

PUR 4243 Financial PR Industry Perspectives

Instructor: Bridget Braxton

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Tuesdays, 6:15 – 7:05 p.m.

Virtual office hours: by appointment

*Note: the fastest way to reach me is via text on my mobile; I will respond as soon as possible, 24 hours as the latest.

Required Texts

There are no required textbooks for this class. Reading assignments or videos will be provided through Canvas. Some requirements are listed below, but I may assign additional assignments through Canvas each week.

Course description

Financial Services Public Relations

The purpose of Industry Perspectives is to provide insight into a particular industry topic area or focus within public relations. This course will focus on the significant seat public relations professionals can fill in the C-suite with other executives to manage the corporate reputations of financial services firms. This class will also examine and evaluate the public relations strategies of companies that have lost trust with stakeholders due to poor business models, unforced errors, or unforeseen crises. Class participants will have the opportunity to offer recommendations to rebuild trust based on expertise from world-class professionals representing a broad spectrum of the financial services industry.

Upon completing this course, students will:

- Understand the broad financial services eco-system.
- Gain a foundational understanding of financial communications including quarterly earnings.
- Learn the role of industry regulation/government relations.
- Gain knowledge of the variety of important functions necessary for a successful PR effort.
- Learn how to build trust/serve as a trusted advisor with CEOs/C-level execs in financial services.
- Identify and develop strategies for key stakeholders.
- Learn how to craft tactical deliverables for financial services audiences e.g., media pitches, social media posts, employee talking points, etc.
- Apply-critical thinking skills related to recent crises in financial services.

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 service to all people and communities.
- 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.

Key Course Policies

Late or Missed Work:

Deadlines for each assignment will be given and students are expected to meet them. Late assignments will automatically lose a full letter grade for each day it is late (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 the fact.

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. 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.

Additional University Policies

Please see the following website for detail regarding the university academic policies and resources: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>.

Grading

Attendance and Active Participation: 25%

Attendance and active participation are mandatory. Students are expected to be engaged and actively participate in class discussions, Q&A with professionals and interactive exercises, unless cleared in advance with the professor.

I've invited a series of leading industry executives and experts to classes throughout the semester and recommend that you make it a practice to look them up on LinkedIn prior to the class to better inform your participation. Additionally, many classes have reading assignments or short videos that will enrich our discussion and should be completed prior to class.

Each absence after the drop/add period will result in a reduction in the grade for attendance. After due warning, the professor may prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a lower or failing grade for excessive absences (please note: more than two unexcused absences during the semester will be considered "excessive absences."

You are responsible for notifying the professor in advance of the cause of your absence when possible and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider. For further information on attendance policy, please consult: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Individual Assignments: 25%

Individual assignments will provide an opportunity for you to gain "real-world" experience and explore various aspects of a Financial Services career in Public Relations.

Final project: Case study: 50%

-Applying a public relations lens, develop a case study highlighting a business challenge or crisis in financial services. I will give you the opportunity to select from a few companies that have recently made headlines related to their business practices. Your case study will need to cover the following parts:

I. Background

II. Description of business failure

III. Describe how financials were impacted

IV. Describe impact/reaction from key audiences

-Customers

-Employees

-Regulators/Congress

-Media/Social media coverage (include links)

-Non-profits or NGOs

V. Evaluate Company's initial PR response

VI. Provide your PR recommendation for the company overall and specific tactics for three priority audiences. **You will be expected to present your recommendations on the last day of class which will account for 50% of your grade.**

* Include sources for your work (can be links to videos, articles, books, etc.)

Grading follows current [UF grading policies](#). *The grading scale for the course is as follows:*

A 94.0-100%

A- 90.0-93.99%

B+ 87.0-89.99%

B 84.0-86.99%

B- 80.0-83.99%

C+ 77.0-79.99%

C 74.0-76.99%

C- 70-73.99%

D+ 67.0-69.99%

D 64.0-66.99%

D- 60.0-63.99%

E below 60%

Tentative Course Schedule*

Part One: Financial Services Understandin g the Business	Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments (due the week prior to class)
	Week 1: August 26	Course Overview/Discus s Case study expectations	What Companies Are in the Financial Services Sector?
	Week 2: Septembe r 2	Financial Services: Quarterly Earnings Example: Apple Inc. Assignment #1: your favorite public company; see separate hand out for instructions	Stocks: What They Are, Main Types, How They Differ from Bonds Earnings Per Share (EPS): What it Means, and How to Calculate It Guide to Company Earnings Earnings Video Efficiency Ratio Balance Sheet
	Week 3: Septembe r 9	Class discussions: your favorite company	Financial Regulators: Who They Are and What They Do How to read a financial statement Financial statements
	Week 4: Septembe r 16	Crisis in Financial Services: the 2008 Financial Services Collapse& the Aftermath – Regulation	What Was The Financial Crises of 2008? Dodd-Frank Act What it Does, Major Components, criticisms

		Mini Regional Banking crisis of 2023	
Part Two: Professional Perspectives	Week 5: September 23	Industry Perspective: Government Relations Financial Services Goes to Washington Assignment #2: write a one- pager – of the CEOs – who do you think best answered senator's questions and who did not? Guest speaker	US Senate Banking Committee US House Financial Services Committee Senator Warren exchange with Bank CEOs about Zelle Senator Cramer questions bank CEOs
	Week 6: September 30	Industry Perspective Media Relations in Financial Services Assignment #3: draft a one- paragraph media statement to a finance reporter responding to inquiries about CEO pay. Guest speaker	

	Week 7: October 7	Industry Perspective: Issues Management & Crisis in Financial Services	
	Week 8: October 14	Industry Perspective: Employee communications in Financial Services Guest speaker Assignment#4: write talking points from the CEO to employees	
	Week 9: October 21	Industry Perspective: Banking to the military Guest speaker:	
	Week 10: October 28	Industry Perspective: AI & Financial Service Guest Speaker	
	Week 11: November 4	Wells Fargo: Unauthorized Accounts Assignment #5: If you worked for Wells Fargo's	https://apple.news/AxgAf3vkaRk2eZBaTmTsQJA Board Report News Release LA Times Board Report Article USA Today Article 4 Execs Fired For Cause

		PR Team, how would you have recommended they handled the initial crisis? Draft a couple of paragraphs	The Wells Fargo Cross Selling Scandal Wells Fargo Sales Culture Senator Warren Questions John Stumpf
	Week 12: November 11	Industry Perspective: AI & Financial Services Guest speaker	
	Week 13: November 18	Industry Perspective: Working with C-suite Executives in financial services	
	Week 14: November 25	Thanksgiving Holiday Break/No Class	Work on Case Study
	Week 15: December 2	Written Case Study Due Present Case Study in Class	