PUR6005, Public Relations Theory

Academic Term: Fall 2026
3 **Credit Hours**

Instructor
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Email me anytime and I will respond within 24 hours, usually sooner.

Course Description and Prerequisites

Course Description:
The purpose of the course is to provide students with an understanding of the theoretical body of knowledge in public relations and its application to professional practice. The overall goal of the course is for students to develop an intellectual foundation in theories of public relations.

This graduate-level class is designed to provide an opportunity to explore concepts and frameworks in public relations, how they are applied academically and professionally, and best employed in research and practice. We will explore the process of planning and executing public information and public relations programs to address an organization's various publics.

Course Prerequisites / Co-Requisites – N/A

Course Expectations

This course is fully online; you must log in to Canvas with your Gatorlink username and password to access the materials and assignments. The course is organized into modules with due dates. Unless otherwise specified, each module begins on Monday at 12:00 AM ET and ends on Sunday at 11:59 PM ET.

Time Commitment & Student Workload Expectations
Expect to spend 10 to 20 hours per week per course watching or attending lectures, reading, working on assignments and projects, and engaging in discussions.

Expectations for Writing Assignments: Writing Style
To meet the academic rigor and standards of a graduate program, all students must use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition style in their courses when appropriate for the assignment. The APA 7th Edition Manual has a plethora of guidelines that include scholarly writing, publishing principles, elements and format for your papers, writing style and grammar, bias-free language guidelines, mechanics of style, in-text citing references, etc. For additional information on notable changes, see changes between APA 6th Edition and APA 7th Edition.

Attendance Policy
Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. Click here to read the university attendance policies for information on absences, religious holidays, illness, and the twelve-day rule. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the Graduate Catalog and require appropriate documentation.

Late Assignment Policy
Late assignments will not be accepted unless it is a University excused absence, as stated in the attendance policies. ***Due to the university grading deadlines, no late work will be accepted for final projects or work due in the final week of class.*** Students should contact their instructors before submitting the assignment deadline if potential issues arise concerning submitting the final work.

1. Late Assignment Grade Reductions
    a. 0-24 Hours Late: 10% reduction in grade.
    b. Over 24 Hours (24 hours and 1 minute) to 7 Calendar Days Late: 20% reduction in grade.
    c. After the 7th Calendar Day: Work will not be accepted.
2. Late Discussions will not be accepted.

Student Guidelines for Course Challenges
A student with questions regarding course content such as assignments, assessments, instructional materials, lectures, meetings, course objectives, course module objectives, or other areas of the course, please adhere to the following guidelines: First, *approach the faculty member who is teaching the course* to ask for clarifications regarding the course assignments, assessments, materials, lectures, meetings, etc. Use the instructor's contact information to request an appointment where you can address any concerns and/or questions. If, after meeting with *the faculty member teaching the course,* you are still unclear on the course assignments, assessments, materials, lectures, meetings, etc., then the next step would be to contact online advising (onlineadvising@jou.ufl.edu) for additional guidance.

Accessibility/Students with Disabilities Information
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/students/get-started/It is important for students to share their accommodation letters with their instructors and discuss their access needs 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. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals,
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or
3. The central portal at https://my-ufl.bluera.com

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/."

Course-Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the historical development and key principles of public relations as a field of study and practice. (CO: 1)
2. Analyze the role and effectiveness of public relations in shaping public opinion and behavior. (CO: 2)
3. Identify ethical challenges in public relations, considering the impact on various stakeholders. (CO: 3)
4. Investigate the public relations function, including strategies and tactics employed by organizations. (CO: 4)
5. Interpret public relations campaign objectives, target audiences, and communication channels to evaluate campaign success. (CO: 5)
6. Examine crisis communication strategies, including developing crisis plans, effective crisis response, and reputation management. (CO: 6)
7. Evaluate the role of digital and social media in contemporary public relations, understanding their advantages, challenges, and best practices. (CO: 7)
8. Examine the role of ethics and values in public relations. (CO: 8)
9. Assess and apply the Global Capacity Framework to evaluate the effectiveness of global public relations strategies, considering cultural, political, economic, and social factors that influence communication in international contexts. (CO: 9)
10. Explore leadership styles, principles, practices, and future trends relevant to the field of public relations. (CO: 10)
11. Evaluate and apply public relations theories, principles, and concepts. (CO: 11)
12. Conduct comprehensive peer reviews and provide insightful, constructive feedback. (CO: 12)
13. Design a Mock CSR and Advocacy Campaign. (CO: 13)
14. Identify the components of DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging) in PR literature and case studies. (CO: 14)
15. Investigate the implications and opportunities of utilizing artificial intelligence in public relations (CO: 15)
16. Explore the bridge between theory and practice for public relations campaigns (CO: 16)

(CO = Course-Level Objective)

Textbooks and Materials

Required Textbook - *available online through UF Library*

Botan, C.H., & Sommerfeldt, E.J. (Eds). (2023). *Public relations theory III: In the age of publics*. Routledge.
ISBN: 9780367683313

Recommended Textbook(s)
This textbook is recommended in all CJC Online classes to support student expectations for writing style.

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7th ed.).

- ISBN-13: 978-1433832161
- ISBN-10: 143383216X

An example of a (mock) student paper in APA format is included in your actual course.

Recommended PR Resources
These are resources to bookmark for additional information related to the public relations industry and research agenda.

- Arthur W. Page Society: http://www.awpagesociety.com/
- Corporate Communication International at Farleigh Dickinson University: http://www.corporatecomm.org/
- Council of Public Relations Firms: http://www.prfirms.org/
- PR-Education.Org (maintained by Dr. Hallahan, Colorado State University), general public relations web site portal, especially related to public relations education: http://lamar.colostate.edu/~pr/
- Global Alliance: http://www.globalpr.org/knowledge/landscapes.asp
- Hispanic Public Relations Association: http://www.hpra-usa.org/
- Institute for Public Relations: http://instituteforpr.org/
- International Association of Business Communicators (IABC): http://www.iabc.com/
- IABC Research Foundation: http://www.iabc.com/rf/
- International Public Relations Association: http://www.ipra.org/
- Issues Management Council: http://www.issuemanagement.org/
- Journal of Public Relations Research: http://www.lib.utk.edu/cgi-bin/auth/connect.cgi?sfxejournal=1062-726X
- Public Relations Review: https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/public-relations-review
- National Black Public Relations Association: http://www.nbprs.org/
- National Investor Relations Institute: http://www.niri.org/
- National School Public Relations Association: http://www.nspra.org/
- Odwyer PR: http://www.odwyerpr.com/
- Public Relations Society of America (PRSA): http://www.prsa.org/
- PRSA Silver Anvil Awards home page: http://www.silveranvil.org
- Cannes Lions Festival for Creativity: http://www.canneslions.org

Recommended PR Podcasts

- Spin Sucks with Gini Dietrich
- Public Relations Review Podcast
- The Talking Points Podcast with Arik Hanson
- PR Week Podcast
- PRMoment Podcast
- How I Posted This
- The PR Podcast
- Wininfluence Podcast
- The Influencer Podcast
- YouTube Creators Hub
- Earned Podcast
- On Top of PR Podcast

Recommended Sources to support student expectations for writing style:

- Associated Press (AP) Stylebook: www.apstylebook.com/
- Purdue Owl AP Style

Instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor(s). The instructor(s) is only responsible for these instructional materials.

University and Course Grading Policies

University Honor Code

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 Conduct Code specifies the number of behaviors that violate this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable, especially in academic communities. All academic work must be an original work of your own thought, research, or self-expression. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to, prohibited collaboration, consultation, and submission of academic work that has been purchased or obtained (see the UF Policy: Student Conduct Violation). In addition, self-plagiarism is also unacceptable. Self-plagiarism is defined as recycling or reusing one's own specific words from previously submitted assignments or published texts. Remember that plagiarism is unacceptable in any of your work, including all discussion board posts, journal entries, wikis, and other written and oral presentation assignments. It's important to always cite your sources in your assignments.

Grading Criterion

Your grade will be calculated based on the following:

Assignments/Assessments	Weight (%)
Course Orientation: These assignments are required; however, they do not count toward the final grade. • Student Introduction • Course Evaluation	0%
11 Discussions	25%
7 Written Assignments (Slidedeck Presentations, Audits, Interviews, Research Paper)	25%
6 Case Studies	25%
Mid-Term Evaluation	12.5%
Capstone Project : PR Campaign Proposal Tying Theory and Practice	12.5%
TOTAL	**100%**

Grade	Percentage
A	**92.5-100%**
A-	**89.5-92.4%**
B+	**86.5-89.4%**
B	**82.5-86.4%**
B-	**79.5-82.4%**
C+	**76.5-79.4%**
C	**72.5-76.4%**
C-	**69.5-72.4%**
D+	**66.5-69.4%**
D	**62.5-66.4%**
D-	**59.5-62.4%**
E	**0 – 59.4%**

The only passing grades for graduate students are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, and C. Letter grades of C-, D+, D, D- or E are not considered passing at the graduate level. However, the grade points associated with these letter grades are included in grade point average calculations. See the Graduate Catalog and UF graduate school grading policy for more information.

Student Privacy
Federal laws protect your privacy regarding grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the Notification to Students of FERPA Rights.

Technology Requirements

Software Use
All faculty, staff, and students at 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.

Software

- Microsoft Office 365.
- UF Apps – access UF software applications from any device from any location at any time.
- Adobe Reader
- Zoom

Technical Support

If you have technical difficulties with your course, don't hesitate to contact the UF Computing Help Desk by filling out an online request form or calling 352-392-4357 (HELP).

If your technical difficulties cause you to miss a due date, you must report the problem to the Help Desk and then email your instructor. Include the ticket number you are given from the Help Desk in an email to the instructor to explain the late assignment/quiz/test.

IT Support
For all Technical assistance questions, please get in touch with the UF Computing Help Desk.
Phone: 352-392-HELP (4357)
Email: helpdesk@ufl.edu

Communication Policies

Student Expectations
You are responsible for reading all announcements posted in the course each time you log in.

Announcements
You are responsible for reading all announcements posted in the course each time you log in.

Email
You are responsible for reading all your course emails and responding promptly (within 24 hours).

Instructor Communications

Email Policy

Except for weekends, holidays, and University breaks, the instructor will typically respond to emails within 48 hours. For course-related questions, please post on the Canvas FAQ discussion board. If you have questions of a personal nature, please email me directly.

Assignment Feedback Policy

I will provide feedback/grades on submitted assignments within two weeks of the due date. Some assignments may require a longer review period, which I will communicate to you if necessary.

Course Policies

Video 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 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.

Privacy

If your course includes live synchronous meetings, the class sessions will all be recorded for students in the class to refer to and for enrolled students who cannot attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilized a profile image agree to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who unmute during class and participate agree to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. Please see UF's Information Technology policies for additional information.

Challenging Topics
In this course, we may cover subjects that may be sensitive and/or challenging. As in all our courses, we do this not to indoctrinate but to instruct, to prepare you to be the most effective and successful media professional or scholar you can be. We encourage you to understand all concepts presented in class, but we know that what you personally believe is your choice. If you want to discuss anything regarding this, don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Academic and Student Resources

Academic Resources

- E-learning Technical Support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 (HELP) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- Career Connection Center: Career assistance and counseling. Reitz Union, Phone: 352-392-1601.
- Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance concerning using the libraries or finding resources.
  UF Library Services for Distance Students
  Ask a Librarian – chat with librarians online.
  CJC Librarian - April Hines, Phone: 352-273-2728, Email: aprhine@uflib.ufl.edu.
- Writing Studio: Provides one-on-one consultations and workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate). 302 Tigert Hall, Phone: 352-846-1138.

Health and Wellness

- *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, call 352-294-2273, or visit the 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 and 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 the UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal well-being, including wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

Student Fees and Service Entitlement

Student Fees

There are fees mandated by the state and one local fee that ALL students must pay per credit hour. Visit the University Bursar for up-to-date fee rates.

- Capital Improvement Trust Fund Fee
- Technology Fee
- Student Financial Aid Fee [not applicable for certificate programs]

Student services and entitlements

The student services that the distance student is entitled to are comparable to those of the resident student and should include the following:

- Eligibility for financial aid and financial aid advising [not applicable for certificate programs]
- Student complaints and concerns
- Student counseling and advising
- Student organizations
- Technology assistance

Course Schedule

Week Number	Topic and Assignments
1	Introduction to PR Theory & Historical Theoretical Perspectives, Discussion Post, Written Assignment
2	Exploring Public Relations Theory: Excellence, Organizational-Public Relationships, DEIB, and Dialogic Approaches, Discussion Post, Written Assignment
3	Strategic Communication and Organizational Listening, Case Study, Written Assignment
4	Social Media and Influencer/Creators , Discussion Post, Written Assignment
5	Crisis Communication Theory, Discussion Post, Case Study
6	Mid-Term Evaluation – Keynote Speech & Peer Review
7	Media Relations in Public Relations Theory, Discussion Post, Case Study
8	Ethics and Values Discussion Post, Written Assignment
9	Global Perspective in Public Relations, Discussion Post, Written Assignment
10	Agenda Setting Theory in Public Relations, Case Study
11	Agenda Building and Political Communication, Discussion Post
12	AI in Public Relations, Case Study
13	Leadership in Public Relations, Discussion Post, Written Assignment
14-16	Week 15: Thanksgiving Break Corporate Social Responsibility and Advocacy + Future of PR theory and development for research and practice, Discussion Post, Capstone Project

The instructor reserves the right to adjust this syllabus as necessary.