Spring 2024 SYLLABUS: Corporate Reputation (☼) PUR 4611 (**26509**)

Professor: Patrick Ford, Professional-in-Residence, Department of Public Relations
Course Time: M 9:35 – 11:30 a.m.; W 10:40 – 11:30 a.m.
Location: Weimer 2056
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.; Wednesday 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Weimer 2093
On Zoom *-- Appointments recommended and may also be possible outside office hours in person or on Zoom*

Contact Information -- Email (fordp@ufl.edu); phone (352-294-0493); or text (703-966-8138)

Teaching Assistant: Rebecca Wolff (rebeccawolff@ufl.edu)
Messages via Canvas are accepted
(☼) This syllabus is subject to change as the professor deems appropriate and necessary.

Course Description

Corporate Reputation focuses on key elements of corporate reputation – one of the most important and yet least understood aspects of any company's overall success and value. In today's digital, global, highly interactive business ecosystem, where a company is subject to instant, vivid, unfiltered, and global scrutiny, the need for effective, proactive reputation management is greater than ever – even more so in the past two years as virtually all corporations navigate through multiple global crises.

Warren Buffett's two famous quotes on corporate reputation, with which every senior corporate executive is familiar, have never been more relevant:

> *"Lose money for the firm, and I will be understanding. Lose a shred of reputation for the firm, and I will be ruthless."*
> *"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently."*

Over the course of this semester, we will delve into how corporate reputations are built and sustained, and how they can be damaged or even permanently ruined. We will examine a wide range of specific case studies and, in some cases, hear from senior communications executives on how they and their companies engage with their various stakeholders (employees, retirees, investors, customers, communities, governments, media, social media influencers and other key opinion leaders).

We will explore best practices in corporate character, purpose, sustainability, governance, corporate social responsibility, ethical behavior, and issues and crisis management. You will learn why corporate boards, executives, and key stakeholders are focusing heavily on environmental, social and governance policies (ESG) and why these concepts matter. We will focus especially on how companies' reputations are being tested amid multiple crises related to the global pandemic, climate change, and the reckoning on race and issues related to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility, among other critical issues. Our group project will require the development of an original, comprehensive case study suitable for entry in the national Page Case Study competition (an opportunity for national recognition for winning teams).

Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:
- Learn what constitute the key factors in corporate reputation management
- Develop a strategic understanding of stakeholder theory
- Understand how to monitor and measure a company's reputation
- Identify and address the ethical issues affecting reputation
- Write comprehensive case studies on best and worst examples of corporate reputations
- Recognize risks to corporate reputation and why they matter

Prerequisite:
- PUR 3000 Principles of Public Relations

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes
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

Readings
Required Book
Reputation First: Building a Crisis Communication Strategy (2nd ed.). **Copyright 2023.**
ISBN: 978-1-7346415-9-2 (paperback); 978-1-7346415-5-4 (ebook)
Note: Textbooks will be provided at no cost to students.

Additional Readings as Assigned
The professor will provide additional assigned reading materials over the course of the semester; in some cases, these may be included in the quizzes. 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 for the professor to call on you in that class to discuss the assigned readings.

Online Course Administration — e-Learning in Canvas
https://elearning.ufl.edu will be used to administer the course communication, materials (e.g., PowerPoint files, additional readings, handouts, assignment guidelines, evaluation forms), and grades. For instance, an electronic file of this document is posted on Canvas. You can access the site by using your GatorLink username and password. Please check the site for announcements and/or threads of comments from classmates, and the professor.

Course Professionalism
- The College of Journalism and Communications is a professional school and professional decorum is expected at all times. Therefore, the students, and the professor, adhere to workplace norms for collegial and respectful interaction. Carefully consider how you participate in class discussions and in the assignments you submit and present. 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 attend classes on time and not leave early unless prior permission is granted. *Please note the significant impact of attendance and active participation in your final grade (25% of grade) and be sure to show up and speak up as appropriate.*

- Students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest, ethical, and courteous manner — with classmates and the professor.

Diversity Statement

Your experience in this class is important to me. I embrace a notion of intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along several dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, socioeconomic class, disability, age, and religion. It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for others.

Course Grades

The evaluation of coursework will be based on the student's performance in four areas, each of which constitutes a proportion of the final grade. These include attendance and active participation; individual assignments (which will include developing case studies related to corporate reputation and presenting them to the class); one group experiential learning project; and two quizzes.

Grading factors include:

Attendance 10%
- Attendance is mandatory. Absences count from the first session following drop/add. Excessive unexcused absences during the semester will cause a reduction in credit for attendance and participation. You are responsible for notifying the instructor prior to missing class or as soon as possible afterwards in an emergency. Requirements for assignments and other work in this course follow UF policies: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Active Participation: 15%
- Active participation in class discussion is required to gain full points; your physical presence is not in itself enough. To receive full credit, you must demonstrate active engagement, which arriving in class on time and being prepared to make comments, ask questions, or answer questions as appropriate.

Individual Assignment and Presentation / Case Study 25%
- Individual assignments will provide an opportunity for you to explore various aspects of corporate reputation management. The most important will be to prepare a case study on a specific company's reputation. You will select the company or institution and the case (subject to the professor's approval). Full details on this individual case study project will be provided early in the semester. Other individual projects may be assigned during the semester.

Quizzes: 25%
- Two quizzes will be scheduled. These will be designed to test the students' understanding of key concepts of corporate reputation addressed in the course textbook and discussed in class by the professor and/or guest lecturers.

Group Project and Presentation: 25%
- The group project will require you to work collaboratively with fellow students to develop a comprehensive

corporate reputation case study that follows the requirements for submission in the national Page Case Study competition (see the guidelines for this national competition as well as the 2023 winning case studies at this link: https://page.org/competitions/).   Directions and team assignments will be provided early in the semester.

Grading for the course follows current UF grading policies for assigning grade points (see https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx).

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

A = 93.0-100%.
A- = 90.0-92.99%. B+ = 87.0-89.99%. B = 83.0-86.99%. B- = 80.0-82.99%. C+ = 77.0-79.99%.
C = 74.0-76.99%. C- = 70.0-73.99%. D+ = 67.0-69.99%. D = 64.0-66.99%. D- = 60.0-63.99%. E = below 60%

Further information about grades and grading policy may be found at this link to the university grades and grading policies.

Online Course Evaluations

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 https://gatorevals.aa.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 https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

The Honor Pledge

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. Click here to read the Honor Code. 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.

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.

Campus Resources

Health and Wellness 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](#).

Policy on Recording Classes

- 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.

Other Important Notes

- I can be reached via email (fordp@ufl.edu), by telephone (352-294-0493) or by text (703-966-8138). While I always strive to respond in a timely way, please be aware that I may not always be able to respond immediately to your communication. As a rule, allow up to 24 hours for a response.
- Students are not permitted to bring guests to class unless pre-arranged with professor Ford or TA Rebecca Wolff in advance.
- If you notice yourself having trouble in the course, it is crucial that you speak with the professor immediately or as soon as possible. Please feel free to approach me about any concerns or comments you might have about this class. Ideally, every student in the class should plan to have at least one 1:1 Zoom or phone meeting with me during the semester – I can meet with you during office hours or at other times, but I ask that you reach out in advance and schedule an appointment.
- Any evidence of plagiarism or cheating will result in an "E" for the course and possible disciplinary action.
- Do not submit the same work to more than one class without prior written permission from both professors. Do not adapt work from another class for this class without my prior written permission.
- Do not adapt someone else's work and submit it as your own. This course requires original work, created at this time, for this purpose.
- Spelling counts, as do grammar, punctuation, and professional presentation techniques. If you need extra help with presentation skills, arrange an appointment with me.
- An assignment turned in past the deadline may be penalized for each weekday it is late.
- In addition to the required and recommended readings, you are expected to maintain comprehensive class notes because class lectures often contain information that is not contained in the readings. You will be quizzed on this information. *If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get briefed by another student on the content covered in the class.*
- Misspelling company or agency names during exercises may result in a grade deduction. Check your work!

Course Schedule
Readings are to be done BEFORE the date listed below

M. Jan 8   Course overview and introductions

W. Jan. 10   Lecture: The Changing Role of Corporations in a Rapidly Changing Business Landscape

M. Jan 15   MLK Holiday

W. Jan. 17   Workshop: Keys to successful individual and group case studies

M. Jan 22   Interactive chapter review: "Reputation … First"
- Read Ch. 1, *Reputation First* textbook.

Lecture: Stakeholder theory as it relates to corporate reputation today and tomorrow.
- "Stakeholder Engagement – Creating and Sustaining Advocacy" (Chapter to be posted in Canvas)
  - Read Ch. 5, *New Era of the CCO* (Fernandez, Gonring and Benjamin-Young)

W. Jan 24   Interactive chapter review: "Behavior"
- Read Ch. 2, *Reputation First* textbook.

M. Jan 29   Guest lecture: Rob Jekielek, Managing Director, **The Harris Poll**
- Current survey data on corporate reputation

Interactive chapter review: "Trust"
- Read Ch. 3: *Reputation First* textbook.

W. Jan 31   Guest Lecture: Scott Farrell, former President, Global Corporate Practice, **Golin**
"New Reputation: 2023 Global Communication Report"

M. Feb 5   Guest lecture: Eliot Mizrachi, VP, Communication and Thought Leadership, **The Page Society**
- "The CCO as Pacesetter"
- Readings to be provided:
  - "The Page Model"
  - "The CCO as Pacesetter: What It Means, Why It Matters, How to Get There"

W. Feb 7   Interactive chapter review: "Character"
- Read Ch. 4: *Reputation First* textbook.

M. Feb 12   Lecture: "Trust at Work" – GenZ Influence on Internal Stakeholder Engagement (Reading to be provided)

W. Feb 14   Guest lecture: Corley Kenna, Head of Communications and Policy, **Patagonia**

M. Feb 19   Guest lecture: Vickee Jordan Adams, Partner, Transactions and Financial Communications, **FGS Global**

W. Feb 21   Interactive chapter review: "Communication"
- Read Ch. 5, *Reputation First* textbook.

M. Feb 26   <mark>Quiz</mark>

W. Feb 28   Guest lecture: Marcia DiStaso, Associate Dean for Research, **UF CJC**
- "The Power of Purpose: Corporate Purpose, Sustainability, and Stakeholder Engagement"

F. Mar 1   <mark>Individual Case Study Assignments Due</mark>

M. Mar 4   Student individual case study presentations

W. Mar 6   Student individual case study presentations

Mar 11-13   <mark>SPRING BREAK</mark>

M. Mar 18   Student individual case study presentations

W. Mar 20   Guest lecture: Carmella Glover, President, **Diversity Action Alliance**, and VP, DEI, **The Page Society**

M. Mar 25   Guest lecture: Dr. Charles Wallington, EVP and Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, **Cone Health.**

W. Mar 27   Individual student case study presentations

M. Apr 1   <mark>Quiz</mark>

W. Apr 3   Team breakouts for group case study project

M. Apr 8   <mark>**Group Case Study Presentations Due**</mark>

W. Apr 10   Group Case Study Presentation

M. Apr 15   Group case study presentations

W. Apr 17   Group case study presentation

M. Apr 22   Guest lecture: TBC

W. Apr 24   Course wrap up and reflections.

End of Semester