

Ethics and Professional Responsibility – PUR 4203

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Office hours: Thursdays, 3pm-5pm

Meeting times via Zoom: T|10:40-11:30 am R|10:40-12:35 pm

Zoom class link:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/93242874161?pwd=Rm1tbWZqV2ovd0RlVUlURkczZVJKQT09>

Meeting ID: 932 4287 4161

Passcode: 797352

Credits: 3

This course will provide an understanding of the role of ethics in public relations, both in historical and current perspective. Based on a number of real life scenarios, we will explore the history of ethics and PR, ethical dilemmas for communicators, the business relevance of ethics, ethics and leadership, and the interesting evolving dynamic between ethics and technology.

The growing lack of trust in institutions has moved ethical considerations of public relations to center stage. Now more than ever, it is critical that we understand the possibilities and responsibilities for professional communicators.

Course Goals:

- To elicit within you a sense of personal and professional responsibility as a future public relations professional
- To increase your ability to identify the moral dimensions of issues that arise in the practice of public relations, and your understanding of how to deal with them transparently, quickly and well to preserve your organization's name and reputation
- To enhance your ability to employ reason, logic, empathy and common sense as tools for dealing with moral issues
- To provide you the knowledge and skills necessary to quickly and professionally reach and justify ethical decisions, often involving many different audiences whose main goals are different from your own and from each other

Course Expectations

This class requires your full engagement. Please process the provided material and give your input Regular, active contributions make up a large part of your final grade.

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This course is outcomes-based, and you will be evaluated primarily on your ability to transfer the theory and knowledge shared in class into practical, workable ideas and solutions. It is essential that you keep up with the assignments and complete all weekly activities in a timely manner. Not all of the materials that you read will be discussed or explained in the lectures, therefore, if you need further explanations or clarifications please reach out to me as soon as possible.

Course Content

Course content will usually be published 1 week in advance. Each week you will be notified of your assignments for that week. You should come to class each week prepared to justify/defend your own perspectives about ethics situations.

Please be aware that while it is important that you absorb and process the provided material, learn about background and history, models and frameworks, etc. I am mainly interested in your own perspective of what you are hearing and learning. Put it in context with your own experience, and in discussions, express your own thoughts, make your own voice heard (rather than just repeat the learned material).

Class Assignments

In-Class Participation: 30%

You are expected to participate in the weekly discussions in both small group assignments and with the entire class. In addition to taking a leadership role in your assigned week, you will be graded on how thoughtfully you participate in class discussions.

Class Leadership: 25%

Each week two-three students will be assigned to take a class leadership role for the class discussion of the readings. You have complete freedom in how you elect to approach that leadership role.

The following are some suggestions on how to lead the class: a) Prepare questions to generate thought-provoking discussions, b) Lecture on the topic and bring additional readings or other materials to the lecture, c) Take a critical position on the authors' perspectives and bring evidence as to why you think an author is wrong, and/or d) Show the class current event examples that illustrate the week's topic and share your insights.

Attendance: 20%

Attendance counts for 20% of your grade and attendance is taken each class. You are expected to attend class. There are two non-penalized absences for this class.

Team Assignment: 25%

Each team will be charged with creating a Code of Ethics. This team assignment will provide an opportunity to reflect on what you have learned about ethics for communicators. Details will be distributed soon.

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The grading scale for the course is:

A 92-100%	C+78-79.99%
A 90-91.99%	C
B+ 88-89.99%	C-
B 82-87.99%	D+ 68-69.99%
B- 80-81.99%	D 62-67.99%
	D- 60-61.99%
	E below 60.99%

Follows current UF policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

Availability

Please feel free to speak with me during the semester about any questions or concerns you have during my office hours or by appointment. You can also reach me by email and I'll do my best to get back to you within 24 hours.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

I'm committed to creating an environment of inclusion which respects and affirms the fundamental dignity, value, and distinctiveness of all individuals and their perspectives. My teaching will reflect the understanding of the complexity of identity and the increasing mutuality of our global community. I believe it is part of my responsibility to help promote and maintain a community of compassion, embracing the rich depths of diversity, while facilitating opportunities for equity and inclusion.

Course Professionalism

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Carefully consider how you participate and the assignments you submit. You can use humor and demonstrate creativity, but think ahead to how it will reflect on you. Use your best professional judgment.

Projects should not contain nudity, profanity, illegal activities or situations that would put you or others in danger. Students are expected to arrive on time via Zoom, not leave early, and wait for the class to end before signing off. Cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used during class. In the event of an emergency, notify me at the start of class. Laptops may be used for assignments or as a note-taking device. Surfing the Internet, checking or sending email or texts, playing games, and other online activities not related to class are strictly prohibited.

Online Course Administration — e-Learning in Canvas

<http://elearning.ufl.edu/> will be used to administer the course communication, materials, and grades.

Class Calendar and Deadlines

Week	In Class and Homework Topics/Assignments
Week 1: August 24 & August 26	Introduction & Class Overview

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	<p>Understanding ethics for communications</p> <p>Homework: Review the PRSA Code of Ethics and the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management Code of Ethics</p>
<p>Week 2: September 2</p>	<p>Analyzing the PRSA Code of Ethics and the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management Code of Ethics</p> <p>Homework: Read Neill, M. S., & Weaver, N. (2017). Silent & unprepared: Most millennial practitioners have not embraced role as ethical conscience. Public Relations Review, 43, 337 - 344.</p>
<p>Week 3: September 9</p>	<p>Ethics decision-making framework</p> <p>Homework: Review the following: Bell Pottinger, a UK agency hired to “stir up racial tensions” by spreading disinformation that helped their client in South Africa.</p> <p>Cambridge Analytica scandal: Facebook hired a Washington PR firm that used “opposition research” common in political campaigns, to dig up and publish or place dirt on rivals, in order to whitewash its own reputation.</p> <p>PR Consulting creates fake newsite: Water district orders PR consultant to halt use of News Hawks site</p> <p>IPR Webinar: Emerging Ethical Decisions in Public Relations</p> <p>The Ethics Guide to Artificial Intelligence in PR</p>
<p>Week 4: September 16</p>	<p>NO CLASS You can use this time to meet with your team to discuss your final presentation.</p>
<p>Week 5: September 23</p>	<p>Guest Speaker: TBA</p> <p>Fake news, privacy, social media and AI</p>
<p>Week 6: September 30</p>	<p>Guest Speaker: TBA Class Topic (continued): Fake news, social media and AI</p> <p>Homework: Read Ryan Holiday, Media Manipulator</p>

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	Papa Johns Ethical Dilemma
Week 7: October 7	What type of PR professionals will you be? Guest speaker: TBA
Week 8: October 14	Group exercise Class Leadership Assignments (2nd hour)
Week 9: October 21	Guest speaker: TBA
Week 10: October 28	Group exercise Ethics and diversity, equity and inclusion Class Leadership Assignments (2nd hour)
Week 11: November 4	Threats and opportunities Class Leadership Assignments (2nd hour)
Week 12: November 11	Class Leadership Assignments (2nd hour)
Week 13 November 18	Team Presentations
Week 14: November 25	NO CLASS
Week 15: November 30 and December 2	Team Presentations
Week 16: December 7 and December 9	Team Presentations

Optional Books

Understanding Business Ethics, Peter Stanwick and Susan Stanwick, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2016, 3rd Ed. (UBE)
 Legal and Ethical Considerations for Public Relations, Karla K. Gower, Waveland Press, 2018, 3rd Ed. (LECPR)

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, 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.

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. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.ua.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 ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida

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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 (sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-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 TA in this class.

Campus Resources

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

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit counseling.ufl.edu/ 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 shcc.ufl.edu/.

University Police Department: Visit police.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 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; ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center.

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.career.ufl.edu/.

Library Support: cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. teachingcenter.ufl.edu/

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/

Student Complaints On-Campus: sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-codestudent-conduct-code/