

**Ethics and Professional Responsibility in Public Relations**  
PUR4203, Section 18915  
Summer A 2021  
Tuesday 9:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. | Thursday 9:30 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.

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Phone: (321)-537-0306  
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:15-1:15 p.m. (and by appointment)

### **Course Purposes**

- to enhance your awareness of the ethical responsibilities of public relations professionals and of the social responsibilities of corporations and other organizations
- to increase your ability to identify the moral dimensions of issues that arise in the practice of public relations
- to enhance your ability to employ reason as a tool for dealing with moral issues
- to provide you the knowledge and skills necessary to reach and justify ethical decisions
- to elicit within you a sense of personal and professional responsibility
- to teach you leadership theories and principles to enhance ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility

### **Course Expectations**

My expectations include the following: **read the assigned materials before the class meeting**, submit a weekly reaction paper, and share your reactions to the readings in our class discussions. In addition, you are expected to research a case study from the instructor's list and to give a short oral report summarizing the case and the public relations strategies used by the organization. Finally, you will be submitting a final report that discusses the case, describes the public relations strategies used in the case and recommends an ethics communication program.

### **Class Assignments**

#### **Reaction Papers (30 of 100 points)**

Students are expected to submit 5, four-page reaction papers. The first section of the paper must summarize or outline the main points of the week's readings and the second section should be your personal reaction to or interpretation of the readings.

Reaction papers are due before class each Tuesday for that week's readings. All papers must be submitted to Canvas by 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday; late papers and e-mailed papers will not be accepted unless the professor was made aware and asked for an extension prior to the deadline.

These reaction papers will be graded with the following scale: Barely Adequate = 0-2 points, Average = 2.1-3.0 points, Good = 3.1-4 points, Very Good = 4.1-5, and Excellent = 5.1-6 points. (An Average reaction paper will have an accurate summary of the readings and will respond thoughtfully to the issues raised in the readings. A Good paper (in addition to summary) will integrate the readings for that week with what you have learned previously about public relations in other classes. A Very Good paper will summarize, integrate the readings, and bring in added

information from what you are learning about public relations and ethics in this course. An Excellent paper will go beyond summary, reaction, and integration and will develop a new idea beyond what you are learning in class. Excellent papers will be rare. Cite external sources on an additional fifth page.) Please find example reaction papers in the Files section on Canvas.

### **Case Study Oral Report and Final Report (40 of 100 points)**

Each student will select a case study after consultation with Professor Vasquez. Given the condensed nature of the summer term, you are allowed to pair up with one other student if you prefer to work in teams. You will research this case and the public relations implications and, on the date selected, you will make a PowerPoint presentation on Zoom (about 20-35 minutes). This oral summary will be a brief overview of the case and the public relations strategies used in the case. (The oral report can earn you up to 10 of your possible 40 points).

Your final report (No more than 15 pages excluding title page and references) will summarize the case and your recommendations for a public relations program including description of the program and the process the company should have used to develop the program. (For this part of your assignment, you will earn up to 30 points.)

### **Discussion Leadership (10 of 100 points)**

Each week students will be assigned to take a class leadership role for the class's discussion of the readings (on Tuesday unless otherwise noted in the syllabus). You have complete freedom in how you elect to approach that leadership role. Discussion leadership presentations should be between 30 and 45 minutes in length per chapter.

The following are some of the ways students have elected to do this in previous classes:

- a) Summarize own reaction paper (or read it in its entirety) and then direct discussion around paper
- b) Prepare questions to generate thought-provoking discussions
- c) Lecture on the topic and bring additional readings or other materials to the lecture,
- d) Take a critical position on the authors' perspectives and bring evidence as to why you think an author is wrong
- e) Show the class current event examples that illustrate the week's readings.

There is no one "right" way to lead; you will be evaluated in terms of how creative you were and how much impact your leadership had on the breadth and depth of the class discussion. Think about how you can get people to talk.

### **Attendance and Active Participation (20 of 100 points)**

In addition to taking a leadership role in your assigned week, you will be graded on how thoughtfully and respectfully you take part in class discussions. I will be making this summary judgment--not on how often you talk--but on the quality of that contribution.

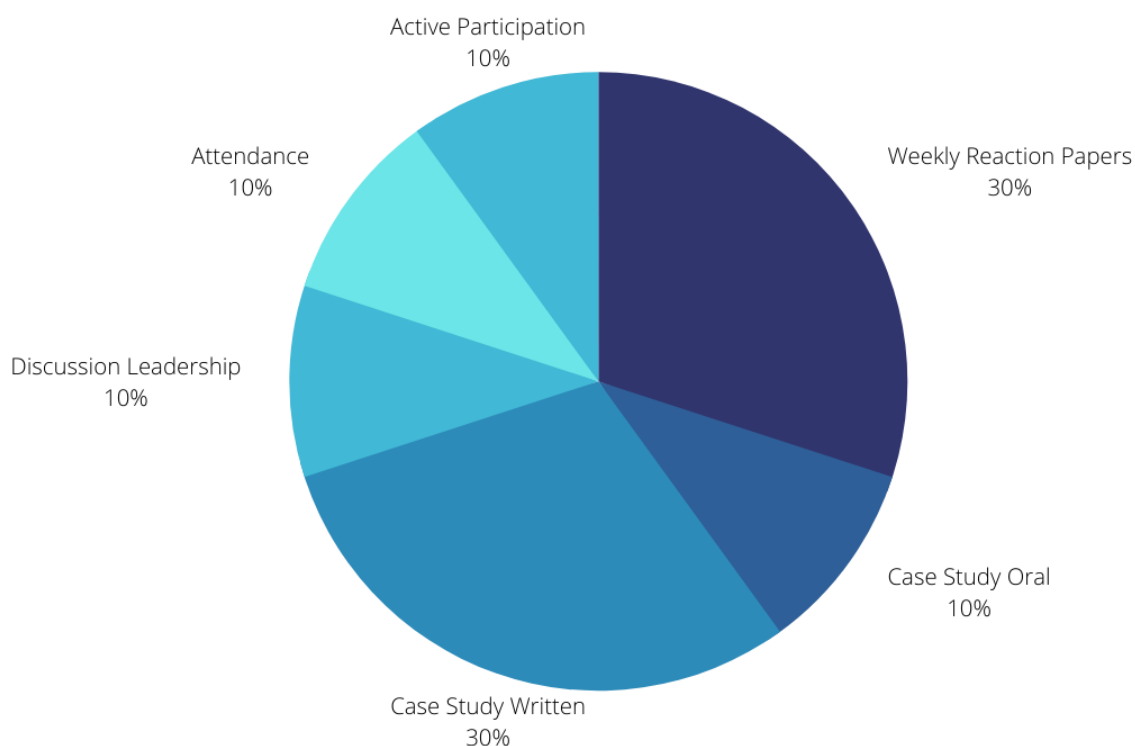
Attendance counts for 10% of your grade and attendance is taken daily. You are expected to attend class. There is **one** non-penalized absence for this class. For each recorded absence—beyond the first one—you will lose 10% of your attendance grade. The way this works is: if you are absent three times, then you will only earn a 90% for attendance, four absences and you earn 80% and so forth.

When you are going to be absent from class, you must let me know by e-mail or phone before the class meets. Failure to do so or habitually arriving late to class will lose you additional attendance points.

### Deadlines

I will not accept late reaction papers. Please let me know ahead of time if you have a scheduling conflict for your discussion leader and oral case study report assignments and make your own arrangements to change dates with someone else. Make sure you tell me about the agreed upon change so I can update the syllabus for the remainder of the term.

### GRADING



### Grading Scale

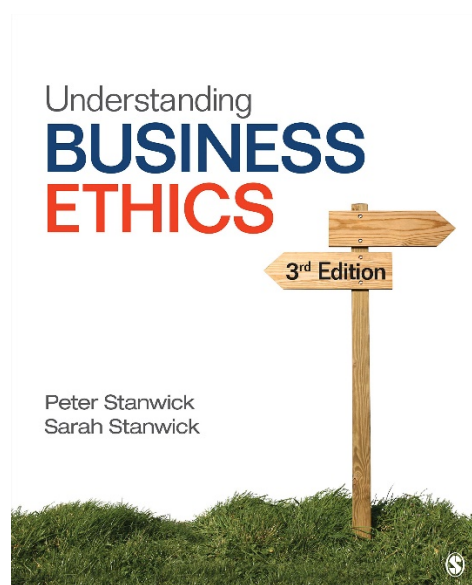
<b>A</b>	<b>94-100</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90-93</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>87-89</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>84-87</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>80-83</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>77-79</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>74-76</b>
<b>C-</b>	<b>70-74</b>
<b>D+</b>	<b>67-69</b>

D	64-66
D_	61-63
E	< 63

## Cell Phones and Other Technology

Cell phones must be turned to mute unless we have a class assignment that requires the use of these technologies. (If your cell phone rings during class, expect to lose participation points.) Ensure your messaging is not open on your laptop during class time, as this disrupts the flow of class if you are unmuted.

## Required Readings



Understanding Business Ethics,  
Peter Stanwick and Susan Stanwick,  
Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA 2016,  
3rd Ed.

## Useful Web Sites:

**Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship:** <http://www.bcccc.net/>

**Business Ethics: The Magazine of Corporate Responsibility:** <http://www.business-ethics.com/>

**Business for Social Responsibility:** <http://www.bsr.org/index.cfm>

**Compliance Week Articles:**

<http://www.complianceweek.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Article.AdvancedSearchResults>

**CSRwire: CSR news and press releases:** <http://www.csrwire.com>

**Ethical Corporation Online:** <http://www.ethicalcorp.com>

**Global Reporting Initiative:** <http://www.globalreporting.org/Home>

**The Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability:**

<http://www.accountability21.net/default.aspx?id=54>

**White House—President's Ten-Point Plan:**

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/corporateresponsibility/index2.html>

**World Bank--Business Ethics and Corporate Accountability: The Search for Standards:**

[http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/corpgov/csr/pdf/bizethics\\_econference.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/corpgov/csr/pdf/bizethics_econference.pdf)

**World Business Council for Sustainable Development:** <http://www.wbcsd.org/>

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Readings</b>	<b>Reaction Paper Due Date and Reaction Sharers (Tuesdays)</b>	<b>Case Reports (On Thursdays)</b>
<b>WEEK 1</b> <i>May 11, 13</i>	<i>Introduction to Social Responsibility &amp; Ethics, Frameworks</i>  <i>Business Ethics Today</i>	Ch. 1 The Foundation for Ethical Thought (pp. 1-18)  Ch. 2 The Evolving Complexities of Business Ethics (pp. 19-35).		<b>Have your case study selected by Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup>- First come, first serve. Fill out Case Study Sign Up Page and Oral Presentation Time on Canvas.</b>
<b>WEEK 2</b> <i>May 18, 20</i>	<i>Stakeholders, Publics and CSR</i>  <i>Leadership and Ethics</i>	Ch. 3 CSR Stakeholders and Corporate Social Responsibility (pp. 36-58)  Ch. 5 Ethical Leadership and Corporate Governance, (pp. 79-94)	<b>Discussion Leaders:</b> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i>	<b>Oral Presentation of case study:</b>
<b>WEEK 3</b> <i>May 25, 27</i>	<i>Strategic Planning and Communication</i>  <i>Ethical Decision Making</i>	Ch. 6 Strategic Planning, Corporate Culture and Corporate Compliance (pp. 95-113)  Ch. 7 Decision Making and Human Resources (pp. 114-132)	<b>Discussion Leaders:</b> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i>	<b>Oral Presentation:</b>  <b><i>OPTIONAL CASE REPORT DRAFT DUE May 27<sup>th</sup></i></b>
<b>WEEK 4</b> <i>June 1, 3</i>	<i>Environment and Sustainability</i>  <i>New Technologies and Methods</i>	Ch. 8, Ethics, and the Environment (pp. 150-168)  Ch. 9, Ethics, and Information Technology (pp. 154-174)	<b>Discussion Leaders:</b> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i>	<b>Oral Presentation:</b>
<b>WEEK 5</b> <i>June 8, 10</i>	<i>Communications Functions and Ethics</i>  <i>Global Issues</i>	Ch. 10, Marketing and Advertising (pp. 174-193)  Ch. 11, Ethical Issues in the Developing World, (pp. 194-212)	<b>Discussion Leaders:</b> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i>	<b>Oral Presentation:</b>

Week	Topic	Required Readings	Reaction Paper Due Date and Reaction Sharers (Tuesdays)	Case Reports (On Thursdays)
<b>WEEK 6</b> <b>June 15,</b> <b>17</b>	<i>Developing Ethical Programs</i>  <i>Evaluation and Wrap Up</i>	Ch. 12, Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines (pp. 213-232)  Ch. 13, Evaluating Corporate Ethics (pp. 233-256)	<b>Discussion Leaders:</b> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i> <i>Student Name</i>	<b>Oral Presentation:</b>  <b>FINAL CASE REPORT</b> <b>DUE 11:59 p.m., June 17th</b>

### REQUIRED UNIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENTS FOR ALL COURSE SYLLABI

“Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.”

#### **6Cl-4.017 Student Affairs: Academic Honesty Guidelines**

“All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines which have been accepted by the University. 1) Each student is required to subscribe to the Guidelines upon registration each semester by signing the following pledge which is contained on the "Course Request Registration Form": I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the University. (2) The conduct set forth hereinafter constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines. Those adjudged to have committed such conduct shall be subject to the sanctions provided in 6Cl-4.016. (a) Cheating -- the improper taking or tendering of any information or material which shall be used to determine academic credit. Taking of information includes, but is not limited to, copying graded homework assignments from another student; working together with other individual(s) on a take-home test or homework when not specifically permitted by the teacher; looking or attempting to look at another student's paper during an examination; looking or attempting to look at text or notes during an examination when not permitted. Tendering of information includes, but is not limited to, giving your work to another student to be used or copied; giving someone answers to exam questions either when the exam is being given or after having taken an exam; giving or selling a term paper or other written materials to another student; sharing information on a graded assignment.

*Plagiarism:* The attempt to represent the work of another as the product of one's own thought, whether the other's work is published or unpublished, or simply the work of a fellow student. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, quoting oral or written materials without citation on an exam, term paper, homework, or other written materials or oral presentations for an academic requirement; submitting a paper which was purchased from a term paper service as your own work; submitting anyone else's paper as your own work.

*Bribery:* The offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting of any materials, items, or services of value to gain academic advantage for yourself or another.

*Misrepresentation:* Any act or omission with intent to deceive a teacher for academic advantage. Misrepresentation includes using computer programs generated by another and handing it in as your own work unless expressly allowed by the teacher; lying to a teacher to increase your grade; lying or misrepresenting facts when confronted with an allegation of academic dishonesty.

*Conspiracy:* The planning or acting with one or more persons to commit any form of academic dishonesty to gain academic advantage for yourself or another.

*Fabrication:* The use of invented or fabricated information, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive for academic or professional advantage.

### **College of Journalism and Communications Objectives**

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- 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
- show 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

### **Class Norms**

This is an ethics class, and it is important we all understand the norms for the class:

#### **Respect for Diversity**

The diversity: gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, disability, age, religion, culture, and political perspective you bring to this class will be respected. Our mutual respect for our differences and our willingness to share our differences is what makes this class such a rewarding experience. Please let me know if your religious events overlap with our class meetings so we can accommodate you.

#### **Our Discussions**

We will talk about things in this class that are difficult topics. Sometimes you may be uncomfortable with something another says. It is ok to express that discomfort but do so with respect for others in the class who believe differently. I am going to encourage disagreement but with your help I will work to ensure that we are empathetic and polite to one another. We will be examining and

assessing basic values and assumptions and this skill will be important to being authentic. Learning how to disagree without being disagreeable will be important to your success in your profession.

### **How We Address One Another**

One of the ways we show respect for others is to address them with their personal identity. Everyone will have the opportunity to share the name they want to be called, as well as the pronouns they would like us to use. I will try my best to address you as you desire, and I hope you will do that for others. Please call me Taylor, Ms. Vasquez, or Professor Vasquez. My pronouns are she/her/hers.