

**SYLLABUS**  
**PUR 3801 (0176)—PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY**

**Instructor**

Christopher Wilson  
Doctoral Student  
Weimer G031  
(352) 846-XXXX; [cwilson2010@ufl.edu](mailto:cwilson2010@ufl.edu)

**Office Hours:**

TR – 4 p.m.– 6 p.m.  
Or by Appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

PUR 3801—Public Relations Strategy: The development of skills in strategic public relations management based on an analysis of current and historical case studies. Prerequisites: minimum grade of C in PUR 3000 and PUR 3500.

**COURSE FORMAT:**

This course uses a combination of lecture and seminar formats. Several guest speakers will join the class to demonstrate how scholarly principles are related to the professional practice of public relations. A high degree of student interaction is expected.

**COURSE PURPOSE & LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

This course is designed to educate students in the strategic management of public relations through a systematic problem-solving process based on theory and research. Through readings, lectures, exercises, and discussions, students will study in-depth the essential steps of the process: research, objectives, programming, evaluation, and stewardship. Using case studies, students will analyze and evaluate actual public relations campaigns related to the various sub-functions of public relations, such as media relations and employee relations. As a result of the course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of public relations and the process through which it is practiced strategically;
- Apply the problem-solving process of ROPES to diverse organizations and situations;
- Identify and explain the concepts and theories on which strategic public relations is based;
- Write and formulate fundamental components of a public relations campaign plan, including objectives and budget;
- Define publics appropriate for specific campaigns and appreciate differences that affect programming;
- Recognize the importance of formative and evaluative research in public relations practice; and
- Demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communication.

The course specifically supports 7 of the 11 professional values and competencies required of graduates by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC):

- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to public relations
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles, and work ethically;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by appropriate methods;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the public relations profession
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

**COURSE TEXTS:**

**Required:** Smith, R. D. (2009). *Strategic planning for public relations* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.

Hendrix, J. A., & Hayes, D. C. (2010). *Public relations cases* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Chapters from the texts are assigned in the “Weekly Course Plan” of this syllabus. Additional assigned readings also are listed. They will be handed out in class, are available online, or will be e-mailed to you. All readings must be **read in advance** of the class dates for which they are listed. Students also are expected to monitor trade publications and the mass media for local, national, and international news related to public relations, which will be used in class discussions.

**TESTS AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

The course grade will be determined on a 100-point scale as follows:

Class Participation	5%
PRSSA Speaker Event	5%
Individual Case Analysis	15%
Team Campaign Analysis	20%
Exam #1	25%
Exam #2	30%

Grading for the course follows current UF grading policies for assigning grade points (see <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>).

Grading Scale: 91-100 = A, 89-90 = A-, 88 = B+, 82-87 = B, 80-81 = B-, 78-79 = C+, 72-77 = C, 70-71 = C-, 60-69 = D, 59 or less = E.

**Class Participation** will account for 5% of the course grade, as determined by such efforts as discussing assigned readings, participating in ungraded exercises, and bringing timely and relevant issues to the attention of the class.

Students will attend one **PRSSA Speaker Event** during the semester and submit a one-page, double-spaced, typed summary of the featured speaker’s presentation, which will account for 5% of the course grade. UF’s Alpha Chapter of PRSSA sponsors a total of approximately five speaker events on Wednesday evenings from September through November (see “Events” at <http://ufprssa.com/>). To verify attendance, students will submit a second sheet containing the student’s name, date of the meeting, and the signature of one Alpha Chapter officer stapled to the summary. Students also can fulfill this requirement by attending the 2012 PRSSA National Conference in San Francisco, October 12-16. Any substitute meetings must be approved in advance by the instructor.

Students will produce an **Individual Case Analysis** of a public relations case study published in the Hendrix and Hayes (2010) textbook. The written analysis will be four to five pages in length, double-spaced and typed. It will account for 15% of the course grade. Details of this first major assignment are given in the handouts, “Case Study Analysis Guidelines” and “Assessment of Individual Case Analysis,” which will be distributed during the third week of class.

A **Team Campaign Analysis** accounts for 20% of the course grade. Students will be organized into five teams of five members each, based on their interest in one of the sub-functions of public relations (for example, investor relations). Each team will prepare an analysis of a public relations campaign conducted by an organization in the assigned sub-function. The team will produce a written report of 22 to 26 pages and a 25-minute oral presentation. The grade received for a team’s analysis is not necessarily the grade individual team members will receive. Utilizing confidential forms, team members will evaluate each other’s contributions. Peer evaluations will weigh heavily in determining individual grades for the project. As in real life, team members will be dependent on each other to complete the project successfully. A detailed assignment handout, “Team Campaign Analysis Schedule and Instructions,” and a “Team Evaluation Form” will be distributed early in the second half of the semester.

**Two Exams** will account for a total of 55% of the course grade. **Exam #1** will be given on Thursday, October 11 during class hours (8<sup>th</sup> week of the semester), and **Exam #2** will be given on December 14, 12:30-2:30 p.m. (Final Exam 14C). Both exams will measure students’ mastery of content covered in the readings, presentations, and lectures/discussions.

**MAKEUPS, LATE ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXTRA CREDIT:**

Policy of the course is that there will be no make-up exams or extensions of deadlines. Dates have been announced in advance in the "Weekly Course Plan" so that students can schedule other activities around these deadlines. Exceptions will be rare and made only in cases of extraordinary, documented circumstances, as determined by the instructor. Any make-up exams administered or late assignments accepted will be graded lower than work turned in on time. No extra credit will be given for additional work.

### **ABSENCES:**

Attendance is mandatory. Each student is allowed two excused absences for the semester. Absences beyond two—for *any* reason—will result in a reduction of the course grade by three points for each absence. Students are responsible for all class work missed. They should consult with classmates, rather than the instructor, to obtain information on lectures, assignments, and other matters.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

Students are expected to observe the University of Florida's policy on academic honesty in fulfilling all course requirements. The penalty for violation of academic honesty is an "E" for the course, at minimum.

Academic dishonesty includes the following: use of materials from another author without citation or attribution, extensive use of verbatim materials from another author *with* citation and attribution, and extensive use of one's own writing from past assignments or from assignments in other, current classes (called "double dipping").

The University of Florida Honor Code was voted on and passed by the Student Body in Fall 1995. The Honor Code reads as follows:

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Code: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. 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."

For more information about the student honor code, violations, and sanctions, go to the Judicial Affairs Web site at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>.

### **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION:**

Lectures given in this course, including handouts and PowerPoint® presentations, are the property of the instructor and the University of Florida. Class lectures may not be recorded in any form without prior permission from the instructor and any guest lecturers that may speak to this class. Recordings, including class notes, may not be used for commercial purposes.

### **CLASSROOM CONDUCT:**

The College of Journalism and Communications is a professional school and professional decorum is expected at all times. This means the instructor and students adhere to workplace norms for collegial and respectful interaction. Students are expected to arrive on time and not leave the classroom until announced breaks or the end of the class.

### **Diversity:**

All discussions will be ruled by mutual respect—for people and their opinions. Effective public relations practice is dependent on gathering and understanding diverse viewpoints. Furthermore, professionalism requires an appreciation for the multicultural society and global economy in which students plan to work. Effectiveness in both practice and scholarship relies on an ability to recognize and embrace diversity in all its forms. Throughout the course, students will have

opportunities to see how different cultural perspectives influence public relations. They are encouraged to also learn from the information and ideas shared by their classmates.

**Other Rules:**

- Cell phones must be turned off during class.
- Laptops may NOT be used in class.
- Talking about subjects unrelated to the class and reading unrelated material are prohibited.
- Anyone violating these rules or disrupting class in other ways will be asked to leave the classroom.
- Students are urged to meet in-person with the instructor and/or teaching assistant if they have questions or are having problems. Office Hours for both are listed on p. 1 of the syllabus. Short conversations immediately following class are welcomed.
- E-mail inquiries to the instructor and teaching assistant should be limited to questions that are not answered elsewhere (e.g., the syllabus). Formal composition and clear and concise writing are required. E-mail messages generally cannot be answered in less than one day, so plan ahead.
- Telephone calls are encouraged for quick questions (when leaving a voice-mail message, slowly state you name, telephone number, and reason for calling; repeat phone number).

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide the documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Requests should be made at a private meeting during the instructor's office hours.

**FINAL CAVEAT:**

This syllabus is subject to change as the instructor deems appropriate and necessary.

➔ Continued ➜

**WEEKLY COURSE PLAN:****Week #1**

Aug. 23

**Topics:**

Introduction to the Course. Overview of Requirements. History of Public Relations. The Public Relations Manager of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Readings::**

Smith's (online) "Historical overview of the evolution of public relations," paying particular attention to Parts 2 & 3, Colonial and Modern History, at <http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/smithrd/prmenu.htm>.

**Week #2**

Aug. 28 &amp; 30

**Topics:**

Smith's (2009) Textbook and Process; Hendrix and Hayes' (2010) Textbook and Process; Comparison of Process Models. ROPES Model of the Public Relations.

**Readings:**

Smith (2009), Introduction

Hendrix & Hayes (2010), Chs. 1-2

Kelly (2001), "Stewardship: The Fifth Step in the Public Relations Process" (e-mailed by Thursday, Aug. 25).

**Week #3**

Sept. 4 &amp; 6

**Topics:**

Individual Case Analysis. Formative Research: Analyzing the Organization.

**Readings:**

Smith (2009), Phase One – Formative Research (pp. 17-18); Step 2 (pp. 34-47).

Memorize ROPES Model Handout.

**Assign:****Week #4**

Sept. 11 &amp; 13

**Topics:**

Formative Research: Analyzing the Situation. Analyzing the Publics. Individual Case Study Analysis Q&A.

**Readings:**

Smith (2009), Step 1 (pp. 19-33); Step 3 (pp. 48-75).

**Week #5**

Sept. 18 &amp; 20

**Topics:**

Strategy: Formulating Goals and Objectives. Individual Case Study Analysis Q&A.

**Readings:**

Smith (2009), Phase Two – Strategy (pp. 77-78); Step 4 (pp. 79-92).

**Week #6**

Sept. 25 &amp; 27

**Topics:**

Strategy: Action and Response Strategies. Message Strategy.

**Readings:**

Smith (2009), Step 5 (pp. 93-136); Step 6 (pp. 137-182).

**Due:**

Individual Case Study Analysis at 1:55 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 27.

**Week #7**

Oct. 2 &amp; 4

**Topics:**

Individual Case Analysis Results. Review for Exam #1. Tactics.

**Readings:**

Smith (2009), Phase Three – Tactics (pp. 183-184); Step 7 (pp. 185-199).

**Assign:**

Memorize Hierarchy of Tactics/Techniques Handout.

**Week #8**

Oct. 9

**Topics:**

Catch up. Review for Exam #1.

Oct. 11

**EXAMINATION #1****Week #9**

Oct. 16

**Topics:**

No Class – PRSSA National Conference.

Oct. 18

**Topics:**

Tactics cont. Digital Media. Exam #1 Results.

**Readings:**

Smith (2009), Step 7 (pp. 199-254).

**Guest Speaker:**

TBA.

**Weekly Course Plan Cont.****Week #10**

Oct. 23 &amp; 25

**Topics:**

Team Campaign Analysis. Organization of Teams. Sub-Functions of Public

**Readings:** Relations. Implementing the Strategic Plan. Planning Tools. Budgeting.  
Smith (2009), Step 8 (pp. 255-270)  
Skim Cases in Hendrix & Hayes (2010)..  
**Assign:** All students must be enrolled in a team for the Team Campaign Analysis by 12 noon, Tuesday, Oct. 30.

*Week #11*

Oct.30 & Nov.1   **Topics:** Budgeting cont. Evaluative Research: Evaluating the Strategic Plan.  
**Readings:** Smith (2009), Phase Four – Evaluative Research (pp. 271-272); Step 9 (273-296).  
**Assign:** Team Campaign Analysis AE Report (roster, specialization, case, and presentation date) due by 12 noon, Tuesday, Nov. 6.

*Week #12*

Nov. 6 & 8   **Topics:** Team Campaign Analysis Q&A. Stewardship Step. Applications of ROPES.  
**Readings:** Review Kelly (2001).  
**Guest Speaker:** TBA.

*Week #13*

Nov. 13   **Topics:** Song Airlines Case Study  
Nov. 15  
1:55-3:30 p.m.   **Guest Speakers:** Members of Department of Public Relations Advisory Council.  
3:30-3:50 p.m.   **Topics:** Catch up. Team Campaign Analysis Q&A.  
**Note:** Monday, Nov. 19, is the last day to drop/withdraw without failing grade.

*Week #14*

Nov. 20   **TEAM PRESENTATION:**                   **Team #1**  
Nov. 22   No Class:                                   THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

*Week #15*

Nov. 27 & 29   **TEAM PRESENTATION:**                   **Team #2.**  
**TEAM PRESENTATIONS:**   **Teams #3, #4, & #5.**  
**Due:** PRSSA Speaker Event Summary at 1:55 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 29.

*Week #16*

Dec. 4   **Topics:** Course Evaluation Reminder. Review for Exam #2.  
**Due:** Team Campaign Analysis Written Report at 3 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 4.

*Week #17*

Friday   **EXAMINATION #2**  
Dec. 14  
12:30-2:30 p.m.

*Happy Holidays and Have a Great Semester Break!*