

## PUR4243 - Travel and Tourism PR – Fall 2025

Course number: 20701 and 23939 (UFO)

Mondays, 5:10 – 6:00 p.m. on Zoom

Prerequisite: PUR3000 with a C or better

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Virtual Office Hours: By appointment

### Required Texts

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

### Course Description

#### Travel and Tourism PR

The purpose of Industry Perspectives is to provide insight into a particular industry topic area or focus within public relations. This course focuses on how world-class travel and tourism brands rely on PR to deliver strategic communications that enhance and protect corporate reputation, drive the business, and engage and inspire employees – from buzzworthy consumer PR to the latest approach to social responsibility comms to reaching a distributed workforce with critical information.

Upon completing this course, students will:

- Better understand the broad world of travel tourism and the importance of Public Relations and Public Affairs in the industry.
- Develop basic business acumen and how to relate that to their role as strategic communicators.
- Learn about the types of issues businesses in the travel industry may face and how the field of communications supports the business in difficult times.
- Learn about how to drive business through strategic communications efforts.
- Develop a better understanding of the importance of stakeholder and industry relations in the travel tourism world.
- Develop a basic understanding of the complexities of working in different markets around the world, new market entry and targeted communications.
- Understand the changing dynamic of the role of traditional media versus social media and influencers in the tourism industry.
- Learn the basics of ESG (environmental, social and governance) and issues management

- Identify the key partners for successful Travel and Tourism communications.
- Develop a deeper understanding of employee engagement and internal communications.

### ***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

### **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 us before the deadline is missed, not after the fact. One homework assignment can be missed or dropped without penalty.

**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 the instructors 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 one of your instructors.

We will document and report all honor code violations, including cheating and plagiarism. AI may be used to enhance your work but not to complete your work. 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 will be established based on the following:

**Attendance and Active Participation: 25%**

- Attendance and active participation are mandatory. Cameras must be on throughout all classes. Students will be expected to participate in various interactive exercises and to be always engaged unless cleared in advance with the professor.

Additionally, many classes have reading assignments that will enrich our discussion and should be completed prior to class.

Each absence after the drop/add period will result in 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/>.

**LinkedIn Connection with Speakers: 25%**

- We’ll hear from a series of leading industry executives and experts during classes throughout the semester and require that you make it a practice to look them up on LinkedIn prior to the class to better inform your participation. As part of your participation grade, you must send each speaker an invitation to connect on LinkedIn, including an introductory note, providing a screen shot of your invitation by email to us.

**Individual Assignments: 25%**

- Individual assignments will provide an opportunity for you to explore various aspects of the Travel Tourism arena of Public Relations.

**Final Project: 25%**

- The development of an integrated communication plan for an agreed-upon public relations challenge will be the final project. The project will be clearly outlined and will include various communications elements including:

- Objective
- Strategy
- Internal tactics
- External tactics
- Stakeholder engagement planning

- Corporate ESR

- Measurement: What will success will look like for the campaign? What metrics will be employed?

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

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\*

<b>Week 1</b> August 25	<b>Course Overview</b> <p>Get to know your instructors and other students and begin to learn about the dynamic world of travel and tourism and the types of communications careers this profession offers. We will also discuss the class, the approach and the final project.</p> <p>No homework and no class next week due to Labor Day!</p>
<b>Week 2</b> September 8	<b>Establishing a narrative: What makes a destination special?</b> <p>We will discuss how to develop your narrative based on the destination itself. We will talk about how to think about everything from dining to experiences to amenities and scenery. Come prepared to talk about your favorite travel destinations and what they have to offer.</p> <p>Our special guest will be <b>Jackie Hutcherson Parker, Communications Manager and host of Shellcast</b>, the official podcast of Fort Myers – Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods.</p> <p>Reading assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the Disney Parks Blog Foodie Guide at <a href="https://disneyparks.disney.go.com/blog/topics/foodie-guides/">https://disneyparks.disney.go.com/blog/topics/foodie-guides/</a></li> </ul>

	<p>- Shellcast Episode 18: Spring training - Let the games begin at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2dKeKZr7Jw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2dKeKZr7Jw</a></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Choose a destination that you have visited or want to visit – can be as simple as Gainesville, itself – and write a food blog that highlights a unique culinary experience that helps to promote the destination. This is due on September 15 at 11:59 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b> September 15</p>	<p><b>Cruise Industry Public Relations</b></p> <p>The cruise industry requires tremendous agility. Leaders have to understand international markets, jurisdictions, maritime traditions and so much more. Learn what is involved in this fascinating industry.</p> <p>Our guests for this class will be <b>Yolanda Cade, VP of Communications, and Jonathan Frontado, Director of Communications, for Disney Signature Experiences</b>, which includes Disney Cruise Line, Adventures by Disney, National Geographic Adventures, Disney Vacation Club, Storyliving by Disney and Disney Institute.</p> <p>There is no advance reading for this class. Write a reflection of one page, double spaced about what you learned. This is due on Sept. 22 at 11:59 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Week 4</b> September 22</p>	<p><b>Airport Public Affairs</b></p> <p>Airports are critical to any travel destination. Learn about what it takes to run communications for an international airport like the Pittsburgh International Airport.</p> <p>Our guest this week will be <b>Angela Bliss, Senior Vice President Communications and Brand, Allegheny County Airport Authority</b>.</p> <p>Write a reflection of one page, double spaced about what you learned. This is due on Sept. 29 at 11:59 p.m.</p>

<p><b>Week 5</b> September 29</p>	<p><b>Theme Park Public Relations</b></p> <p>Florida is the world capital of themed entertainment with parks that bring to life popular movies and characters and operate at the scale of a mid-sized city. New attractions, annual events, celebrity visits and more make this one of the most dynamic PR roles. Learn about how to promote seasonal events and more.</p> <p>Special guest will be <b>Tom Schroder, former VP Corporate Communications for Universal Destinations and Experiences.</b></p>
<p><b>Week 6</b> October 6</p>	<p><b>Fam Trips: Creating an Experience that Drives the Story</b></p> <p>A thoughtfully curated familiarization trip can elevate coverage in both traditional and social media. For travel writers, the experience is the message. Learn the keys to planning and the little touches that can make your destination stand out.</p> <p>Our special guest will be <b>Rachel Kenon, Sr. Director Consumer and Commercial Communications, Hilton,</b> and <b>Victoria Hart, Sr. Director Consumer and Commercial Communications, Hilton.</b></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Create a two-day itinerary for a media fam trip to Gainesville, identifying your travel audience and including planned accommodations, ground transportation, experiences and special touches along the way. This is due on Oct. 13 at 11:59 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Week 7</b> October 13</p>	<p><b>Travel Journalism Today</b></p> <p>In an era of media disruption, brand journalism and influencer/newsfluencer great travel journalism continues to drive engagement and thanks to generative search is more important than ever. What do travel journalists want from PR professionals? How can you inspire them to cover your story?</p> <p>Special Guest: TBD</p> <p>Assignment: Write an email pitch to a travel journalist. Be sure to include a substantive and attention-grabbing subject line, and</p>

	remember that travel journalists don't have a lot of time. What makes your pitch special? What are you offering the journalists – Access? Accommodations? This is due on Sept. 28, at 11:59 p.m.
<b>Week 8</b> October 20	<p><b>On-Property Hotel Public Relations</b></p> <p>Working on-site at a resort or convention hotel immerses you into the world of hospitality like no other role. Communications expertise is needed to drive “heads in beds” and to help connect the dots of a dynamic organization.</p> <p>Our special guest will be <b>Jorian Weiner, Associate VP, Americas Communications, Hyatt Hotels Corporation.</b></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Write a short reflection paper about what you took away from this class. Due on Oct. 27 at 11:59 p.m.</p>
<b>Week 9</b> October 27	<p><b>Making Your Own News: Using Trends and Surveys to Tell a Story</b></p> <p>News Media love a good data-driven story, and an on-target survey can elevate your story into top tier media outlets. Tying your communications goal into a media-genic trend can yield coverage that modernizes perception of your brand or destination.</p> <p>Special guests will be: <b>Colleen Hart, Sr. Director Consumer and Commercial Communications at Hilton</b>, and <b>Danielle Paleafico, Vice President at Coyne Public Relations.</b></p> <p>Assignment: Read the Hilton Trends Report and write a pitch email to a journalist about one of the trend. This is due on Nov. 3, at 11:59 p.m.</p>



<p><b>Week 10</b> November 3</p>	<p><b>Creating New Stories: Driving business through influencers and celebrities.</b></p> <p>We will discuss how to identify and engage with the right influencers to maximize media coverage of a destination or event.</p> <p>Our special guest will be <b>Miguel Piedra, Co-Founder and Managing Partner of RockOrange, an award-winning Miami-based PR agency and Global Chief Communications Officer at Subway.</b></p> <p>Reading Assignment: <a href="https://www.travelandleisure.com/travel-tips/celebrity-travel">https://www.travelandleisure.com/travel-tips/celebrity-travel</a></p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Imagine that you are representing the well-established but older travel destination Niagara Falls and that it is in need of a fresh PR approach. What type of influencer or celebrity engagement would you consider for this effort and, most importantly, why? Write a brief document outlining your approach. This is due on Nov. 10, at 11:59 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Week 11</b> November 10</p>	<p><b>Creating Travel Content with Impact</b></p> <p>Nothing is more likely to be shared on social channels than travel photos and video. With a sea of user generated content already flooding platforms, how can you make your content stand out? And how can you best work with Social Media influencers?</p> <p>Our special guest will be <b>Jennifer Fickley Baker, Ph.D., Director – Global Editorial Content, Hilton</b></p> <p>Reading: Visit <a href="http://www.stories.hilton.com">www.stories.hilton.com</a> prior to class</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> EXTRA CREDIT: Put together an Instagram Carousel showcasing a Gainesville location as a travel destination. Do a six-slide carousel. Have fun with it! Due November 20 at 11:59 p.m. This can be used as a make-up assignment if you missed a class.</p>

<p><b>Week 12</b> November 17</p>	<p><b>Crisis Communications in Travel and Tourism</b></p> <p>A crisis can hit at any time whether it's a global event, a pandemic, an accident or a political issue. Learn how to stay calm and be a leader during a crisis.</p> <p>Our special guests will be <b>Kent Landers, Hilton, VP of Corporate Communications</b>, and <b>Mina Radman, Hilton, Sr. Manager Corporate Communications</b>.</p> <p>No assignment. Work on your final project!</p> <p>No school next week. Thanksgiving Break November 24-28</p> <p><b>Final projects are due December 1.</b></p>
<p><b>Week 13</b> December 1</p>	<p>Final Class – Projects Due</p> <p><b>Travel PR Goes Global: Working Around the World</b></p> <p>Part of the appeal of Travel and Tourism PR is the opportunity to experience new destinations. How can you successfully execute PR campaigns in an unfamiliar culture?</p> <p>Our special guest will be <b>Mike Hyland, former Vice President of Disney Parks, Experiences and Products</b>, who led PR teams at Disneyland (Calif.), Aulani, A Disney Resort and Spa (Hawaii), Hong Kong Disney Resort and Shanghai Disney Resort.</p>

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](#).