

PUR4932 – MEDIA RELATIONS – Spring 2022

31281 & 31559 (UFO)
Wednesdays, 12:50 - 1:40 p.m. on Zoom
Prerequisite: PUR3000 with a C or better

Instructor: Kristen Mondshein
Email: mondsheink@ufl.edu
Virtual Office Hours: By Appointment
Phone: 305-877-3293

Required Texts

Gini Dietrich (2014). *Spin Sucks: Communication and Reputation Management in the Digital Age*. Que Publishing.
<https://www.amazon.com/Spin-Sucks-Communication-Reputation-Management/dp/078974886X>

Additional Readings as Assigned

Students will be expected to be regular readers of free updates from *PRWeek Daily Breakfast Briefing*. PRWeek is accessible to UF students through the UF George A. Smathers Libraries online database system. Additional readings may be assigned over the semester. 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 to be called on in class to discuss the assigned readings.

Course Description

The purpose of Media Relations is to keep you up to speed with the ever-evolving need for PR practitioners to be expert storytellers and develop and maintain strong relationships with journalists. This course will teach the critical fundamentals keeping in mind that the rapport between a publicist and a reporter is a key factor in successfully branding your clients and being a trusted source for news.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will:

- Develop an understanding of what defines a productive and successful relationship between a publicist and a journalist
- Learn about the changing role of PR professionals as it relates to working with press across various mediums
- Learn the basics of media pitching and press release writing
- Develop a deeper understanding of the current media landscape

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:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work

Key Course Policies

Late or Missed Work:

Deadlines for each assignment will be given and students are expected to meet them. Late assignments will automatically lose a full letter grade for each week it is late (e.g. B to a C). Some consideration, however, might be given (at the discretion of the instructor) if there are extenuating circumstances such as prolonged hospitalization, family death, or extended individual sickness; however, you need to notify me before the deadline is missed, not after the fact.

Attendance:

This course focuses on class participation and group discussion. Your attendance is an important aspect of this course. Excessive absences will harm your grade. You are responsible for notifying me 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 go [here](#).

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](#) 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 me.

I will document and report all honor code violations, including cheating and plagiarism. The minimum penalty for a violation of the honor code is a zero on the assignment or exam but may be higher depending on the severity of the violation.

Students Requiring Accommodations:

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.

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations [here](#). 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 [here](#).

Grading and Assignments

Grading:

I will be as fair and impartial as is humanly possible in the grading process. Each of you will be graded on the same criteria. Because of this, no extra work or special assignments will be given. Normally, by the time I return your graded assignment, I have looked at each person's work at least several times and feel comfortable with the grade assigned to it. Grades are earned; they are not gifts. Grades are awarded on the basis of quality, not the amount of time expended. I don't round up (e.g., if you get 89.9 points, you earn a B+ not an A-). I will keep grades posted on Canvas and it is your responsibility to check on your progress throughout the semester. Grade components for the class are as follows:

Attendance and Active Participation: 30%

Attendance and active participation are mandatory. Students will be expected to participate in various interactive exercises and be fully engaged unless cleared in advance with the professor. Each absence after the drop/add period will result in a reduction to your grade for attendance. After due warning, the professor may prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a lower or failing grade for excessive absences (please note that more than two unexcused absences during the semester will be considered "excessive absences".) You are responsible for notifying the professor in advance of the cause of your absence when possible and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider. For further information on attendance policy, please go [here](#).

Individual Assignment: 25%

Individual assignments will provide an opportunity for you to explore various aspects of the media relations area of Public Relations. These will include:

- Brief reports on selected topics (selected in consultation with professor)
- A brief precis on elements of assigned readings

Quizzes: 45%

Quizzes will be designed to test the students' understanding of key concepts of corporate communication essentials addressed in the course textbook and/or in supplemental readings, and those discussed in class by the professor and/or guest lecturers.

Grading follows current [UF grading policies](#). *The grading scale for the course is as follows:*

A	94.0 – 100%	C	74.0 – 76.99%
A-	90.0 – 93.99%	C-	70.0 – 73.99%
B+	87.0 – 89.99%	D+	67.0 – 69.99%
B	84.0 – 86.99%	D	64.0 – 66.99%
B-	80.0 – 83.99%	D-	60.0 – 63.99%
C+	77.0 – 79.99%	E	below 60%

Tentative Course Schedule*

Week of Jan. 3	Course overview - review syllabus, discuss class goals, answer student questions
Week of Jan. 10	Read Spin Sucks Key Idea #1: In an overpopulated media landscape, only stand-out content with a clear vision will attract an audience. Class discussion.
Week of Jan. 17	(Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Monday 1/17 - NO CLASSES) Read Spin Sucks Key Idea #2: Connecting with people and building trust are crucial to good PR in the internet age. Class discussion.
Week of Jan. 24	Read Spin Sucks Key Idea #3: A “white hat” search engine strategy built around high-quality content beats the “black hat” techniques. Class discussion.
Week of Jan. 31	Quiz #1
Week of Feb. 7	Assignment #1
Week of Feb. 14	Spin Sucks Key Idea #4: Start the four-step process of addressing criticism by evaluating the validity of the complaint and its source. Class discussion.
Week of Feb. 21	Read Spin Sucks Key Idea #5: The four-step process of addressing criticism ends with strategizing your responses and finding solutions for problems. Class discussion.
Week of Feb. 28	Read Spin Sucks Key Idea #6: It’s easy to manipulate the media, but it’s a waste of time. Class discussion.
Week of March 7	SPRING BREAK
Week of March 14	Quiz #2
Week of March 21	Assignment #2
Week of March 28	Read Spin Sucks Key Idea #7: Either fight content thieves or find a way to use the stolen content to your advantage. Class discussion.
Week of April 4	Read Spin Sucks Key Idea #8: Although social media allows you to tap your customers to build a brand, this has some downsides. Class discussion.

Week of April 11	Read Spin Sucks Key Idea #9: Customer experience and real-time interaction are today's two biggest marketing themes. Class discussion.
Week of April 18	Quiz #3 Assignment #3

Standard UF Policy Information and Links

Software Use:

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy:

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please go [here](#).

In-Class Recording:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited

to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Policy on Course Syllabi 3 UF, Academic Affairs, July 28th, 2021 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

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 [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](#).

Academic Resources:

University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) 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; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

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.

Library Support: 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 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

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

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the [Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).