

University of Florida
Department of Public Relations
College of Journalism and Communications

COURSE SYLLABUS – Fall 2015 – Sec. 0176

PUR 3801 – Public Relations Strategy

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Michael A. Mitrook
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Office hours: By appointment.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Credits: 3; Prereq: PUR 3000 and PUR 3500 with minimum grades of C.
Develops skills in strategic public relations management based on an analysis of current and historical case studies.

PREREQUISITES:

PUR 3000 Principles and PUR 3500 Research with minimum grades of C. If you do not have these prerequisites, you are advised to drop this class. Failure to do so or to obtain the instructor's permission to remain in the course may mean the departmental office will drop you.

COURSE OVERVIEW/GOALS:

This course is designed to help develop and refine critical thinking on the part of the student in selecting, creating and applying tools, techniques and principles of public relations to a variety of managerial cases and problem situations. This learner-centered course will primarily use class discussions, service-learning projects, presentations, and hands-on instruction to engage in the learning process. We will rarely simply recount what is stated in the readings, but rather use them as a springboard for expanded discussion. We will emphasize *interactivity* and *collaboration* and classes will move in a seminar format much like the collaborations that operate in the professional world. 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. This course is outcomes-based, and you will be evaluated primarily on your ability to transfer the theory and knowledge shared in class into workable solutions. It is essential that you keep up with the reading schedule and come to class with the assigned reading's concepts in your memory and in your written notes. Not all of the materials that you read will be discussed or explained in class, therefore, if you need further explanations or clarifications please take advantage of the posted office hours. If you have a problem, see the professor sooner, not later.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

As a result of the course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of public relations and its strategic process.
- Identify and explain the concepts and theories on which strategic public relations is based.
- Apply the knowledge and experience gained in this course as well as that from course prerequisites to the development of a service-learning project for a client organization, which should become part of students' professional portfolios.
- Write and formulate fundamental components of a public relations strategic plan, including situation analysis, objectives, and selection of strategies and tactics.
- Define publics appropriate for specific client organizations and appreciate differences that affect programming.

- Recognize the importance of primary and secondary research in public relations practice.
- Demonstrate understanding of conceptual foundation and professional skills competency related to strategic management process of the public relations function.
- Demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communications.

The course specifically supports 7 of the 12 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.

This course supports the UF College of Journalism and Mass Communications' mission to prepare exemplary professional practitioners and scholars for journalism and communications fields and to generate and exchange new knowledge about these fields. The College is the home for the world's most respected educators and scholars who advance the value, practice, and understanding of journalism and communications in a democratic society. The faculty are committed to preparing professionals and scholars to practice and teach in a global society, providing leading research and service while generating and sharing knowledge. This is particularly relevant in public relations campaigns.

*Audio recording and note taking for the purpose of sale are strictly prohibited. However, sharing audio recordings and notes with classmates is acceptable.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Smith, R. D. (2013). *Strategic planning for public relations* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Hendrix, J. A., & Hayes, D. C. (2013). *Public relations cases* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

Additional readings will be assigned as needed. These additional readings will be distributed as needed via Canvas. Students may fall behind quickly and therefore are strongly advised to keep up with the reading assignments.

WRITTEN & PRESENTATION ASSIGNMENTS (Individual & Team):

All work submitted for this course must be coherent, logical, and carefully edited. That is, writing proficiency is necessary to pass this course. Misspellings, syntax and grammar errors, and other writing problems are unacceptable in upper-division college writing, especially in work by public relations students.

Students will produce an **Individual Case Analysis** of a public relations case study. The written analysis will be four to five pages in length, double-spaced and typed.

Team Situation Analysis. Students will be organized into teams, based on their interest in one of the sub-functions of public relations (for example, sports public relations). Each team will conduct a situation analysis. The team will produce a written report and an oral presentation out of that analysis. The grade received for a team's analysis is not necessarily the grade individual team members will earn. 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.

The same holds true for the **Team Strategic Plan**. Each team will produce a strategic plan. These plans should be based on the situation analysis conducted earlier. The team will produce a written report and an oral presentation of the plan.

EXAMS:

There will be two exams given. You will be tested on your comprehension of class materials.

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION:

Your participation in class is imperative. As a practitioner, you will be required to influence public relations activities and affect campaign strategies in boardroom meetings where your ability to converse with others about your craft will be mandated. Prepare for meetings, anticipate discussions and be ready to talk intelligently on issues that arise. Your grade, and in fact your career, depend on it. For this class, I will evaluate you on your classroom conduct as well as how I believe you are conducting yourself in your team. Part of this falls under the category of class participation. Since part of your grade is based on class participation it is vital that you be in class and be prepared. Simply being in class but acting invisible won't work here. Your success and the success of the class as a whole require you to play an active part in the learning experience and the class discussions.

PEER EVALUATION:

Public relations is often a group activity. You must be able to become a cog in a company's PR wheel. This involves working closely with others and pulling your share of the weight. Because some of your work will be done outside of class, I have limited ability to monitor your involvement with your team. For this reason, each of you will evaluate the performance and contributions of other members of your team. This peer level grading will take place at multiple times during the semester and will count as part of your project grade.

GRADE WEIGHTS:

Grading in the course is based on the following formula:

Active Participation (Ins Eval):	10%
Individual Presentation:	10%
Team Presentation 1:	10%
Team Presentation 2:	15%
Situation Analysis:	15%
Strategic Plan:	15%
Exam 1:	10%
Exam 2:	15%
Total	100%

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	92-100%
A-	90-91.99%
B+	88-89.99%
B	82-87.99%
B-	80-81.99%
C+	78-79.99%
C	72-77.99%
C-	70-71.99%
D+	68-69.99%
D	62-67.99%
D-	60-61.99%
E	Below 60%

ONLINE COURSE ADMINISTRATION:

e-Learning in Canvas <http://lss.at.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, the teaching assistant, and the professor.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance is required. One of the goals of this class is to introduce students to working in a professional environment. In an effort to create a deadlines-are-everything setting, I will not tolerate absences or tardiness. Absent practitioners are of no use to employers, and public relations materials distributed a day late are filed in the trash. Arriving late or leaving class early—without prior permission from the instructor—will be considered an absence. Students will have their final grade reduced by one grade level for each additional unexcused absence beyond two. If you miss a class, it is up to you to obtain course materials. You are responsible for all material covered in class, including readings, class discussions, video presentations, and any other material covered. Students missing class must obtain class notes from another student; notes are not available from the instructor. (Being on time for class is as important as being attending class. Nothing puts me in a bad mood more than people arriving late for class.)

UF POLICY ON RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES:

All students have a right to expect that the University will reasonably accommodate their religious observances, practices, and beliefs. Please notify your instructor in writing before the second class meeting if you intend to be absent from a class, in accordance with this policy.

DEADLINE POLICY:

Late assignments will not receive full credit, if any credit is permitted at all. A valid reason for missing class will be the determining factor as to the acceptability of any late work. All work is due at the start of class and will not be accepted late. In the case of documented illness or other extraordinary problems, students must contact the instructor BEFORE the class when work is due to make other arrangements for turning in the work; otherwise it will not be accepted.

MATERIAL CONTENT POLICY:

Students should provide thoughtful and factual information on quizzes, tests and on oral and written assignments. Factual errors will result in a grade reduction. All materials produced for PUR 3801 must be created/developed during the current semester for this particular course.

NOTE: Course grades will be based entirely on demonstrated student performance on work required for this class. No "extra credit" work will be permitted.

Please know that I am here to help you learn. If you have any questions, problems or difficulties, please feel free to talk to me. I look forward working with you this semester.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to arrange appropriate accommodations. Students are required to give reasonable notice prior to requesting an accommodation. DRC can be contacted at www.dso.ufl.edu.

CELL PHONES:

Easiest thing here is don't bring them to class. Since this won't happen, you must make sure that they are turned off. If a phone rings in class it will be quiz time. If this becomes a problem it will impact a greater portion of your grade. **No texting/social networking etc. during class!** This is also cause for a quiz. Work with me on these.

LAPTOPS/TABLET COMPUTERS:

Laptops and electronic tablets may not be used in class; notes must be handwritten.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

Students are expected to understand and conform to the letter and spirit of the University of Florida Student Conduct Code. Students who violate the code are subject to immediate failure of the course and referral of the case to the College Journalism and Communications Dean's Office or the Office of Student Affairs for further action and determination of penalty. In case this isn't clear enough we have the following...

And Now A Few Words From Our Lawyers: The University of Florida is committed to the highest standards of academic and professional ethics and expects its students to adhere to those standards. Each student is bound by the academic honesty guidelines of the University and the student conduct code.

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 academic honesty, contact, Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261. You can review UF's academic honesty guidelines in detail at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/honestybrochure.php>

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT QUICKVIEW: All students in attendance at The University of Florida are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. All acts of dishonesty in any academic work constitute academic misconduct. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Cheating**-using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
- Plagiarism**-representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one's own in any academic exercise.
- Fabrication**-unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- Aiding and abetting academic dishonesty**-intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another student commit an act of academic dishonesty.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS:

The UF College of Journalism and Communications complies with national accrediting standards designed to foster understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, including instruction in issues and perspectives in a range of diverse cultures in a global society in relation to mass communications.

END OF COURSE EVALUATIONS:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. 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 at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

MEETINGS:

PUR 3801 sect. 0176 meets in WEIM G030 Tuesdays (3.00-3.50) and Thursdays (1.55-3.50).

DATES TO NOTE:

Classes begin – Aug. 24

Drop/Add – Aug. 24-28

Holidays (no classes) – Sept. 7 Labor Day, Oct 6-7 Homecoming, Nov. 11 Veterans Day, Nov. 25-27 Thanksgiving

Classes End – Dec. 9

Final Exams – Dec. 12, 14-18

Commencement – Dec. 18-19

FINAL NOTE:

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