

Public Relations Case Studies

JOUR4420-001

Fall 2012

Tuesday, Thursday – 2:40-4:05 p.m., #112 Meeman Journalism

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CATALOGUE/COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Case studies and typical public relations problems; planning and preparation of communications materials for various media; application of public relations techniques.

PREREQUISITES:

JOUR 3400

TEXTBOOK:

Swann, P. (2010). *Cases in public relations management*. New York: Routledge.

ISBN: 0415878934

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

Due to the content of this course, there will be a lot of discussion so class participation is MANDATORY. You must come to class prepared and ready to participate.

MEDIA DIET:

As you know, the very nature of our profession requires us to stay on top of today's happenings. Our responsibility is to assess their relevance to – and their implications for – our clients and employers. Knowledge of current events, government, history and media is becoming more and more crucial. While your undergraduate education will provide a strong base of understanding in these areas, your proactive efforts to continue learning about them will greatly benefit your career.

Be familiar with current events. Read reputable local news sources like www.commercialappeal.com or www.thememphisflyer.com, and national news sources like www.nytimes.com. Peruse PR blogs, and become actively engaged in social media conversations. The new media landscape has changed public relations, and we have to adapt. We must know where our target public(s) is finding their news.

DEADLINES:

Understanding and working with deadlines is a critical part of the public relations process. **No late assignments will be accepted.** All assignments must be uploaded to the appropriate eCourseware DropBox by the assigned deadline.

GRADING:

Course work will be accomplished every week. There will be writing assignments, current event reports, and a final project. Each must be completed by its due date and time, which varies by assignment. Other parts of your grade will come from participating in class discussions and of course, class attendance. Written assignments will be graded on the basis of AP style, grammar, spelling and punctuation, as well as content.

Your success in this course will depend on your willingness to read the textual and supplemental learning materials, successfully complete written assignments, and participate in discussion activities, as assigned.

Grading Scale for Written Assignments

A

90 – 100 Professional work.

Clear thinking reflected in clear writing.

Uses appropriate style for type of media. Knows and uses preferred form. **No errors in form, grammar or spelling.** Adapted to intended audience (public).

B

89– 80 Near professional work. Lacks polish (style) of A work.

Form is correct. **No errors in form, grammar or spelling.**

Adapted to intended audience.

C

79 – 70 Acceptable as a classroom assignment only.

Not usable professionally without further editing/corrections.

Up to 7 errors detected. [or]

Not well adapted to intended audience or medium.

D

69 – 60 Needs significant work in form and/or style.

Up to 12 errors detected. [or]

Little consideration of needs/interests of intended audience or of medium.

F

50 and below Unacceptable in form and style [or] fails to adapt to audience or medium.

GRADING FOR SEMESTER

Current event reports (10 total)	50 points each
Homework assignments: Tylenol, 2012 Election, social media, Memphis	100 points each
Group case study	200 points each
Group presentation	100 points
Final paper	200 points
Quizzes (5 total)	20 points each
TOTAL	1500 points

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR PR CASE STUDIES:

Students will be able to:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power and to assemble and petition for redress and grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical structure;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts; and
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

Cognitive Objectives To Be Mastered (Ability to Explain, Analyze, Understand, Think Critically): Students will:

- apply their knowledge of public relations theories and concepts in various professional settings to build problem-solving and critical thinking skills;
- develop counseling and peer feedback skills;
- build teamwork skills; and
- distinguish between goals, objectives, strategies and tactics using the case method: diagnosing public relations problems and suggesting solutions with detailed messages, timelines, budgets and details.

Performance Standards To Be Met (Demonstrable Skills, Abilities, Techniques, Applied Competencies): Students will:

- understand and discuss how different public relations processes lead to difficult outcomes in various professional settings;
- successfully analyze and prescribe solutions for text and contemporary problems;
- work in teams to plan solutions focusing on goals, objectives, strategies and tactics; and
- offer constructive criticism by evaluating the work of their peers on a group project.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET:

The course is designed to equip students with knowledge necessary to analyze public relations problems, postulate alternative solutions, evaluate alternatives and develop appropriate public relations strategies and tactics.

Awareness:

- Identify and solve public relations problems through online discussions, individual written assignments, exams and a group project.

Application:

- Define publics, examine motivators, establish message content, select media and conform to budgetary limitations. Students will pay special attention to diversity among organizational constituencies and the implications of diversity in the development of public relations plans.
- Students will review and analyze case problems covering textbook and contemporary scenarios and submit individual written assessments. Each assessment will be graded.
- Students will successfully execute a group project. Final project will be graded (including a peer grade.)
- Students will successfully complete periodic exams covering textbook materials and contemporary case problems.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be to

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and innovation. Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

- *Awareness*: familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
- *Understanding*: assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and

- ideas.
- *Application*: competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

EMAIL:

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You should check your email regularly, as I may communicate with you outside of class. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the university.

In addition to email, we will use eCourseware this semester. I will post additional readings, assignments, and other course communication on eCourseware, so check this site frequently as well.

CELLPHONES:

No cellphones are permitted in class. You will be asked to leave if your cellphone is used during class. Be respectful and make professional choices.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is **mandatory** in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

You have **three** excused absences to use at your discretion. After the third absence, your grade will drop half of a letter grade for each additional absence. Use your absences wisely. I don't care if you want to skip class to get your hair done or go hang out with your friends, but if later something serious happens (even a job interview!) and you have no "free" absences left – too bad. Your grade will suffer.

CHEATING:

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

"Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting

plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.” (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at (901) 678-2880 in #110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

ONLINE SETEs:

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

EXIT EXAM FOR ALL JOURNALISM MAJORS:

All Journalism majors are required to take the Journalism Exit Exam their last semester before graduation. Please contact the Journalism office staff anytime during the semester to sign up. You may take the test anytime there are open lab hours during the semester. You will not be certified to graduate until you have completed the test.