

Communication 314: Public Relations Cases and Strategies

Fall 2016
Course Syllabus

M, W, F 1:40-2 :30 p.m.
014 SOC

Instructor

Prof. Marjorie Kruvand
211 School of Communication
mkruvand@luc.edu
312-915-7229

Office Hours: M & W 12:15-1:15 p.m., M 2:30-3:30 p.m. or by appointment

By providing practical experience analyzing and recommending solutions to real-world public relations problems and opportunities, this course helps prepare students for careers in public relations.

Course Description

This course focuses on the challenges, opportunities, strategies, solutions, and outcomes organizations experience in managing their reputations. It builds on students' existing knowledge of public relations, tools and techniques used by public relations professionals, and the concept that public relations is a strategic management function that can build and sustain positive relationships with key publics through genuine engagement. This course provides practical, real-world experience analyzing and applying case-specific solutions. The cases cover a wide range of communication issues, including internal communications, media relations, community relations, investor and financial relations, consumer relations, issues management and crisis communication.

Course Objectives

- To expose students to the range of communication issues organizations face, and how public relations can play a vital role in accomplishing organizational objectives.
- To engage students in the strategic process of public relations counseling and problem solving.
- To critique actual public relations challenges and how they were addressed by public relations practitioners.
- To give students practical, hands-on experience formulating strategies and tactics to help resolve public relations issues and capitalize on public relations opportunities.

Prerequisite

COMM 210 Principles of Public Relations

Required Textbook

Center, A. H., Jackson, P., Smith, S., & Stansberry, F. R. *Public Relations Practices: Managerial Case Studies and Problems* (8th edition, 2013), Pearson Prentice Hall.

Additional Assigned Readings

Additional required course reading and case studies will be available on Sakai.

Sakai

Lectures will be posted in advance on Sakai. This is designed to enable students to avoid having to take extensive notes in class and as an aid for studying for exams; it is not meant as a substitute for class attendance.

Expectations

Students are expected to be prepared for, attend and actively participate in all class sessions. Class will begin promptly at 1:40 p.m. and students who arrive after attendance has been taken will be marked absent. Class participation counts for 10 percent of a student's grade, and if you don't attend, you can't participate. Please inform me in advance if you believe you have a legitimate reason for an absence.

Assignments

There will be six short (2-3 page) written assignments during the semester. All assignments should be typed double spaced in a 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides and the student's name on the top of the first page. Do not insert extra lines between paragraphs. Papers should be stapled.

Public relations practitioners write for professional audiences. Students should aim to produce high-quality work: accuracy, quality, format and neatness all count. Papers should be carefully proofread, and those with typos, factual errors or errors in grammar, punctuation or syntax will be graded down.

Students are strongly advised to refer to a recent edition of the Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law (2016 edition, ISBN 978-0-917360-63-3; print edition, online subscription and mobile app are available for purchase through <https://www.apstylebook.com/>). In addition, students are urged to have and use a reference book on English grammar for guidance on writing style.

Since public relations practitioners are held to deadlines, hard copies of all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the specified date. No email copies will be accepted without prior approval of the instructor.

Late assignments will be graded down one grade per day. For example, an assignment that would have received an A if it been turned in on time would receive a B+ if it was received between the class meeting time and midnight on the date due, a B if it was turned in on the following day, a C if it was turned in two days late, etc. No make-up assignments will be available.

Discussions

Lectures on a public relations topic will be followed by a class discussion of real-world cases on that topic. All students are expected to come to class prepared to actively discuss the cases and to respond to questions from the instructor and classmates. Students who do not attend discussion sessions and/or do not participate will receive a participation grade of zero for that session.

In-Class Team Exercises

Students will be divided into teams to work on a realistic public relations situation, problem, issue or opportunity on different topics. Teams will spend one class session working on the exercise and another presenting their solutions. Students who do not attend both the team exercise session and presentation will receive a grade of zero for that exercise.

Exams

The mid-term will cover material up to the mid-term; the final will cover material from after the mid-term to the end of the semester. Both exams will be in essay form. Both will cover materials from lectures, assigned readings and guest speakers. Neither exam may be made up at another time. *Please note the dates and times of the midterm and final exam and plan your spring and summer break travel accordingly.*

Grading Scale

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	61-66
F	60 or below

Course Grading

Written assignments	30 percent of grade
In-class team exercises	20 percent of grade
Mid-term	20 percent of grade
Final exam	20 percent of grade
Class participation	10 percent of grade

Academic Integrity

Each student is expected to do his or her own work in the course. Allegations of academic misconduct will be forwarded to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication for possible disciplinary action. Loyola regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter with consequences ranging from failure of the course to probation to expulsion.

Academic misconduct includes:

- Cheating on exams or aiding other students to cheat. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful.
- Stealing the intellectual property of others and passing it off as your own work (this includes material found on the Internet). Software will be used to identify plagiarism.
- Failing to quote directly if you use someone else's words, and to cite that particular work and author. If you paraphrase the ideas of another, credit the source with a

citation. Please ask me if you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism and/or how to cite sources.

- For closed-book exams, academic misconduct includes conferring with other class members, copying or reading someone else's test, and using notes and materials without prior permission of the instructor.
- Turning in the same work for two classes, whether in the same or different semesters.

Classroom Behavior

To help create a positive learning community, this will be a device-free class – no phones, laptops or tablets – except on days with in-class team exercises. In several research studies, students in classes in which devices were allowed (but not required for class use) reported greater levels of distraction and lower levels of engagement and learning. In addition, at least one study found a negative correlation between laptop use in class and course grade.

Please be respectful of fellow students and be in your seat when class begins.

Accommodations

Any student with a learning disability who needs accommodation during class sessions or exams should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities to the instructor during the first week of class; this information will be treated in complete confidence. The instructor will accommodate students' needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the responsibility of each student to plan in advance to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

Students are excused for recognized religious holidays. Please let me know in advance.

Course Schedule

(Reading assignments are to be completed before class on the date shown)

Week 1

Jan. 18

Course Overview and Introductions

Jan. 20

Foundations of Public Relations

Reading: Ch. 1 & 2

Miltenberg, "Public Relations Redefined and Deconstructed"

Week 2

Jan. 23

Public Relations from Theory to Practice

Jan. 25

Employee Communication

Reading: Ch. 3, p. 21-28

McAdams, "How Deloitte's Social Network Beat the Isolation Blues"

Ovatt, "Top Brands Offer a Roadmap for Communicating with Rank and File"

Jan. 27

Guest speaker on change management: Pamela Davies, senior communication strategist,
Pam Davies 365

Week 3

Jan. 30

Discussion of Employee Communication Cases

Reading: Ch. 3, TBD

Bush, "Counting Every Drop"

Leung, "The Mensch of Malden Mills"

Feb. 1

In-class team employee communication exercise

Feb. 3

Presentations of team employee communication exercise

Week 4

Feb. 6

Community Relations

Reading: Ch. 4, p. 49-54

Kane, Fichman, Gallagher & Glaser, "Community Relations 2.0"

Employee communication problem due

Feb. 8

Discussion of Community Relations Cases

Reading: Ch. 4, TBD

Feb. 10

In-class team community relations exercise

Week 5

Feb. 13

Presentations of team community relations exercise

Feb. 15

Financial Communication

Reading: Ch. 5, p. 76-82

Safdar & Connaughton, "Investor Communications Strategies in the Age of Online
Activist Shareholders"

Karp & York, "McDonald's: Ronald isn't Going Anywhere"

Wardell, "Scuffles, Protests Mar BP Shareholder Meeting"

Community relations problem due

Feb. 17

Case Study: This Bud's for Who?

Week 6

Feb. 20

Discussion of Financial Communication Cases

Reading: Ch. 5, TBD

Dayton Hudson case

SDG&E takeover case

Feb. 22

Consumer Relations

Reading: Ch. 6, p. 107-111

Goel, "G.M. Uses Social Media to Manage Customers and its Reputation"

Morrissey, "These Brands Build Community" (*excerpt*)

Stelter, "Gripping Online? Comcast Hears and Talks Back"

Working, "Southwest Airlines' New Listening Center Making an Immediate Mark"

Feb. 24

Discussion of Consumer Relations Cases

Reading: Ch. 6, TBD

Week 7

Feb. 27

In-class team consumer relations exercise
Financial communication problem due

March 1

Presentations of team consumer relations exercise

March 3

Mid-term exam
Consumer relations problem due

Week 8

March 6, 8 and 10

Spring break, no classes

Week 9

March 13

Media Relations

Reading: Ch. 7, p. 142-147

Bush, "As Media Market Shrinks, PR Passes up Reporters, Pitches Directly to Consumers"

Edgecliffe-Johnson, "The Invasion of Corporate News"

Stoller, "Creating an Online Newsroom"

2016 Online Newsroom Survey Report

March 15

Getting Your Story in the News

Reading: Kaufman, "Need Press? Repeat: 'Green,' 'Sex,' 'Cancer,' 'Secret,' 'Fat'"

Sprung, "Five Real-Life Examples of Awful PR Pitches"

March 17

Guest speaker on media relations

Week 10

March 20

Discussion of Media Relations Cases

Reading: Ch. 7, TBD

Alar case

GM vs. NBC case

March 22

Public Issue Campaigns and Debates

Reading: Ch. 8, p. 167-172

Blair, "Under the Radar, PR's Political Savvy"

Hopkinson, "Monsanto Confronts Devilish Public Image Problem"

March 24

Issues Management from A to Z

Reading: Eng & Cancino, "Debate over Chain's Marketing of Burgers, Fries with Toys Likely to Ramp up, with Group Threatening Lawsuit"

Week 11

March 27

Discussion of Public Issue Campaigns and Debates Cases

Reading: Ch. 8, TBD

Kruvand & Silver, "Zombies Gone Viral: How a Fictional Zombie Invasion Helped CDC Promote Emergency Awareness"

Media relations problem due

March 29

In-class team public issues and debates exercise

March 31

Presentations of team public issues and debates exercise

Week 12

April 3

Crisis Communication

Reading: Ch. 9, p. 207-209

Barnett, "The PR Response to Virginia Tech and Beyond"

Bernstein, "Making a Crisis Worse: The Eleven Biggest Mistakes in Crisis Communications"

Goodman, "In Case of Emergency: What Not to Do"

Hannah, "In Hudson River Landing, PR Pros Were Not First Responders"

Public issue campaigns and debates problem due

April 5

Crisis Management

April 7

Discussion of Crisis Communication Cases

Reading: Ch. 9, TBD

Harrison, "The Community is Speaking Loud and Clear: Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Planned Parenthood, and the Crisis of Public Opinion"

Young & Flowers, "Fight Viral with Viral: A Case Study of Domino's Pizza's Crisis Communication Strategies"

Week 13

April 10

In-class team crisis communication exercise

April 12

Presentation of team crisis communication exercise

April 14

Easter break, no class

Week 14

April 17

Easter break, no class

April 19

Guest speaker on crisis communication

Crisis communication problem due

April 21

Standards, Ethics and Values

Reading: Ch. 10, p. 239-242

Berfield, "The One Lie That Brought Down Walmart's PR Chief"

Gunther, "Climate Changeable: Waffling Lands PR Firm Edelman in Hot Water"

Newman, "Bloggers Don't Follow the Script, to ConAgra's Chagrin"

Reuters, "FTC Settles Complaint about Fake Video Game Testimonials"

Somaiya, "PR Firm for Putin's Russia Now Walking a Fine Line"

Stelter, "When Chevron Hires Ex-Reporter to Investigate Pollution, Chevron Looks Good"

Winchel, "5 Lessons in Ethics from PR Disasters"

Week 15

April 24

Discussion of Standards, Ethics and Values Cases

Reading: Ch. 10, TBD

April 26

In-class team standards, ethics and values exercise

April 28

Presentation of team standards, ethics and values exercise

FINAL EXAM: Thurs. May 4, 1-3 p.m.