

## **Public Relations Case Studies**

JOUR 3409-501

Fall 2018

Varnell-Jones 321

TR 11:20 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

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Office hours: TR 12:50-2:50 p.m. & by appointment

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

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

#### **PREREQUISITE:**

JOUR 3400

#### **TEXTBOOK:**

*Cases in Public Relations Management*, Second Edition by Swann, P. (New York: Routledge). ISBN: 978-0-415-51771-3

#### **COURSE WEBSITE ADDRESS:**

1. Go to the University of Memphis home page: <http://www.memphis.edu>
2. Click on the "MyMemphis" link at the bottom of the left column menu
3. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
4. Click on the "eCampus resources" tab.
5. In the center column of the page, click on the blue U of M eCourseware link

NOTE: We will NOT use the internal eCourseware email system on the course web page. Use your regular UM email located inside MyMemphis and correspond with the professor at her regular UM address noted at the top of this syllabus.

#### **BASIC REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Complete assigned readings each week and survey media landscape;
2. Check campus email each weekday morning by 8 a.m.;
3. Arrive to each class punctually and prepared;
4. Complete all work on deadline with excellence;
5. Do well on class exams;
6. Contribute meaningfully to all group work;
7. Be respectful of classmates and professor at all times;
8. Participate in meaningful class discussion diving past surface level concepts. Students are expected to synthesize concepts from PBRL 3400 and this class while exercising critical thinking in case study analysis;
9. Navigate multiple digital platforms such as eCourseware, Twitter, and Google One; and
10. Deliver polished, professional presentations utilizing multimedia tools.

**CLASSROOM FORMAT:**

The class will be presented in lecture and discussion format. It is a hybrid class, meaning work will be accomplished inside the classroom in a traditional format, and outside the classroom using various digital platforms. Proficiency within MyMemphis and eCourseware is expected, as is ability to navigate a variety of digital platforms.

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 current events. 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 critical. 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.

It is imperative that you read a variety of local and national news sources (print and online) as well as PR trade publications (e.g., *Public Relations Tactics*, *PR News*) and become actively engaged in social media conversations. The new media landscape has changed public relations, and you must adapt. You must know where your target public(s) is finding its news.

**Coursework:**

Coursework will be accomplished every week. Five exams will be part of your final grade. Each one will cover the main sections of the text.

Other parts of your grade will come from participation, homework assignments, class reports, individual case study reports, group work and a final issues and strategy presentation. These assignments, discussions and case studies must be submitted per instructions; no credit will be given outside of the proper submission guidelines.

All work submitted will be considered final. There will be no re-submission of work to increase the initial grade given. You are required to ask questions, either in class or by appointment with your instructor, as to the proper completion of the assignment. It is your responsibility to ensure clarification of assignment instructions.

All written work must reflect critical thinking and knowledge of the material; that is, examples found within or outside of class, along with elaboration, are required to achieve an “A” grade.

**DEADLINES:**

Meeting deadlines is essential for media professionals. Regular attendance is vital in class. Late work will not be accepted. If a student knows about an absence in advance, arrangements may be made with the professor to turn in the work early at the professor's discretion.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Attendance is mandatory. Students who enter the classroom late are required to sit in the closest seat available near the front of the class by the door to minimize distraction. If a student is late more than four times, the professor may ask the student not to enter the classroom on any future days that they are late.

Students who miss more than three classes are subject to drop one letter grade per absence at the discretion of the professor. Students with more than two tardies are subject to have their final grade reduced by one percentage point per additional tardy.

Coming to class well prepared is equally important. This means reading the assigned chapters in the textbook and staying informed about current events.

**GRADING:**

Homework Assignments/Discussion Participation/Activities/Projects:	40%
Presentations:	30%
Tests:	30%

**GRADING RUBRIC:**

- A (90-100): Professional work. Critical thinking and synthesis of concepts is reflected. No errors in form, grammar or spelling. Adapted to intended audience (public). Meets all assignment requirements.
- B (80-89): Near professional work. Lacks polish (style) of A work. No errors in form, grammar or spelling. Adapted to intended audience. Meets all assignment requirements.
- C (70-79): Acceptable as a classroom assignment only. Not usable professionally without further editing/corrections. Numerous errors detected [or] not well adapted to intended audience or medium. Does not meet all assignment requirements.
- D (60-69): Needs significant work in form and/or style. Riddled with errors [or] shows little consideration of needs/interests of intended audience or medium. Significantly fails to meet all assignment requirements.
- F (59 or below): Unacceptable in form and style [or] fails to adapt to intended audience or medium.

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Aug. 28	Introduction/Review Syllabus / <b>Homework:</b> Read Ch. 1 & Print PRSA Code of Ethics to Bring to Next Class
Aug. 30	Lecture Ch. 1 & Discussion of PRSA Code of Ethics/ <b>Homework:</b> Case Study 2 (Typed answers to questions at the end of case study due in Dropbox by start of next class meeting. Be prepared to discuss.)
Sept. 4 Sept. 6	Discussion of Case Study 2; turn in answers/ Lecture Ch. 2 / <b>Homework:</b> Read Ch. 3 Tweet Chat Exploration
Sept. 11 Sept. 13	What Would You Do? Exercise (pg. 19) & Lecture Ch. 3/ <b>Homework:</b> Read Case Study 4 Special Topics (Current Case or Too Fat to Fly)
Sept. 18  Sept. 20	Group Work: Case Study 4 / Group Presentation of Case & Questions from Case 4 <b>Test 1 / Homework:</b> Read Ch. 4 & Case Study 7 (Typed answers to questions at the end of case study due in dropbox by start of next class meeting. Be prepared to discuss.)
Sept. 25  Sept. 27	Lecture Ch. 4 / Discuss Case 7 / <b>Homework:</b> Case Study 10 (Typed answers to questions at the end of case study due in Dropbox by start of next class meeting. Be prepared to discuss.) Discuss Case 10 / <b>Homework:</b> Read Ch. 5
Oct. 2 Oct. 4	Tweet Chat Exercise 1 Watch Documentary "Hot Coffee" / <b>Homework:</b> Case Study 11 (Typed answers to questions at the end of case study due in Dropbox by start of next class meeting. Be prepared to discuss.)
Oct. 9 Oct. 11	Lecture Ch. 5 / Discussion of Case 11 <b>Test 2 / Homework:</b> Read Ch. 6
Oct. 16 Oct. 18	<b>FALL BREAK: No Class</b> TBA
Oct. 23 Oct. 25	Lecture Ch. 6 / Current Topics in PR Discussion Special Topics / <b>Homework:</b> Read Case Study 27
Oct. 30  Nov. 1	Group Work: Case Study 27/ Group Presentation of Questions from Case 27 / Current Topics in PR Discussion / Strategy Tweet Chat Exercise 2 / <b>Homework:</b> Current Cases in PR Brief (Typed answers to questions at the end of case study due in Dropbox by start of next class meeting. Be prepared to discuss.)
Nov. 6  Nov. 8	PR Case Brief Due; Presentation of Cases / <b>Homework:</b> Read Ch. 6 Tweet Chat Exercise 3
Nov. 13 Nov. 15	Class Work: Case Study 15 & Discussion <b>Test 3 / Homework:</b> Read Ch. 7, 8 & 9
Nov. 20 Nov. 22	Lecture Ch. 7 / Lecture Ch. 8 / Lecture Ch. 9 / <b>Homework:</b> Read Case Study 21 <b>THANKSGIVING: No Class</b>
Nov. 27 Nov. 29	<b>Test 4 / Homework:</b> Read Case Study 24 Group Work & Presentation of Case & Questions from Case 21
Dec. 4	Individual Case Studies Presentations / Last Day of Class

### **FIVE PILLARS OF PBRL3409**

- *Professionalism*: Students learn the professional and ethical standards of the public relations industry by discussing current events and case examples.
- *Writing*: Students focus on the application of the four-step process of public relations. Students dissect cases, identify each step in the process and discuss, write case briefs or present the ramifications.
- *Multimedia*: Students participate in Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Twitter chats and learn how to effectively manage their own social media.
- *Critical Thinking*: Students demonstrate an understanding of each step in the public relations process through case analysis.
- *Media Literacy*: Students increase their media literacy by looking at previous events where public relations affected the outcome. Students discuss each step in the public relations process and their impact.

### **ASSESSMENT**

#### **PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR PBRL3409:**

- 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 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 communication.
- 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.

## **HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:**

### ***Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically):***

- Apply 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
- 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):***

- 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
- Offer constructive criticism by evaluating the work of their peers on a group project

## **HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR PBRL3409:**

### ***Awareness:***

- Learn how public relations opportunities and problematic issues are forecasted, identified and managed in today's media environment

### ***Understanding:***

- Identify opportunities and solve public relation problems
- Define publics, paying special attention to diversity among organizational constituencies and the implications of diversity in the development of public relations plans
- Examine motivators among publics, stakeholders, and organizations and understand how that affects message content
- Recognize appropriate message content and media platform selection while conforming to budgetary limitations
- Understand public relations practitioners are advocates for clients, but must operate within ethical guidelines

### ***Application:***

- Read textbook chapter materials and engage in meaningful class discussion about the topics
- Review textbook or contemporary cases and answer accompanying questions, submitting individually written assessments or delivering case presentations. Each assessment or presentation will be graded
- Execute quality group work, contributing in meaningful ways to the group's success. This work will be graded (including a peer grade)

- Develop a public relations industry-news diet, keeping abreast of contemporary cases as they unfold and engaging in discussion on the topics in class, or in Twitter chats or Slack channels
- Complete periodic exams covering textbook materials and contemporary case problems

## **DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

### **PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:**

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and contribute to it from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

### **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 are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

**MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of 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.

**CHEATING:**

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media 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.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

"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)

**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.



**DEADLINES:**

Remember there's a reason "DEAD" makes up half the word "deadline." All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

**AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:**

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don't know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.

**DISABILITY:**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact your instructor 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.

**DIVERSITY:**

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communications reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

**WEATHER POLICY:**

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.