

PUR4243 – MEDIA RELATIONS – SPRING 2024

Course number: 27364 29990
Tuesdays, 10:40 – 11:30 a.m. on Zoom

Instructor: Peter Nasca, APR
Email: pnasca@ufl.edu
Virtual Office Hours: By Appointment
Phone: 954-557-2966

Messages via Canvas are accepted.

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

Required Texts

All readings will be provided on Canvas, no textbook purchase required.

Additional Materials as Assigned

The professor will provide or assign reading, listening, or viewing materials (e.g., print, podcast or television interviews). Generally, assigned materials in the syllabus should be read, listened to, or watched in advance of the class for which they are listed. Be prepared for the professor to call you in that class to discuss the assigned materials.

Course Description

This course will introduce the historical perspective of the media (print, broadcast, and new media), public relations, and the ever-revolving relationships between the two. Participants will learn the skills required to communicate effectively with the media and the ability to establish strong relationships with members of the Fourth Estate. The course will feature several guest speakers from the national media and nationally recognized public relations professionals who will discuss various topics germane to the profession, including but not limited to crisis communications, sports PR, pitching national media, etc.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will:

- Develop an understanding of what defines a productive and successful relationship between a public relations professional and a journalist.
- Learn techniques that help you become an engaging storyteller, make the most of interview opportunities and handle difficult questions from journalists.
- Learn about the changing role of PR professionals as it relates to working with the media across various mediums.
- Learn the basics of media pitching and press release writing.
- Develop a keen understanding of the current, diverse media landscape.

Key Course Policies

Late or Missed Work:

Deadlines for each assignment will be given and students are expected to meet them. **If you submit your assignment late, you will automatically lose six points from your grade and, for each week it is late, you will receive a full letter grade deduction (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.

Attendance:

This course focuses on class participation and group discussion. Your attendance and engagement are important aspects of this course, and students are strongly encouraged to attend class on camera.

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 carefully reviewed each person's work and feel comfortable with the grade assigned. Grades are earned; they are not gifts. Grades are awarded on the basis of quality, not the amount of time spent. **I will round up** (e.g., if you get 89.9 points, you earn an A- not a B+). 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: 50% total, allocated as follows:

Attendance: 30%

- Attendance is mandatory. Absences count from the first-class following drop/add. More than **two** unexcused absences during the semester will be considered "excessive absences" and you will not receive attendance credit. You are responsible for notifying the instructor prior to missing class or as soon as possible afterwards in an emergency situation. Requirements for assignments and other work in this course follow UF policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Active Participation: 20%

Active participation through commenting verbally or in the chat feature and asking questions is required to gain full points -- your physical presence is not enough. Present but no participation will receive no points, present but non-meaningful participation (i.e. simply saying "I agree") will result in partial credit, and participation that adds to the discussion via meaningful comments or questions will receive full credit. Credit is assessed weekly.

Individual Assignments: 50% total, allocated as follows:

Individual assignments will provide an opportunity for you to explore various aspects of the media relations and media training areas of Public Relations. There will be multiple assignments throughout the course, primarily consisting of brief reports or summaries of print, television or podcast interviews.

Tentative schedule of assignments:

- **Assignment 1 (10%): The pitch** **Feb. 6**
- **Assignment 2 (15%): Interview techniques** **March 5**
- **Assignment 3 (25%): Final assignment** **April 25**

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

Grading follows current [UF grading policies](#).

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 1 January 9	Course Overview, review syllabus, discuss class goals, answer student questions
Week 2 January 16	History of public relations and the media
Week 3 January 23	Review reading assignment

Week 4 January 30	Guest Speaker #1
Week 5 February 6	The Pitch - Assignment #1 student pitches
Week 6 February 13	Review and discuss pitches
Week 7 February 20	Guest speaker #2
Week 8 February 27	Press release writing
Week 9 March 5	Assignment #2 review press releases
Week 10 March 19	Crisis Communications
Week 11 March 26	Guest speaker #3
Week 12 April 2	PR from the client side
Week 13 April 9	Guest speaker #4
Week April 16	Guest Speaker #5
Week 15 April 23	Assignment #3 Review; Open Discussion with Professor

*Guest speakers may change due to 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.

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](#).

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.

Academic Resources:

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](#).