

# Fall 2025 SYLLABUS: Corporate Reputation (⚙️) PUR 4611 (20706)

## University of Florida – Department of Public Relations

Professor: Patrick Ford, Professional-in-Residence

Teaching Assistant: Carolina Calleiro

### Quick Reference Guide

#### **Class Meetings:**

- Mondays 12:50 – 1:40 (Period 6)
- Wednesdays 12:50-2:45 (Periods 6-7)

**Location:** Zoom (live / synchronous)

#### **Office Hours:**

- Tuesday 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
- Wednesday 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

(Appointments recommended, available outside office hours by request)

#### **Contact Info:**

- Prof. Ford email -- [fordp@ufl.edu](mailto:fordp@ufl.edu); Text or call: 703-966-8138 | Canvas messages accepted
- TA Carolina Calleiro email – [ccalleiro@ufl.edu](mailto:ccalleiro@ufl.edu)

### Required Textbook

**Reputation First: Building a Crisis Communication Plan (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2024**, by Chris Komisarjevsky

ISBN:978-1-7346415-9-2 (paperback); 978-1-7356415-5-4 (eBook)

*Note: textbook will be provided at the beginning of the semester at no charge to students.*

#### **Additional Readings as Assigned**

The professor will provide additional assigned reading materials over the course of the semester for use in class discussions. Generally, assigned reading (book chapters or other articles) should be read in advance of the class for which they are listed.

#### **Major Deadlines**

Oct 6	Individual Case Study Due
Nov 5	Preliminary Draft of Group Project Due
Nov 17	Final Group Project & Presentations Begin
Dec 1 - Dec 3	Final Presentations & Course Wrap-up

### Welcome from Professor Ford

Corporate reputations can take decades to build and minutes to destroy because of severe crises. In this class, you'll learn how to identify critical risks, prevent or prepare for a crisis, how to manage an active crisis, and how to recover from crises and rebuild reputation. These are skills employers in PR, marketing, corporate affairs, and consulting value deeply. You'll hear directly from leaders at top companies and agencies, analyze real-world cases, and produce work that will prepare you for issues and crisis management in your professional career.

### Course Overview

**Corporate Reputation** explores how reputations are built, sustained, and sometimes damaged beyond repair. In an era of global connectivity, polarization, constant crises, and rapid technological change – including AI – the ability to manage corporate reputation is a top priority for executives worldwide. You will study and actively discuss real-world cases, learn best practices, and hear from and engage with senior communications leaders from top corporations and agencies. Guest lecturers in this course in the past year included leaders from Patagonia, McKinsey & Co., General Mills, Cone

Health, FleishmanHillard, Weber Shandwick, Zeno Group, Finn Partners, The Harris Poll, Sloane & Co., United Minds, and The Page Society. An equally impressive lineup is planning to join us this semester.

Our group project will involve creating an original case study for submission to the national IPR-Page Case Study Competition – a renowned program in which teams from this course have finished in the money in five of the past six years, including the Grand Prize in 2024 for a wonderful case study on how Mattel’s corporate and product reputations were enhanced by the company’s involvement with 2023 *Barbie* film production.

## What You’ll Learn

By the end of this course, you’ll be able to:

- Spot early signs of a crisis --
- Map stakeholders and design engagement strategies
- Apply ethics and cultural fluency in decision-making
- Write an industry-standard corporate case study
- Measure and track a company’s reputation over time

*Note: This course aligns with Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) accreditation standards and emphasizes competencies in ethical decision-making, culturally proficient communication, stakeholder engagement, and digital literacy.*

The ACEJMC 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

## Prerequisite:

- PUR 3000 Principles of Public Relations

## 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 and Policies

- Students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest, ethical, and courteous manner — with classmates and the professor. This course values and respects the diverse experiences, identities, and viewpoints of all students. We aim to foster a classroom environment in which everyone feels safe and encouraged to participate.
- All work must reflect professional standards – avoid any inappropriate or unsafe content.
- 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 and be sure to show up and speak up as appropriate.*
- Cameras on during Zoom classes unless you have pre-arranged an exception with the professor.

## Course Grades

The evaluation of coursework will be based on the students' performance in four areas, each of which constitutes a proportion of the final grade. These include attendance, active participation, individual assignment, and group experiential learning project.

### Assignments & Grading

Component	% of Grade	What You'll Do
Attendance	10%	Mandatory: be present, on time, and engaged
Participation	30%	Prepare for discussions, ask/answer questions, occasional pop quizzes
Individual Case Study	20%	Research & analyze a company's reputation—portfolio-ready
Group Project	40%	Develop a full case study for the IPR-Page competition

### Attendance 10%

- Attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absences during the semester may 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 Points: 30%

- Active class participation will be assessed and graded on an ongoing basis. To receive high scores, you must demonstrate active engagement, which includes arriving in class on time, keeping your camera on during Zoom sessions, and being prepared to make comments, ask questions, or answer questions as appropriate. We will also have occasional pop quizzes to gauge your understanding of course content and guest-lecture discussions. Each month, you will receive feedback and a point allocation for your participation:
  - Excellent: fully prepared for and performing strongly in discussions and pop quizzes
  - Satisfactory: present and actively listening; but minimal engagement and/or poor pop quiz results
  - Needs improvement; failure to be present and engaged.

### Individual Assignments 20%

- Prepare a case study (approximately 8-10 pages) on a specific challenge or opportunity relating to 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.

### Group Project and Presentation: 40%

- 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 IPR-Page Case

Study competition. See the guidelines for this national competition here (<https://instituteofpr.org/awards/ipr-page-case-study/>) as well as UF's 2024 winning case study at this link (<https://page.org/press-news/university-of-florida-wins-top-prize-in-pageand-institute-of-public-relationscase-study-competition/>). 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](#).

## Academic Policies and Resources

**Please see this link to important policies and resources:**

<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

## Other Important Notes from the Instructor

- Late assignments lose 5% per weekday unless pre-approved.
- I can be reached via email ([fordp@ufl.edu](mailto:fordp@ufl.edu)), or by telephone or 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 me or TA Carolina Calheiro in advance.
- If you notice yourself having trouble in the course, it is crucial that you speak with me immediately or as soon as possible. Please feel free to contact 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 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, so please be sure to edit and proofread your written material.
- If you need extra help with presentation skills, arrange an appointment with me.
- If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get briefed by another student on the content covered in the class.

## Weekly Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic / Reading	Notes
Week 1	Aug 25–27	Course overview & introductions	

Week 2	Sept 3	The Changing Role of Corporations	
Week 3	Sept 8–10	Corporate Reputation – Ch. 1	Read Ch. 1
Week 4	Sept 15–17	Effective Case Studies Workshop & Review Best Practice Examples	
Week 5	Sept 22–24	Behavior & Trust – Ch. 2–3	Read Ch. 2 and 3 and additional news clips posted on Canvas. Guest speaker, Chris Komisarjevsky, on Sept 24
Week 6	Sept 29–Oct 1	Stakeholder Engagement	
Week 7	Oct 6–8	Corporate Purpose, Mission, Vision, Values	
Week 8	Oct 13–15	Individual Case Study Due	Assignment Due Oct 13
Week 9	Oct 20–22	Character – Ch. 4	Read Ch. 4
Week 10	Oct 27–29	Communication Imperatives – Ch. 5	Read Ch. 5
Week 11	Nov 3–5	Group Project Workshop – Preliminary Drafts Due	Draft Due Nov. 5
Week 12	Nov 10–12	International Reputation Management	
Week 13	Nov 17–19	Final Group Project Due – Presentations Begin	Assignment Due Nov 17
Week 14	Nov 24–26	Thanksgiving Break – No Classes	
Week 15	Dec 1–3	Final Presentations & Course Wrap-up	

**Semester ends – happy holidays!**