

Media Relations

PBRL 4430-001

Fall 2019

Class meeting: MW 12:40-2:05 p.m., MJ 202

Prof. Kim Marks Malone, APR

Office: 332 Meeman Journalism Building

Office Hours: Tuesday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Other hours by appointment.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Development of media relations skills, including advanced writing of collateral materials, presentations, pitching and media training. Build effective and proactive work strategies with media through various tools including news conferences, media interviews, and media campaigns, and how PR professionals must mix traditional with new media outlets to most effectively promote their clients and employers. Strategic tools and techniques for developing successful media relations will be explored.

Prerequisites

Students must have successfully completed 60 hours of credit.

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

Associated Press Stylebook (2018 or 2019). New York: Basic Books. You are responsible for the latest changes, so I recommend having the most current version.

Cision University Program. I have registered our class with the Cision University Program. Cision Communications Cloud is the leading PR software and services provider in the industry. Cision helps PR professionals reach, target and engage their audience and measure the impact of their media campaigns. Companies pay hundreds of thousands of dollars a year for access to the software that you will be getting for free this semester as part of the University Program. Each student will receive an individual login and will be responsible for following all rules and expectations set forth by Cision. You are required to use Cision to complete assignments this semester and will need to complete online training courses on your own time outside of class.

Additionally, you will be required to complete the training requirements and take the exam (free for students through the University Program) to become Cision accredited.

Other readings will be assigned and posted to eCourseware.

Classroom format

The class will include lecture, discussion, and in-class activities. I prefer to have a very casual and informal environment in which we learn about public and media relations through group discussions and

applications. We are fortunate this class is small enough that we will have the opportunity to get to know one another. There will be plenty of time in this class to converse with other students in group discussions.

I ask that you not talk during lectures and, please, unless we are using them for a class activity, **turn off all cell phones and put them away during class**. If I see you text-messaging, playing games or browsing on your phone (or laptop) during class, you may be asked to leave and be given an absence for the day. Please also refrain from checking your email and personal social media accounts during class.

Class participation. This class is hands-on, and we will all benefit from class discussions and collaborative efforts in our study of media relations, communication tactics, public relations tools, audience and media selection. Your class participation and collaboration not only are appreciated, but they are also expected. Class participation will be graded on a class day by class day basis. Your participation assessment is based on the extent that I can see that you are “getting it” and keeping current with the assigned readings and assignments. Toward this objective, please come to class prepared and ready to respond if called upon.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for PBRL 4430-001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Course Requirements

PR writing assignments. Individual PR writing assignments will be used throughout the semester and will vary in length, format and point value. Some will be written during in-class writing labs.

Quizzes. A total of 6 quizzes will be given throughout the semester. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

Media relations plan and presentation. In teams, you will select an organization/company with a problem, opportunity and/or initiative that requires media relations support. Your final product needs to showcase your understanding of media relations. You will want to have elements for both traditional and non-traditional media. Each group will give a professional presentation for their media relations campaign. It's recommended that you treat this as you would a job presentation: dress professionally, have visual aids/handouts, practice ahead of time, and be prepared for questions. You will have 10 minutes to present. All group members will also submit a page summarizing the group members' participation as well as their own individual contribution. In addition to a group grade on the plan and presentation, each group member will be graded individually based on group member's feedback, contribution to the project, participation and poise during the presentation. Additional details on the assignment will be provided separately.

Mock news conference. In teams, you will work to plan and conduct a news conference to include talking points, introductory statement, response to questions and collateral.

Cision accreditation. Each student will be required to complete the training and pass the exam to earn Cision accreditation. Details will be provided separately.

Media training. Media training can teach you how to use your words, tone and body language to deliver

your message in a powerful way. Throughout the semester there will be assignments and hands-on exercises designed to expose students to the basic concepts of media communication, including on-camera interview drills and practice in preparing a company's/organization's spokesperson (CEO, subject matter expert [SME], etc.) to do media interviews.

Grading

Assignment categories and points or percentage weights.

A = 92% - 100%; A- = 90% - 91%

B+ = 87% - 89%; B = 82% - 86%; B- = 80% - 81%

C+ = 77% - 79%; C = 72% - 76%; C- = 70% - 71%

D = 65% - 69%

F = 0% - 64%

Grading philosophy. A = professional quality work that could be used with little or not modification; B = good to excellent work and exceeds requirements, but would require revision to be used professionally; C = satisfactory work and adequately meets requirements, but would need significant revision to be used professionally; D = barely satisfied minimum requirements and below average quality; F = unsatisfactory work that does not meet minimum requirements. NOTE: plusses and minuses may be given.

Other issues

Media diet. The very nature of our profession requires us to stay on top of today's happenings. Our responsibility as PR professionals 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. Continue to feed your media diet with a good mix of traditional, specialized and internet news sources.

Other media consumption. While we are studying media relations, be a voracious, critical consumer of media, texts, stories, brands, experiences – and the messages sent about and within them in the media. Look for the exceptional and the #PRFail. Bring these examples of good media relations and bad to class so we can critically analyze and learn from them together.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, Aug. 26 & 28: Introduction to course | State of the news media

Making sense of news coverage

Readings: eCourseware

Week 2, Sept. 4: Developing a message & communication planning

(No class Monday, Sept. 1, for Labor Day)

Messaging goals & mapping strategies

Readings: eCourseware

Week 3, Sept. 9 & 11: Working with reporters

Developing media lists and building relationships

Readings: eCourseware

Week 4, Sept. 16 & 18: Media outreach & pitching

Targeting your pitches

Readings: eCourseware

Week 5, Sept. 23 & 25: Media events & promotion

Live events, tours & demonstrations and conferences & trade shows

Readings: eCourseware

Week 6, Sept. 30 & Oct. 2: Media relations planning

Preparing for the media relations plan assignment

Readings: eCourseware

Week 7, Oct. 7 & 9: Crisis management as it relates to communicating with the media

Developing a crisis media relations plan & news conferences

Readings: eCourseware

Fall Break, Oct. 12 - 15: No class

Week 8, Oct. 14 & 16: Group work – media relations plan

(No class Monday, Oct. 14, for fall break)

Wednesday, Oct. 16, media relations plan group work day

Week 9, Oct. 21 & 23: Spokesperson & Media Training

Getting your message across on air

Readings: eCourseware

Week 10, Oct. 28 & 30: Media Training Workshop

Practice what you've learned

Students will conduct media interviews on camera and recordings will be analyzed for class discussion.

Week 11, Nov. 4 & 6: Train the trainer: Dealing with the principal

(Monday, Nov. 4, will be a group work day)

How to identify and prepare your spokesperson/SME

Readings: eCourseware

Week 12, Nov. 11 & 13: Media relations plan presentations | Mock news conference assignment

(Monday, Nov. 11, will be media relations plan presentations)

Readings: eCourseware

Week 13, Nov. 18 & 20: Non-profit media relations | In-class workshop

Messaging around issues

Readings: eCourseware

Week 14, Nov. 25 & 27: In-class workshop

(No class Wednesday, Nov. 27, for Thanksgiving)

Final push toward conducting mock news conferences

Week 15, Dec. 2 & 4: Mock news conferences

Practice what you've learned

Students will conduct a mock news conference. Press conferences will be recorded and analyzed for class discussion.

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Five Pillars in PBRL 4430

- *Critical Thinking:* Students will use industry-standard tools to analyze media and their audience and to identify appropriate target media based on the client's public relations objectives.
- *Media Literacy:* Students will develop a deeper understanding of what news is as it relates to public relations and how to assess news and current event relevance to – and implications for – their clients and employers.
- *Multimedia:* Students will use social media platforms to cultivate relationships with media and will prepare materials for online news rooms.
- *Professionalism:* Students learn the professional standards and routines of media and the ways public relations practitioners can work productively with journalists by practicing media relations in a range of settings, identifying key media and learning how to cultivate relationships with them. Additionally, students will conduct print, broadcast and online media interviews and a press conference and learn how to identify and prepare a spokesperson and subject matter experts for interviews.
- *Writing:* Journalistic writing skills will be reinforced in the class. Students will practice identifying news opportunities and presenting them to news media appropriately in writing. Students will be required to write news releases, media advisories, scripts, media pitches, and social media content.

Professional values and competencies for PBRL 4430

- 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 current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

How professional values and competencies will be met

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

- Learn techniques with writing in a brand voice to a diverse and global audience.
- Apply strategic thinking for communicating an organization's message to media.
- To produce professional grade content that can be used by an organization.
- To use the industry-standard tools that support media relations work.

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)

- Complete a large-scale project that relies heavily on the skills presented in the class.
- Demonstrate an advanced ability to write in an appropriate and brand-consistent voice
- Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the monitoring and social listening software required for the course.

How assessment of student learning will be met

Awareness

- Become aware of how public relations practitioners work with the media to share information

Understanding

- Develop an understanding of the role of public relations in the media landscape.
- Develop an understanding of the processes by which public relations professionals shape images when working with the media.

Application

- Creation of large-scale projects addressing different media tools, strategies and tactics as applicable to media relations practice.

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA 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 graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or Squarespace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they 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 lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

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 writing 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

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the

University.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class 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). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

Academic integrity

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 students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media 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 rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according

to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the 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 must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Diversity and inclusivity

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. Media 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.

Student support

Student who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in

connecting with campus or community support.