

**COMM 210**  
**Principals of Public Relations**  
**Loyola University – Department of Communication**

**Course Syllabus**  
**Spring 2015**

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**Office Hours:** By appointment

Course Schedule:

Tuesdays and Thursdays

1:00 – 2:15 p.m.

Jan. 13, 2014– April 30, 2015

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to equip students with the applicable skills and knowledge they need to successfully manage entry-level communication functions at public, private and non-profit organizations. Students will learn how to create compelling narratives for use on various communication platforms, assess and plan for communication challenges, engage media and influencers with the express goal of driving positive awareness and brand reputation, among other skills.

**Course Goals & Objectives:**

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the theoretical and practical underpinnings of public relations and help them master the foundational elements required to enter the field of communication.

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

1. Develop communication tools and materials
2. Differentiate between internal and external organizational communications
3. Identify the right audience, message, and channel for a PR campaign
4. Understand the media relations and influencer engagement process

Success in this course hinges on students connecting critical and analytical thinking to best practices and communication theories. Students will be required to use the knowledge offered in class to solve problems, make decisions and strategize.

**Required Text:**

The following books are required:

1. **Wilcox, Cameron, Reber, Shin (2013). *Think Public Relations*. New York, NY: Pearson Education Inc. ISBN-13: 978-0205857258.**
2. **Associated Press (2013). *Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN-13: 978-0465082995**

**Office Hours:**

Individual consultations can be scheduled on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at a mutually convenient time. Consultations may happen by phone, over email or in person.

**Assignment Grading:**

Course assignments and exams will be reviewed with the following in mind:

- o Writing proficiency - grammatically correct; coherent & succinct without spelling or typographical errors
- o Use of scholarly data and research - all major conclusions and analyses are justified and supported using class literature.
- o Content – thorough and accurate and comprehensive analyses consistent with undergraduate-level work
- o Insightful thinking – consistently identifies important implications and consequences

I will return a graded assignment no later than seven calendar days after the deadline. If you submit your assignment late, I will finish grading it no later than seven calendar days after I receive it. In general, when grading an assignment, I will provide feedback, an itemized and total number of potential and actual points.

**Assignments:**

The table below provides a quick overview of the assignments, their point values, and their deadlines.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Weekly News Items	30	Weekly
LinkedIn Profile and About.me Page	10	January 20
Consumer Psychograph	25	February 3
Media Strategy + Supporting Materials	25	February 24
Mid-Term Exam	50	February 26
Blogger/Influencer Recommendation	25	March 10
Creative Brief	50	March 17
Crisis Case Study	25	March 31
Strategic Communication Plan	100	April 21
Final Exam	50	April 28
<b>Total</b>	<b>365</b>	

**Late Assignments:**

*All assignments are due on Thursdays unless otherwise noted.* Late assignments will receive an automatic reduction of one letter grade or a reduction of 10 points (whichever is greater depending on the value of the assignment). A documented medical emergency that occurs to you (or a person within your care) can be discussed with the faculty member for consideration of acceptance of the assignment with no grading penalty.

**Course Grade:**

At the end of this course, you will receive a letter grade. To determine your grade, divide your total number of actual points across all assignments by the total number of potential points for this course to get a percentage, and use the following chart:

Percentage Range	Letter Grade
98% and higher	A+
94% to less than 98%	A
90% to less than 94%	A-
88% to less than 90%	B+
84% to less than 88%	B
80% to less than 84%	B-
70% to less than 80%	C
Less than 70%	F

**Policies:**

***Inclement Weather***

If the University cancels class our class will be cancelled. You can check the LUC website to determine the University's status. In addition, on any "questionable" days I will send out an email by 9:00 am letting you know of our specific class' status.

If class is cancelled, any assignments due on that day should be emailed to me by 11:59 p.m.

If a student feels that his/her safety would be compromised by attending class during inclement weather and remains home, his/her grade will not be penalized. Any student who is unable to attend class due to weather conditions should contact me as soon as possible to arrange the submission of any missed work.

***Dropping the Course***

You are responsible for understanding the university's policies and procedures regarding withdrawing from courses found in the current catalog. You should be aware of the current deadlines.

**Weekly Overview:**

Week 1 <b>Jan. 13</b>	Introduction to Course Syllabus (Policies & Procedures) Introduction to Public Relations Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 1: What Is Public Relations? Assignment: Create LinkedIn profile and develop About.me page
Week 2 <b>Jan. 20</b>	Evolution of Public Relations and Careers Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 2: Careers in Public Relations Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 3: The Growth of the Profession Due: LinkedIn profile and About.me page In-Class: Group assignments announced
Week 3 <b>Jan. 27</b>	Best Practices: Research + Planning Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 5: Research and Campaign Planning Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 6: Communication + Measurement <b>(pg. 127-135)</b> Assignment: Develop a consumer psychograph
Week 4 <b>Feb. 3</b>	Communication and Public Persuasion Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 6: Communication + Measurement <b>(pg. 115 – 126)</b> Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 7: Public Opinion + Persuasion Due: Consumer psychograph
Week 5 <b>Feb. 10</b>	The Mass Media and The Internet and Social Media Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 11: The Mass Media Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 12: The Internet and Social Media Assignment: Develop media relations strategy and write corresponding materials (case to be provided in class)
Week 6 <b>Feb. 17</b>	Sectors of PR Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 13: Events + Promotions Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 16: Entertainment, Sports + Tourism In-Class: Midterm Review
Week 7 <b>Feb. 24</b>	Midterm Exam In-Class: Crisis Situation Due: Media strategy and corresponding media materials Assignment: Blogger/influencer engagement recommendation
Week 8 <b>Mar. 2</b>	<b>Spring Break – No Classes</b>

Week 9 <b>Mar. 10</b>	Creativity + Brainstorming In-Class: Brainstorming Exercise In-Class: Final Project Briefing In-Class: Group Discussions Due: Blogger/influencer engagement recommendation Assignment: Creative Brief
Week 10 <b>Mar. 17</b>	Corporate PR + Crisis + Issues Management Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 8: Conflict Management Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 15: Corporate Public Relations Guest Speaker: Kelley Yoeder, Vice President, Crisis and Issues Management (Weber Shandwick) Due: Creative Brief Assignment: Crisis Case Study
Week 11 <b>Mar. 24</b>	Sectors of PR Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 17: Government + Politics Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 18: Nonprofit, Health and Education In-Class: Crisis Exercise (Groups)
Week 12 <b>Mar. 31</b>	Ethics + The Law Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 9: Ethics and The Law Due: Crisis Case Study
Week 13 <b>Apr. 7</b>	No formal instruction. Class dedicated to group project discussions
Week 14 <b>Apr. 14</b>	No formal instruction. Class dedicated to group project discussions
Week 15 <b>Apr. 21</b>	Communication Plan Presentations Final exam review
Week 16 <b>Apr. 28</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>

## **Class Assignments and Instructions:**

### **Weekly News Items**

**Points: 30**

**Due: Tuesdays + Thursdays**

Each week students will be responsible for bringing in a summary of two (one for each scheduled class) news items of interest. Items can be a notable PR campaign, an organizational crisis or reputational challenge, ethics fiasco or trend/insight. In 1-2 paragraphs summarize what the item is and why it's relevant to PR and to the class. Be sure to think beyond traditional PR and look for items of interest in social/digital, marketing, etc.

### **Consumer Psychograph**

**Points: 25**

**Due February 3**

During class, students will be provided a communication scenario and will be asked to develop a consumer psychograph. Using a variety of research methods such as one-on-one interviews, surveys, focus groups, media analysis, among others, develop a consumer psychograph that:

- Highlights the consumer opportunity
- Identifies media channels that reach the consumer
- Includes key attributes and activities that differentiate the consumer from the masses

Your psychograph should not only provide critical details about the consumer but also tell a compelling story as to why this consumer is relevant to the brand and/or organization. For example, Edelman and Unilever determined through research that "real" women were tired of seeing unrealistic standards of beauty in the media. Using this key insight and other psychographic information, Edelman and Unilever launched The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty.

The psychograph should be high-level and 3-5 slides in length. Students should use PowerPoint (preferred) or a similar program.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Potential Points</b>	<b>Actual Points</b>
Psychograph uses at least one primary method of research, e.g. one-on-one interviews, survey, etc. to draw conclusions	5	
Analysis includes review media, social/digital media, and secondary research to help identify attributes, activities and other psychographic information.	10	
All major conclusions and analyses are justified and	5	

supported in the literature or with examples. Citations are presented correctly.		
Writing is clear, concise, and free of grammatical errors.	4	
Paper adheres to AP style/formatting directions.	1	
TOTAL	25 points	

**Creative Brief**  
**Points: 50**  
**Due: March 17**

**Consumer Product Launch Scenario (Fiction):**

You are the senior manager of communication for Nintendo. While game console and software sales soared on Black Friday, the gaming industry's revenues are down. In fact, according to market research firm NPD, sales plunged 19.3% to \$443.0 million from \$549.1 million in 2012. The impact is devastating - Nintendo is seeing its lowest market share and sales since the introduction of the Wii.

The CEO, developers and marketing have called a meeting with the communications team. They need a plan to drive awareness of Nintendo's new gaming systems due out in 2015. You've got your marching orders – develop a plan. But before you do, you need creative inspiration.

**Assignment:**

Phase 1: In Develop a creative brief using the process discussed in class. Your brief should outline the situation/challenges, audience, message, etc. Hint: your situation may not be exactly what is outlined above; you may find other barriers or issues to be solved when you do research.

Due to the instructor are your creative brief and some initial ideas that you think could help Nintendo. Offer a 2-3 sentence explanation for each idea that you submit; 2-3 is sufficient.

Criteria	Potential Points	Actual Points
Creative brief follows the strategic planning process outlined in readings/class and includes all relevant information	15	
Facts and insights are compelling and capture the essence of the product launch scenario	5	
Brainstorm was well thought out, creative and created engagement among fellow participants	20	
Team work: worked collaboratively to relay facts to larger group and facilitate discussion	5	
Writing is clear, concise, and free of grammatical errors.	3	
Paper adheres to AP style/formatting directions.	2	
TOTAL	50 points	

## Crisis Case Study

Points: 50

Due: March 31

Identify an organization or individual that has recently suffered a crisis – a major event that everyone is talking about, including you. The crisis could be a product recall, a spokesperson gone rogue, a financial or political scandal, etc. Develop a comprehensive case study that highlights the following:

- Situation analysis
- Fallout from crisis – consumer, media and influencer response
- Organization/individual initial communication approach and challenges
- Analysis of the channels most impacted – social media buzz or local media coverage, for example
- Identify audience(s) targeted by organization
- Organization's message and how it was distributed and received

When writing the case study you should:

- Take into consideration timing, specific actions undertaken, accusations being made and issues needing to be addressed, etc.
- Consider the approaches undertaken by various organizations that may be connected to the crisis. For example, think Lance Armstrong (celebrity) and The Livestrong Foundation (organization). Think about how their approaches are similar and where they differ.
- Review social and traditional media response and how they may differ. Look through the lens of the consumer – which channel has more impact on their opinion.
- Briefly discuss what the consumer, media and organization's response was and highlight what impact it may or may not have had on the organization.

Written response to the case study should show understanding of the issues reflected in the text, additional articles, etc. Response should be 3-5 pages (double spaced, 12 point font).

Criteria	Potential Points	Actual Points
Group participation: all team members contribute equally to discussions and final submission	5	
Case study begins with a clear introduction of the crisis, including timing, actions undertaken by the organization, etc.	10	
Case study proposes insightful analysis related to communication strategy, target audiences	15	
Paper is organized and understandable (concepts flow, paragraphs have topic sentences and supporting detail, terms are defined).	15	



The entire paper is well written (clear, concise, minimal use of passive voice, free of typos, misspellings, syntax and other grammatical errors).	5	
The entire paper conforms to proper AP format.	2	
TOTAL	25	

## Communication Plan

**Points: 100**

**Due: April 21**

As a group, you will work together to develop a robust communication plan for a pre-determined organization. Specifically, Weber Shandwick, a well-established communications firm located in Chicago, will present the class with a creative brief on behalf of one of their blue-chip clients. Each team will use the creative brief to develop a campaign that tackles a real-world challenge and/or opportunity the organization is facing.

Students will apply lessons learned in the classroom to develop plans that should include:

- Brief overview of the challenge and/or opportunity
- Objectives, strategies
- Message/campaign platform
- Primary and secondary tactics that support the strategy
- Media strategy
- Measurement and evaluation

Keep in mind that today, most communication plans are developed in PowerPoint. Therefore your plan should be created using the industry standard. The key to PowerPoint, and what the instructor will be looking for, is compelling ideas that are communicated succinctly but make a compelling case. If additional explanation is needed, please add context by including comments in the notes section or examples to an appendix. Your plan should include the above elements, in addition to any other elements that support your strategy.

Students will present their plans to the class and the client. Presentations should be limited to 30 minutes. Upon completion of the presentations, Weber Shandwick, the client and professor will select a winner and announce at the end of class.

Criteria	Potential Points	Actual Points
Introduction presents specific, insightful goal, target audience, and desired behavior for campaign. Any claims are cited.	10	
Strategic plan begins with a clear introductory analysis that previews the recommendations.	5	

Strategic plan proposes at least 5 specific, insightful recommendations related to target audience segments, messages and channels.	50	
Strategic plan draws from practical and theoretical learnings from class.	5	
Plan is well-designed and relies on consistent formatting and storytelling to convey arguments and explanations	10	
Plan is organized and understandable (concepts flow, paragraphs have topic sentences and supporting detail, terms are defined).	8	
The entire presentation is well written (clear, concise, minimal use of passive voice, free of typos, misspellings, syntax and other grammatical errors).	10	
The entire presentation conforms to proper AP format.	2	
TOTAL	100	