# PUR 4243 – Engage & Influence: PR Storytelling Across Platforms

**Course Number:** PUR 4243

**Semester:** Summer C (2025)

**Time**: Tuesdays, 5:00 p.m.

**Instructor:** Susie Gilden

**Email**: [susan.millheiser@ufl.edu](mailto:susan.millheiser@ufl.edu)

**Virtual Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Prerequisite:** PUR3000 with a C or better

**Course Description:** In today's ever-changing media landscape, brands are no longer solely reliant on traditional media to tell their stories. Successful PR practitioners must craft compelling narratives across multiple platforms, including social media, blogs, media relations, websites, and beyond. This course will teach students the art of PR storytelling through the PESO model (Paid, Earned, Shared, Owned), equipping them with the skills to adapt messaging based on audience and platform. Students will develop strategic messaging, write for different formats, and analyze how campaigns succeed by reaching different audiences in different ways.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Understand how the modern media and PR landscape operates.

- Learn the PESO model and how to apply it to campaigns.

- Craft compelling stories that resonate across platforms.

- Identify how storytelling varies depending on audience (consumer, media, B2B, etc.).

- Develop effective writing and content creation strategies for various PR channels.

- Gain hands-on experience writing press releases, social media posts, blog articles, and brand narratives.

- Analyze real-world PR campaigns (Silver Anvil winners, PR Council cases) to understand effective multi-platform storytelling.

- Learn how to measure and adapt PR storytelling efforts for engagement and reach.

**Required Texts:**

All readings will be provided on Canvas—no textbook purchase required. Students may be expected to be regular readers of PRWeek Daily Breakfast Briefing, accessible through the UF George A. Smathers Libraries. Additional readings such as case studies, TED Talks, and podcasts may be assigned throughout the semester. Read assigned materials before the class meeting for which they are listed.

**Grading and Assignments**

- Attendance & Active Participation (30%) – Participation in discussions, breakout groups, and live Zoom sessions is required. Excessive absences (more than two unexcused) will negatively impact your grade.

- Individual Assignments (45%) – Short, weekly assignments such as press releases, blogs, pitches, content calendars, and brief reactions to assigned case studies, TED Talks, podcasts, or articles. These assignments are designed to be low-stress and allow students to practice applying storytelling concepts.

- Final Project (25%) – A comprehensive multi-platform storytelling campaign using the PESO model, including press release(s), blog content, social media posts, and a pitch deck tailored to a selected audience or platform.

Grading for the course follows current UF grading policies for assigning grade points (see [here](#)). 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 [here](#).

**Course Policies and Resources**

**Instructor Communication:** Email is the best way to reach me. I respond within 48 hours during the workweek. Please avoid sending personal or grade-related information via email, as it is considered public record under Florida law. Face-to-face (Zoom) meetings are preferred for more complex discussions.

**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. Students are expected to notify the professor in advance of any absence. More than two unexcused absences will be considered excessive. For details, see the UF Attendance Policy: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/

**Professionalism**: You are expected to maintain a high level of professionalism during class. Be courteous and respectful to peers and the instructor. Be present and engaged with camera and mic etiquette observed during Zoom sessions. Practice communicating professionally in all formats.

**Late Work**: Deadlines will be given for each assignment. Late assignments will automatically lose a full letter grade for each day late (e.g. B to a C). Exceptions may be made for documented emergencies if communicated in advance.

**University Honesty Policy:** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: "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."

**Accommodations:** Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center: https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/

**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/evals. Summary results are available at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/

**Resources for Students:**

- U Matter, We Care: https://umatter.ufl.edu/

- Counseling & Wellness Center: https://counseling.ufl.edu/ or 352-392-1575

- Student Health Care Center: https://shcc.ufl.edu/ or 352-392-1161

- UF Police Department: https://police.ufl.edu/ or 352-392-1111

- UF Computing Help Desk: https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/

- Career Connections Center: https://career.ufl.edu/

- Library Support: https://uflib.ufl.edu/

- Writing Studio: https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/

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

- Online Students Complaints: https://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process

**FERPA & In-Class Recording:** Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures for personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the university, or as evidence in a legal proceeding. Publishing recordings without the instructor's consent is strictly prohibited.

**Learn more**: http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html

**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

# PUR 4243 Art of Storytelling– Week-by-Week Course Breakdown

**Week 1 (May 13)**
**Topic**: Introduction to PR Storytelling & Media Landscape

**Week 2 (May 20)**
**Topic**: The Foundations of a Good Story

**Week 3 (May 27)**
*No Class – Memorial Day Week*

**Week 4 (June 3)**
**Topic**: Audience-Centric Storytelling

**Week 5 (June 10)**
**Topic**: Writing for PR: Press Releases & Media Pitches

**Week 6 (June 17)**
**Topic**: Storytelling Through Blogs & Owned Media

**Week 7 (June 24)**
*No Class – Summer Break*

**Week 8 (July 1)**
**Topic:** Campaigns That Moved the Needle

**Week 9 (July 8)**
**Topic**: Social Media as a Storytelling Platform

**Week 10 (July 15)**
**Topic**: Video & Visual Storytelling

**Week 11 (July 22)**
**Topic**: Influencers

**Week 12 (July 29)**
**Topic**: Final Presentations & Course Wrap-Up