify types of strategic approaches and think critically through situations requiring public relations strategy support. An exam review session will be held prior to the final exam.

#### **Grades**

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent</b>
A	92-100
A-	90-91
B+	87-89
B	82-86
B-	80-81
C+	77-79
C	72-76
C-	70-71
D	60-69
E	59 or less

Each assignment will be graded on a 100-point scale and weighted accordingly. Letter grades are based on the total points accumulated over the term. Students who earn a "C" or better will fulfill the PUR 3801 requirement for graduating with a degree in public relations and will not be required to retake the course. Information on current UF grading policies is provided at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

#### **Appointments**

Supporting students throughout the semester is a priority. Please contact me with questions or if you need support in thinking through assignments. I am always available before and after class and will coordinate another time as needed. I have an open-door policy to meet with my students! Please do not ever hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions or need help.

## **Speakers**

During the semester, the class will have the opportunity to discuss aspects of the public relations research with senior public relations practitioners. The purpose of inviting speakers to participate in class is to provide hands-on perspectives on role, realities, challenges, and opportunities when the research process is placed in practice. Students are encouraged to consider speaker's experience and background and develop discussion questions and topics.

## **Attendance**

Whether classes occur online or in-person, attendance is mandatory. Each student is allowed two absences for the semester. Each additional absence one will result in a reduction of the course grade by one percentage grade for each unexcused absence from your total attendance/participation grade. Students are responsible for all class work missed. They should consult with classmates, rather than the instructor, to obtain information on lectures, assignments, and other matters. Additional information concerning UF's attendance policy is provide here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#absencestext>.

## **Makeups, Late Assignments, and Extra Credit**

The practice of public relations hinges on meeting deadlines. Missing deadlines not only damages a public relations professional's credibility, but also can lead to termination of a relationship with a client or to dismissal. Thus, deadlines are treated seriously in this class. All written assignments are due by the date of the deadline, unless otherwise instructed. A student may not submit a late assignment and will receive a grade of zero for that assignment. There will be no make-up exams or extensions of deadlines. Dates have been announced in advance in the Weekly Course Plan so that students can schedule other activities around these deadlines. Exceptions will be rare and made only in cases of extraordinary, documented circumstances, as determined by the instructor. No extra credit will be given for additional work.

## **Academic Honesty**

The University of Florida is committed to the highest standards of academic and professional ethics and expects its students to adhere to those standards. Each student is bound by the academic honesty guidelines of the University and the student conduct code. The penalty for violation of academic honesty is an "E" for the course, at minimum.

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 specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Honor Code](#). 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 are expected to observe the University of Florida's policy on academic honesty in fulfilling all course requirements. The work you submit for this course must be your own. It must be original for this course. You must never use direct or paraphrased material from any source, including Web sites, without attribution. You may not submit anything that you wrote for another class, or that you wrote as a volunteer or intern. You may not submit anything that was written for any purpose other than the given assignment. Having someone else do your work or sign your name/initials on the attendance sheet is considered academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty includes the following: use of materials from another author without citation or attribution, extensive use of verbatim materials from another author with citation and attribution, and

extensive use of one's own writing from past assignments or from assignments in other, current classes (called "double dipping"). Any time you complete an assignment for this course you will clearly attribute the source of your information, including information obtained from organizations' Web sites or internal documents.

### **Intellectual Property Protection**

Lectures given in this course, including handouts and PowerPoint® slide decks, are the property of the instructor and the University of Florida. Class lectures may not be recorded in any form without prior permission from the instructor and any guest lecturers that may speak to this class. Recordings, including class notes, may not be used for commercial purposes.

### **Diversity**

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 practice. 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.

### **Course Professionalism**

The College of Journalism and Communications is a professional school and professional decorum is expected at all times. I expect you to adhere to workplace norms of collegial and respectful interaction.

It is expected that whether conducted online or in-person, the following student conduct is expected:

- Cell phones must be turned off during class.
- Photos and other recordings are prohibited unless approved in advance by the instructor.
- Reading unrelated material or talking while others are speaking is prohibited.
- Anyone violating these rules or disrupting class in other ways will be asked to leave the class session.

### **COVID-19 Practices**

We will likely have face-to-face instructional sessions to accomplish the student learning objectives of this course. In response to COVID-19, the following policies and requirements are in place to maintain your learning environment and to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions.

- You are required to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings. Following and enforcing these policies and requirements are all of our responsibility. Failure to do so will lead to a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
- This course has been assigned a physical classroom with enough capacity to maintain physical distancing (6 feet between individuals) requirements. Please utilize designated seats and maintain appropriate spacing between students. Please do not move desks or stations.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- Follow your instructor's guidance on how to enter and exit the classroom. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible when entering and exiting the classroom.
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms ([Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the

instructions on whether you are able to attend class. [Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms.](#)

- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. [Find more information in the university attendance policies.](#)

### **Format for Written Assignments**

All written work submitted for this course must be coherent, logical, and carefully edited. Writing proficiency is necessary to pass this course. Misspellings, syntax, and grammar errors as well as other writing problems are unacceptable in upper-division college writing, especially in work by public relations students. Please do not submit materials with editing marks on them; all assignments must be client ready. Specifics as to assignment format will be included in instructions provided during the semester.

### **Online Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner.](#) 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 [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.](#)

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center.](#) 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

### **Religious Observance**

Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

### **Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities**

Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up any graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.

### **Campus Resources**

*U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

*Counseling and Wellness Center:* [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

*Student Health Care Center:* Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website.](#)

*University Police Department:* [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 911 for emergencies).

*UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:* For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.](#)

**SYLLABUS – SPRING 2021**  
**PUR 3801 (SECTION 4922): PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY**  
**WEEKLY COURSE PLAN**

Week	Date	Topics	Readings from Assigned Text	Due
1	1/15/2021	Syllabus Review Introduction to the Course Key Strategy Concepts and Systems Perspective		
2	1/22/2021	Current Topics in Public Relations Comparison of Process Models Situation Analysis Introduction to ROPES Process Role of Research in Strategy Development	Review syllabus <a href="#">Constructing a Strategic Plan</a> <a href="#">Research Basis for Public Relations</a>	<u>Questions about the syllabus</u>
3	1/29/2021	Student Discussion Leadership Current Topics in Public Relations Formulating Action and Response Strategies <b>Public Relations Subtopic: Activist Engagement and Management</b> Discuss Case Study 1 assignment		
4	2/5/2021	Student Discussion Leadership Discuss Case Study 1 progress Practical Challenges to Conducting Research – When Clients Say No to Research Guest Speaker TBD	Public Relations Research for Planning and Evaluation <a href="https://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2006_Planning_Eval.pdf">https://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2006_Planning_Eval.pdf</a>	
5	2/12/2021	Student Discussion Leadership Addressing Conflict and Stakeholder Engagement 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer	Responding to Activism: An Analysis of Public Relations Strategy Influence on Publics (Werder, 2006) 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Results	<u>Case Study 1 due</u>
6	2/19/2021	Student Discussion Leadership <b>Public Relations Subtopic: Equitable Engagement</b> Guest speaker: Carmen Holshuh, Indigenous Engagement Specialist/Client Executive, British Columbia, Canada	Speaker to provide readings to FPIC and the role of effective engagement in consensus seeking	
7	2/26/2021	Student Discussion Leadership Social Media Campaigns Strategies for Public Relations and Marketing Overcoming the Competence/ Confidence Gap		<u>Case Study 2 due</u>

Week	Date	Topics	Readings from Assigned Text	Due
		<b>Public Relations Subtopic: Media Relations</b>		
8	3/5/2021	Student Discussion Leadership Programming Elements Media Relations Speaker: TBD		<u>Case Study 3 due</u>
9	3/12/2021	Student Discussion Leadership Counseling Clients about Strategy <b>Public Relations Subtopic: Employee Relations</b>		
10	3/19/2021	Student Discussion Leadership Campaign Evaluation and Stewardship/Relationship Building Counseling Clients through Evaluation		<u>Case Study 4 due</u>
11	3/26/2021	Student Discussion Leadership Strategic Approaches to Multinational Projects and Organizations Confidence/Competence Gap		
12	4/2/2021	Student Discussion Leadership Aligning Resources and Schedule Issues during Implementation Planning for the Unexpected and Uncertainty		
13	4/9/2021	Student Discussion Leadership Strategy Document Preparation Leadership and Initiative for Young Professionals Exam Review Session		
14	4/16/2021	Student Discussion Leadership Final comment on strategy		Final Exam
<b>Please submit instructor evaluations!!!!</b>				