

PUR 4212: Diversity and Inclusion for Public Relations Spring 2025

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Course Meetings: Asynchronous on Zoom

Office Hours: Available by appointment

Course Description

As the practice of public relations becomes increasingly diverse and multicultural, it's essential that practitioners understand the value and practice of contributing to and advocating for diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplaces. In this course, you will learn to use your skills as a strategic communicator to build more diverse, equitable and inclusive environments. You'll also gain the skill of working and thriving in a diverse and multicultural work environment. Everything you'll learn in this course is supported by peer-reviewed academic research and insights from recognized experts.

Course Format

The format for this course is asynchronous – meaning you are able to complete work at your own pace.

Participation in online discussions, group work and timely assignment completion are keys to succeeding in this class. You are responsible for notifying me in advance if you are unable to complete an assignment due to illness and should be prepared to provide a note from your medical provider. For further information on attendance policy, please go [here](#).

Required Material

There is no textbook for this course. All required readings, podcasts, and videos/movies are listed on the syllabus and will be available on Canvas. **Additional readings and assignments may be added at my discretion over the course of the semester.**

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

In this course, you will learn:

- The proper use of terms associated with building, working in, contributing to and thriving in diverse, inclusive, equitable and multicultural environments. You will also learn which terms to eliminate because they are harmful or have discriminatory meanings or history.
- How to adopt a “diversity first” mindset.

- How to communicate across difference
- How to recognize and address forms of implicit and explicit bias.
- How to use the Diversity and Inclusion Wheel for PR Practitioners.
- How to apply systems thinking and human-centered design to advance diversity, inclusion and equity.
- How to use social norming to build more diverse, equitable and inclusive communities and workplaces.
- Recognize the ways in which bias or exclusion can manifest in the practice of public relations.
- How to apply principles of ethical story sharing.
- Why the concept of intersectionality is essential to building a multicultural mindset.
- How to support, advocate and build new systems with people who experience marginalization.
- How to bring a diversity and inclusion first mindset to your research.
- How to maintain a “growth mindset” on your own journey.
- How a multicultural mindset and skill set strengthens teams and organizations.

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 United States
- 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.

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

The evaluation of coursework will be based on your performance in four major assignments, each of which constitutes a proportion of the final grade. Your grade will be calculated by the following:

Discussion Posts: 10%

Each week, a discussion question will be posted to Canvas which will cover either the readings or a contemporary event. Your response should be a critical reflection of the readings you have had for the week. You will only be graded for your contribution, but you are more than welcome to comment on and engage with others' post.

Team Case Study (2): 40%

Groups should present the company's DEI initiatives and conduct a SWOT analysis. **Please follow the following outline:**

- 1) An overview of the company
- 2) Company's DEI leadership
- 3) Company's DEI policies
- 4) At least two of the company's DEI program examples
- 5) Recent trends and/or articles in DEI related to the company
- 6) SWOT

Here's a great resource on how to conduct a SWOT analysis: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/swot-analysis/main>

NOTE: All elements of the SWOT should be related to DEI(JBA).

Presentation

Teams should prepare a 15-slide minimum presentation. The presentation should be recorded live or include voice overs. Be creative – show videos, images, articles or other visual depictions to enhance your presentation. Note: Your presentation should not be more than 20 minutes in length.

Team Participation

This is a group project; therefore, each team will have to meet for each member to contribute to the assignment equally. It is important that the information presented be cohesive and representative of team collaboration.

DEI/CSR Interview with a local business owner: 45%

The final paper will allow you to put together the information learned from the group case study and the class content to conduct your own assessment of a local business. Using the SWOT analysis, you will interview a local business owner to understand the value of DE&I and CSR concepts in a more localized context.

The business should have at least five (5) non-familial employees – this means that the employees are not related to the owner.

Papers should be 5-7 pages double-spaced (APA format) and should focus on the internal and external DEI and CSR practices and initiatives as well as the opportunities that exist to better address any or all of the three.

Sample Interview Questions:

DEI:

1. Does diversity, equity, and inclusion matter to you and your business? Why or why not?
2. What is your approach to dealing with discussions about potentially difficult topics, such as race, religion, politics, or sexual orientation?
3. Have you incorporated the viewpoints and perspectives of underrepresented groups into your business? How?
4. How do you work to create a work environment that is welcoming and inclusive? Please provide a specific example.

CSR:

1. Does the company have a Corporate Social Responsibility strategy?
2. How does the company approach corporate social responsibility?
3. How is the company tracking or measuring their Corporate Social Responsibility impact?
4. What are the company's customers' social aspirations? Have you taken any action? What environmental/social issues would consumers want the company to address?

Two critical reflections to include in the paper:

1. Is there a difference between how DEI and CSR are valued? What are the differences?
2. Is there a sense of obligation or responsibility to either of the concepts?
3. Has the perception of either DEI or CSR changed for them over time?

LinkedIn Post: 5%

In week 15, you must make one LinkedIn post reflecting on what you learned this semester. The post must include a learning from one of the companies you assessed and at least one link to a relevant article. To receive full credit, it must include the hashtag #DEIinPR and a tag of the professor, Ajia Meux, and any people being quoted or referenced, where possible.

Requirements for assignments and other work in this course follow UF policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

The grading scale for the course is:

A 92-100%
A- 90-91.99%
B+ 88-89.99%
B 82-87.99.99%
B- 80-81.99%
C+ 78-79.99%
C 72-77.99%
C- 70-71.99%
D+ 68-69.99%
D 62-67.99%
D- 60-61.99%
E below 60.99%

Follows current UF policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

Availability

Please feel free to speak with me during the semester about any questions or concerns you have during my office hours or by appointment. (You can also reach me by email and I'll do my best to get back to you within 24 hours.)

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

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 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 ufl.bluera.com/ufl/.

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

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 (sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-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.

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

umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Visit counseling.ufl.edu/ 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 shcc.ufl.edu/.

University Police Department

Visit police.ufl.edu/ 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; ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center.

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 career.ufl.edu/. Library Support: 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 to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. teachingcenter.ufl.edu/ Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/ Student Complaints On-Campus: sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code/student-conduct

A Note on 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 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

PUR 4212: Diversity and Inclusion for Public Relations Spring 2025 Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading, Listening or Viewing	Exercise or Assignments
Week 1	Course Overview, defining PR and DEI, and their intersections	PRSA Definition of Public Relations Freitag, A., Stokes, A.Q. (2009). <i>What PR is not</i> . Global Public Relations: Spanning borders, spanning cultures (p. 7-8). Routledge. Public Relations 101 . (Public Relations 101, August 2020. YouTube) Diversity and Public Relations Practice	Discussion #1:
Week 2	Diversity + PR: The Role of Identity <i>Identity Factors (race, gender, sexuality, disability) in PR messaging</i>	What is Stakeholder Theory? [Video] Dimensions of Diversity Defining Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (University of Michigan Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) Starbucks to Open First “Signing Store” in the U.S. to Serve Deaf Customers	Discussion #2 Quiz
Week 3	The current (and future) state of DEI: <i>Shifting language and priorities</i>	What the next Trump Presidency means for the future of DEI Continuing the work of DEI, no matter what your company calls it. Walmart is the latest company to roll back DEI policies. NPR.org [AUDIO] The Rise and fall of the DEI Movement NPR.org [AUDIO].	Discussion #3
Week 4	Language, Tone, and Cultural Sensitivity: <i>Effective messaging for diverse audiences</i>	Avoiding Pitfalls: Why Cultural Sensitivity is Key in Modern PR Ethical Considerations in International Public Relations [Video] Speaking to Diverse Audiences	DEI Quiz and Results

Week 5			Case Study Due
Week 6	DEI Stakeholders: <i>Internal vs. External Efforts and Structures</i>	<p>Souza, K., Weiss, A., & Mensch, L. (31, May 2022). REAL Talks Episode 6 - Internal and External Engagement with DEI: A Conversation with The Food Trust</p> <p>Harrison, E., Ngon, P., Williamson M.V., Bradbury, E. (n.d.). Aligning your external DEI Commitments to your Internal Organization [Video]. PR News</p> <p>Differences between Internal and External Stakeholders [Video]</p> <p>DEI centered on your internal audiences, external stakeholders and inclusive product design</p>	Discussion #4
Week 7	Fundraising, Public Relations and The Power of Diverse Narratives	<p>Satchwell, CM (2010). At the fundraising core: Strategic public relations in fundraising practice. <i>CASE</i>.</p> <p>Devex Partnerships (2021). How development organizations can tell stories more ethically.</p> <p>Trust Matters: Ethical Storytelling for Donor Engagement [Podcast]</p> <p>Schohl, L. (2021) How to create a culture of inclusive philanthropy. <i>Philanthropy.com</i></p>	Discussion #5
Week 8	Crisis Management/ Communication and DEI	<p>The Principles of Effective Crisis Communication (.pdf)</p> <p>Where DEI, Ethics, and Crisis Communication Intersect</p> <p>When racial insensitivity causes PR Crisis</p>	Discussion #6
Week 9	Corporate Social Responsibility and DE&I	<p>Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity in the Modern Workplace Building better businesses [Video].</p> <p>Aligning DEI and Corporate Responsibility: Advantages and Pitfalls</p>	Discussion #7

Week 10	SPRING BREAK		
Week 11			Case Study Due
Week 12	DEI(AJB): Adding Accessibility to the discussion	<p>EARN. (2022). Adding Accessibility to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives</p> <p>Chung, C., Walker, M. (2024) American Airlines fined \$50 million for treatment of passengers using wheelchairs. New York Times</p> <p>Accessibility Statement. (2024). Netflix.</p> <p>Office of Disability Employment Policy. (2023). National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). U.S. Department of Labor.</p>	Discussion #8
Week 13	DEI(AJB): Adding Justice to the discussion	<p>EPA. (2023). Learn About Environmental Justice</p> <p>Zheng, L. (2020, June 15). We're Entering the Age of Corporate Social Justice. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>.</p> <p>Consider This. (2022, April 30). Understanding The Link Between Racial Justice And the Fight Against Climate Change [Audio]. <i>NPR.org</i>.</p> <p>The Social Impact Show. (2023, November 9). How to connect Environmental Justice into your CSR Strategy [Video]. YouTube.</p>	Discussion #9
Week 14	Metrics and Measurement in Inclusive PR	<p>The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Metrics Inventory</p> <p>Why brands may lose billions of dollars by dropping DEI Programs</p> <p>The business case for inclusion and diversity in the workplace</p>	Discussion #10

		Stop making the business case for diversity	
Week 15			LinkedIn Post
Week 16			Individual Case Study/Interview

