

PUR 4243 Financial PR Industry Perspectives

Instructor: Bridget Braxton

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Tuesdays, 6:15 – 7:05 p.m.

Virtual office hours: by appointment

Required Texts

There are no required textbooks for this class. Reading assignments or videos will be provided through Canvas. Some requirements are listed below, but I may assign additional assignments through Canvas each week.

Course description

Financial Services Public Relations

The purpose of Industry Perspectives is to provide insight into a particular industry topic area or focus within public relations. This course will focus on the significant seat public relations professionals can fill in the C-suite with other executives to manage the corporate reputations of financial services firms. This class will also examine and evaluate the public relations strategies of companies that have lost trust with stakeholders due to poor business models, unforced errors, or unforeseen crises. Class participants will have the opportunity to offer recommendations to rebuild trust based on expertise from world-class professionals representing a broad spectrum of the financial services industry.

Upon completing this course, students will:

- Understand the broad financial services eco-system.
- Gain a foundational understanding of financial communications including quarterly earnings.
- Learn the role of industry regulation/government relations.
- Gain knowledge of the variety of important functions necessary for a successful PR effort.
- Learn how to build trust/serve as a trusted advisor with CEOs/C-level execs in financial services.
- Identify and develop strategies for key stakeholders.
- Learn how to craft tactical deliverables for financial services audiences e.g., media pitches, social media posts, employee talking points, etc.
- Apply-critical thinking skills related to recent crises in financial services.

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 day 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 will be established based upon the following:

Attendance and Active Participation: 25%

Attendance and active participation are mandatory. Students are expected to be engaged and actively participate in class discussions, Q&A with professionals and interactive exercises, unless cleared in advance with the professor.

I’ve invited a series of leading industry executives and experts to classes throughout the semester and recommend that you make it a practice to look them up on LinkedIn prior to the class to better inform your participation. Additionally, many classes have reading assignments or short videos that will enrich our discussion and should be completed prior to class.

Each absence after the drop/add period will result in reduction in the 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: 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 consult: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Individual Assignments: 25%

Individual assignments will provide an opportunity for you to gain “real-world” experience and explore various aspects of a Financial Services career in Public Relations.

Final project: Case study: 50%

-Applying a public relations lens, develop a case study highlighting a business challenge or crisis in financial services. I will give you the opportunity to select from a few companies that have recently made headlines related to their business practices. Your case study will need to cover the following parts:

I. Background

II. Description of business failure

III. Describe how financials were impacted

IV. Describe impact/reaction from key audiences

-Customers

-Employees

-Regulators/Congress

-Media/Social media coverage (include links)

-Non-profits or NGOs

V. Evaluate Company’s initial PR response

VI. Provide your PR recommendation for the company overall and specific tactics for three priority audiences

* Include sources for your work (can be links to videos, articles, books, etc.)

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

A 94.0-100%

A- 90.0-93.99%

B+ 87.0-89.99%

B 84.0-86.99%

B- 80.0-83.99%

C+ 77.0-79.99%

C 74.0-76.99%

C- 70-73.99%

D+ 67.0-69.99%

D 64.0-66.99%

D- 60.0-63.99%

E below 60%

Tentative Course Schedule*

Date	Topic	Reading/Viewing Assignments
Week 1: August 29	Course Overview/Intro to Financial Services	What Companies Are in the Financial Services Sector?
Week 2: September 5	Financial Services: Quarterly Earnings Example: Apple Inc. Assignment #1: research financials representing your favorite public company	Stocks: What They Are, Main Types, How They Differ from Bonds Earnings Per Share (EPS): What it Means, and How to Calculate It Guide to Company Earnings Earnings Video Efficiency Ratio Balance Sheet

	(present findings September 12)	
Week 3: September 12	Class discussions: present financials for your favorite company (no assignment)	Financial Regulators: Who They Are and What They Do How to read a financial statement Financial statements
Week 4: September 19	Industry Perspective: Government Relations Financial Services Goes to Washington Guest speaker: TBD Assignment #2: after watching the videos, write a couple of paragraphs about the bank CEO's communications style during the hearings. Who communicated effectively? Who communicated less effectively? (due September 26)	What Was The Financial Crises of 2008? Dodd-Frank Act What it Does, Major Components, criticisms US Senate Banking Committee US House Financial Services Committee Banking CEOs questioned by House Financial Services Committees Senator Cramer questions bank CEOs
Week 5: September 26	Industry Perspective: CEO Communication & Employee Communications in Financial Services Guest speaker: Emily Bauman, Director, North America Communications, Bacardi	linkedin.com/in/emilyabauman

	<p>Assignment#3: write talking points from the CEO to employees</p> <p>(due October 3)</p>	
<p>Week 6: October 3</p>	<p>Industry Perspective: Private Company Perspective</p> <p>Guest speaker: Huw Gilbert, SVP, Head of Associate Communications</p> <p>Assignment#4: write a short reflection. As a PR professional, would you rather represent a public or private company in financial services?</p> <p>(due October 10)</p>	<p>linkedin.com/in/huw-gilbert-82687a4</p>
<p>Week 7: October 10</p>	<p>Industry Perspective: A CCOs Perspective in Financial Services</p> <p>Guest speaker: Oscar Suris, CCO, Duke Energy</p> <p>No assignment</p>	<p>linkedin.com/in/oscarsuris</p>
<p>Week 8: October 17</p>	<p>Industry Perspective: Media Relations in Financial Services</p> <p>Guest speaker: Mary Eshet, Former EVP, Wells Fargo, Consumer Banking Communications</p>	<p>linkedin.com/in/mary-eshet-501bb1a</p>

	<p>Assignment #5: draft a one-paragraph email pitch to a finance reporter</p> <p>(due October 24)</p>	
<p>Week 9: October 24</p>	<p>Industry Perspective: Banking to the military Guest speaker: Jason Mcree, Executive Leader, Merck</p> <p>Assignment #6: write a short reflection. What career conversation in financial services has interested you the most so far? Why? Due October 31</p>	<p>linkedin.com/in/jason-mccree-88a9b044</p>
<p>Week 10: October 31</p>	<p>No class</p>	
<p>Week 11: November 7</p>	<p>Industry Perspective: Community relations; outreach to multicultural communities Guest speaker: Gaby Lambertus, AVP, Wells Fargo</p> <p>Assignment #7: draft a social media post for X (formerly known as Twitter) highlighting a joint initiative with a bank and a non-profit (due November 14)</p>	<p>linkedin.com/in/gabriela-lambertus-3b755a20</p>

Week 12: November 14	Wells Fargo: Unauthorized Accounts No assignment	Board Report News Release LA Times Board Report Article USA Today Article 4 Execs Fired For Cause The Wells Fargo Cross Selling Scandal Wells Fargo Sales Culture Senator Warren Questions John Stumpf
Week 13: November 21	No class	
Week 14: November 28	Equifax: Stolen Identities Case studies due	Equifax turned its hack into a PR catastrophe Senator Warren Questions Equifax Equifax to pay \$700 million for massive data breach
Week 15: December 5	Present case study (select parts)	No reading/viewing assignments

* Dates may shift based on availability

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.

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](#).

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](#).

Academic Resources:

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](#).