



Principles of Public Relations

Spring - 2024
Asynchronous Online

Professor: Alexandra Matthews

Office: Virtual

Email: amatthews@ufl.edu

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/alexandreamatthews/>

Office Hours: Via Zoom by appointment

*This syllabus is subject to change as the professor deems appropriate and necessary.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In Principles of Public Relations, you will learn about the theory and practice of public relations, how public relations operates in organizations, its impact on publics, and its functions in society. You will study the professional development of the field; concepts, issues, and principles in the practice; and models and theories guiding the practice. You will apply course materials to public relations program planning and management by working in a group on a strategic planning project.

For those planning public relations careers, this course provides a foundation for the public relations major. The course also meets the needs of those planning other professional and managerial careers that can benefit from an understanding of public relations concepts and management practices.

COURSE FORMAT

This course will include only asynchronous components. Each week you will have readings, posted lectures to watch/listen to, and assignments. All of this comes together in your three exams and the large project due at the end of the semester. You must keep up with the readings to fully understand issues and intelligently complete your assignments and exams. It is in your best interest to fully engage yourself because what you learn will help you make important decisions in the future.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students should:

- Have gained a historical perspective of the public relations discipline and profession.

- Understand the basic theories, principles, concepts and practices relevant to public relations.
- Understand key processes involved in public relations, including goal, research, planning, strategy, implementation, and evaluation.
- Gained an international perspective of public relations.
- Gained insights into the different types of public relations industries and careers.
- Demonstrated proficiency in written and oral communications.

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;
 - demonstrate 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.

REQUIRED READING

Tom Kelleher, Public Relations, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2020)

Students are expected to regularly read industry news, examples include: [PRWeek](#), [The Holmes Report](#), [IPR Research Letter](#), and [PR News](#).

*Supplemental readings will be made available to you through the course website.

COURSE POLICIES

INSTRUCTOR INTERACTION

I am happy to meet with students by appointment on Zoom. The best way to reach me is by e-mail. I will try to send a response as soon as possible but it may take up to 48 hours to get a reply. If I haven't responded within that timeframe, please re-send your email. If you are struggling with the course material, exams, having problems with members of your group, etc., it is imperative that you talk to me as soon as you think you're having a problem. Come talk to me *before* you must hand in the assignment.

ASSIGNMENT PROFESSIONALISM

Everything submitted for this course, including emails with the professor, should be written with a level of professionalism that would be expected by an employer. If you need assistance with professional writing skills, grammar, APA formatting, or other writing needs please visit the campus writing center for help. If assignments are submitted with writing mistakes it will harm your grade and I may direct you to the writing center. The center can be reached at Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 352-846-1138.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

Please be considerate of the ideas of others, and treat everyone in class with kindness, tolerance, and respect, regardless of your own personal views.

LATE OR MISSED WORK

Students are expected to meet deadlines just as professionals in the workplace are. Late assignments for this course **will not be accepted**. 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. Please do not submit Pages documents. Submit assignments preferably as Word documents or you may also submit them as PDFs.

ATTENDANCE

This is an asynchronous class so we will not have an attendance requirement, but staying on top of the weekly materials and assignments is essential because the semester will go fast!

EMAIL POLICY

As a state employee, my email is considered a public record. Therefore, it can be requested via an open-records request. Because emails are considered public records, federal privacy laws prevent me from discussing grades or other personal matters via email. As a result, you will need to set up a meeting with me to discuss grades. While you are welcome to email me, I may

indicate that you need a Zoom meeting depending on the complexity of the issue. In addition, please be aware that email is considered formal communication, which means you should practice professionalism. Only send things via email that you would say to another person in a face-to-face setting.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All work submitted for this course must adhere to the university's honor code as follows: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student 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."

All work submitted for this course must be original and not previously submitted for any other course. Plagiarism or having another student complete an assignment for you will not be tolerated and will be considered academic dishonesty. All cases relating to such behavior will result in a failing grade or more severe measures may need to be taken in compliance with university guidelines.

You may review the Student Conduct & Honor Codes here:
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>.

ACCOMODATIONS

Students requesting classroom accommodation should first register with the Dean of Students Office's Disability Resource Center. The Dean of Students Office will provide an accommodation letter that must be presented to me when requesting accommodation. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. To contact the Disability Resource Center, visit www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/ or call 352-392-8565. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure 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 at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. 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 at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

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 see: <http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html>

COURSE RECORDING POLICY

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 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

STUDENT RESOURCES

U Matter, We Care

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc> and 352-392-1575; and the University Police Department: 352-392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 352-392-1161.

University Police Department

352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Career Resource Center

Reitz Union, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://www.crc.ufl.edu/>

Library Support

<http://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 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio

302 Tigert Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Student Complaints

Campus: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf

On-Line Students Complaints

<http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>

ASSIGNMENTS

Grading Policy

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

| | |
|-----------|-------------|
| A 93-100% | C 72-77% |
| A- 90-92% | C- 70-71% |
| B+ 88-89% | D+ 68-69% |
| B 82-87% | D 62-67% |
| B- 80-81% | D- 60-61% |
| C+ 78-79% | E below 60% |

Each part of the course will count toward the final letter grade as follows:

Exams: 60%

Exam 1: 20%

Exam 2: 20%

Exam 3: 20%

Assignments: 20%

Assignment 1: 100 points

Assignment 2: 100 points

Assignment 3: 100 points

Assignment 4: 100 points

Assignment 5: 100 points

Public Relations Report: 20%**Exams: 60%**

The exams will cover the modules listed. Each exam will be 50 multiple-choice questions. Exams are only open during a 24-hour window that starts at 12:01 am on the day it is due and will close at 11:59 pm that day. You can only take it once (no repeats). If you have any technical difficulties, please contact the Honorlock technical support and me immediately. Failure to take the exam on the day it is scheduled will result in a 10-point deduction for each 24-hour period it is late.

- Exam 1: 20% - Feb. 7: Closed-book and cover Modules 1, 2, 3 & 4 (Chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4)
- Exam 2: 20% - March 20: Closed-book and cover Modules 6, 7, 8, & 9 (Chapters 5, 6, 7 & 8)
- Exam 3: 20% - May 1: Closed-book and cover Modules 11, 12, 13, 14, & 15 (Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, & 13)

Assignments: 20%

Public Relations is not something you can simply read about or attend a class and know. It takes a lot of work. Throughout this course, we will do a variety of assignments. This work will not only count toward your grade, but also help give you experience applying what you are studying. In public relations, deadlines are extremely important, so I typically do not accept late work. Each assignment is worth 100 points.

Public Relations Report: 20%

This assignment is to research a particular organization (for-profit or nonprofit) for its public relations elements. This can be someplace you would like to learn more about to aid your career search or just someplace you are interested in. The report does a deep dive into the organization and its competitors. This is something you can start thinking about right away. Details will be distributed soon. Late Reports will not be accepted.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Tentative Course Schedule*

| WEEK | TOPICS/ASSIGNMENTS | READINGS |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Module/Dates | | |
| Module 1 1/8-1/12 | Introduction to Public Relations | Chapter 1 |
| Module 2 1/15-1/19 | PR Models Through the Ages Assignment 1 | Chapter 2 |
| Module 3 1/22-1/26 | Convergence & Integrated Communication | Chapter 3 |
| Module 4 1/29-2/2 | Relationship Management Assignment 2 | Chapter 4 |
| Module 5 2/5-2/9 | EXAM 1 | |
| Module 6 2/12-2/16 | Research | Chapter 5 |
| Module 7 2/19-2/23 | Planning Assignment 3 | Chapter 6 |
| Module 8 2/26-3/1 | Implementation | Chapter 7 |
| Module 9 3/4-3/8 | Evaluation Assignment 4 | Chapter 8 |
| Holiday 3/11-3/15 | Spring Break | |
| Module 10 3/18-3/22 | EXAM 2 | |
| Module 11 3/25-3/29 | Writing | Chapter 9 |
| Module 12 4/1-4/5 | Social Media & Mobile Assignment 5 | Chapter 10 |
| Module 13 4/8-4/12 | Legal | Chapter 11 |
| Module 14 4/15-4/19 | Global | Chapter 13 |
| Module 15 4/22-4/26 | Issues & Crises PR Report | Chapter 12 |
| Module 16 4/29-5/3 | Careers EXAM 3 | Chapter 14 (Optional) |

*This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Changes to the schedule will be discussed in class. You are responsible for attending all classes unless it is marked as a holiday.