

# Intro to Public Relations

PBRL 3400-M50

Spring 2021

## Dr. Teri Del Rosso

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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Catalog description

Development, scope, and modern role of public relations; emphasis on problem solving, lectures, and application of major public relations tools and practices.

### Prerequisites

None

### Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

Kim, C. M. (2019). *Public Relations: Competencies and Practice (1st edition)*. New York: Routledge. *The Associated Press Stylebook 2017* (or 2016). New York: Basic Books.

### Recommended Text

*The Associated Press Stylebook online.*

### Classroom Format

This course is delivered online in an asynchronous format, which means that you will work at your own pace each week to cover the lecture, material, and assignments. The professor is available to answer any questions via email, and will make announcements each week regarding the content, preparing you for upcoming work, and other class necessities.

Class discussion will involve the history, contemporary status, and future of the public relations field, along with the public relations four-step process. Students will write and submit assignments that will be returned with feedback meant to encourage student improvement over the course of the semester.

**Note on technology:** Students will write and submit assignments to eCourseware, which will be returned with feedback meant to encourage student improvement over the course of the semester. Access to a computer or mobile electronic device (tablet or smartphone) with internet access is required to complete all of your assignments. Please let me know if this is a burden.

I recommend visiting [IT's recommendation page for remote learning](#). You'll find information about hardware, [software](#), [the virtual private network](#), and [the help desk](#).

**Meeman Lab Availability:** If you need to come to Meeman to use the labs, you must email me within 48-hours of your preferred time. Labs will be available Monday-Thursday. You may arrive as early as 9 a.m and work until 4:30 p.m. In addition to Meeman, labs are available in the Tech Hub and the Library.

### 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 JRSM 3400 – M50 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

### Students with disabilities & accommodations

If you will need accommodations through [Disability Resources](#) to meet any of the requirements of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. Remember, this does not mean you are incapable or receiving special treatment. We all have specific tools we use to do our best work. I encourage you to consider which tools you need to be your best in this class.

### Trauma & emotional needs

This class is just one component of your life. It is important, but sometimes we experience trauma and crisis, and we need to reprioritize. As your instructor, I feel your health and well- being is more important than this class, especially under the circumstances. If completing this course or an assignment to the best of your abilities is challenging, please let me know as soon as possible. I am here for you and want to work with you.

### COVID-19 illness accommodations

I hope that this is the most worthless syllabus section I've ever written. I hope that COVID-19 comes nowhere near you or your loved ones, and doesn't affect you in any way, including physically, emotionally, spiritually, financially, and mentally. COVID-19 will likely affect one of us in one of those ways, however. Here's how we'll adapt:

#### **If you get sick:**

I recommend you take an incomplete for the semester. Given that it's hard to know how your body will react, and cases range from asymptomatic to months of illness to death, we should prepare for you to dedicate a substantial amount of your time to feeling better. Your health is more important than this course. *Honor code: no documentation required.*

#### **If you need to take care of someone who gets sick:**

Depending on the severity of their illness, I recommend you consider taking an incomplete. If you are the primary caretaker of someone who tests positive for COVID-19 with symptoms, your priority should be remaining healthy and supporting that person. *Honor code: no documentation required.*

#### **If you are exposed to someone who tests positive:**

You must isolate and monitor your symptoms. Please let me know as soon as possible if that affects your access to resources and technology. *Honor code: no documentation required.*

**Resources specific to physical health and wellness:**

Mental health Services

UofM Student Health Center

Sexual, domestic, and intimate partner violence resources

**If you are affected financially because of COVID-19:**

There are many resources available through the Dean of Students including:

Dr. Rosie Phillips Bingham Student Emergency Fund

Emergency Food Resources, which includes Tiger Pantry

Emergency Housing

Specific COVID-19 relief funds

**Course and Assignment Expectations**

Course work will be accomplished every week, including readings, discussion posts, and quizzes to check your learning and comprehension. Each assignment must be completed by its due date and time (Central Time), which may vary by assignment, so make sure to check each individual due date and time to ensure that you post by the deadline.

**Quality of Work**

All work in this course should follow AP Style, including proper spelling, grammar, and language. A large part of public relations is having a polished written concept of what you are communicating. This includes all class work and presentations. Problems in these or other areas will result in the deduction of points.

I expect your work to be good and to be yours. What is not yours should be fully cited. In documenting sources, you must use APA formatting. If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources. In addition, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource, and can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

**Repetition of Courses and Coursework**

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 resume and logo).

**Questions about Grades**

If you would like to ask about a grade, please make an appointment to meet with me outside of class time, as I will not discuss grades via email or during class. If you have a question or problem with a grade, exam question, or assignment, you have 48 hours after the assignment is returned to you to contact me, or the grade stands. Your question or appeal must be stated in writing, citing your position and why you feel the mark is incorrect. The appeal should be turned in to the professor or sent via email within the stated time frame.

Additionally, you are responsible for tracking your grade online and meeting with me early in the semester if you are concerned about your overall grade. Meeting early and often can help both parties involved find ways to improve student-instructor understanding and quality of work.

### Plagiarism policy

*First offense:* Redo for 50%, plus meet with Teri

*Second offense:* Automatic 0, no redo

*Third offense:* Automatic class fail

*Final assignment, regardless of which offense:* Automatic 0 on assignment

### Late work

<24 hours late: -10% (perfect = 90% A)

24-48 hours late: -20% (perfect = 80% B)

48-72 hours late: -30% (perfect = 70% C)

Final call: Up to 50% credit (perfect = 50% F)

### Grading

A+ = 97-100%; A = 93-96%; 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 = 60-66%

F= 0-59%

### Grade breakdown.

A=Professional quality work that could be use with little or no modification.

B=Good to excellent work and exceeds requirement, but would require revision to be used professionally.

C=Satisfactory work and adequately meets requirement, but would need significant revision.

D=Barely satisfies minimum requirement and below average quality.

F=Unsatisfactory work and does not meet minimum requirement.

### Emailed assignment policy

I will not accept assignments via email unless I *tell* you to email it to me.

### Your deliverables

#### Group assignments

Class Twitter chat (credit/no credit)	5 points
Tea with Teri (c/nc: group meeting twice a semester)	10 points
Meme/social media content assignment (c/nc: 5 at 2 points each)	10 points

#### Individual Assignments

Environmental scans (3 reports at 5 points each)	15 points
Choose Your Own Adventure Project	25 points
Midterm	15 points
Final	20 points

Total

100 points

### Assignment breakdown and important terms:

More in-depth guidelines posted to eCourseware.

**Credit/no credit (c/nc):** These assignments are graded based on completion. If you did the assignment and put some thought into it, you will receive full points. Failing to submit the assignment will result in a 0.

**Groups:** You will be assigned to a group this semester. You'll work with your peers on all group/partner assignments, which includes Tea with Teri and the social media content assignment.

**Tea with Teri:** Twice a semester we will get together to chat. This is a casual, 30-minute student-centered chat about any PR/UofM-related topic that feels important to your group. We can discuss internship opportunities, PRSSA, assignments, or what to expect during advising.

**Meme/Social media content creation:** Your group will make five PR-related, class relevant memes or social media posts.

**Twitter chat:** Students are responsible for attending a Twitter chat. It will likely happen during my "in-person" PBRL 3400, which runs M/W 12:40-2:05 p.m.

**Environmental scans:** You will pick an organization to follow for the semester. This assignment requires that you read relevant news to your organization, and reflect on how to handle current events from a PR perspective.

**Midterm/Final:** Exams and quizzes are open-note, open-book, with unlimited tries.

**Choose your own adventure (CYOA):** Your final assignment will be a choose your own adventure assignment. You may work with a partner or with a team (podcast/vlog, social, pitch only). There are five options:

1. Event-based option: You attend at least six PR-related events and write six blog posts
2. Podcast/vlog: You write and record a 15-minute podcast or vlog about a PR topic
3. Social media content: You create a mini social media PR campaign
4. Networking/personal brand: Develop your portfolio, LinkedIn, and network interview
5. Pitch your own project

This assignment will divide the 25 points into four sections:

- CYOA Part 1: the proposal—tell me what you'd like to do and why (c/nc: 5 points)
- CYOA Part 2: the outline/script/calendar/plan (c/nc: 5 points)
- CYOA Part 3: The follow-up—based on your assignment, I will ask you for additional work (see full guidelines): (c/nc: 5 points)

- CYOA Part 4: The final draft (graded: 10 points)

## COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a basic schedule for topics and major assignments over the course of the semester. Although every effort will be made to stick with this schedule, please understand that changes to the schedule may occur. All changes will be announced as soon as possible. All assignments are due on Sunday at 11:59 p.m. C.T. unless otherwise noted.

I will post the lectures from my live 3400.001 class, which meets M/W 12:40-2:05 p.m. You are always welcomed to join for the live class! I will post those opportunities in eCourseware.

*Week 1, January 18: Setting us up for success, introduction to the course*

Readings: Chapters 1-2

Assignments: No assignment

*Week 2, January 25: Diversity & Inclusion*

Readings: Chapters 3-4

Assignments: No assignment

Notes: Final day to drop is Feb. 1

*Week 3, February 1: Ethics & Law & Research*

Readings: Chapter 5, 8

Assignments: Environmental scan 1

*Week 4, February 8: Skills and business literacy*

Readings: Chapter 6

Assignments: CYOA Part 1

Happy Chinese New Year (Feb. 12)

*Week 5, February 15: Publics: Stewardship & internal communication*

Readings: Chapter 11, 14

Assignments: No assignment

*Week 6, February 22: Recovery week*

You are off Monday-Sunday. I am available to meet if you'd like!

*Week 7, March 1: Research, measurement, & evaluation*

Readings: Chapter 9

Assignments: CYOA Part 2

*Week 8, March 8: Crisis (do something well for your Monday/Tuesday wellness break March 8-9)*

Readings: Chapter 10

Assignments: Environmental scan 2

*Week 9, March 15: Midterm*

**YOU WILL TAKE YOUR MIDTERM ONLINE ON ECOURSEWARE.**

Readings: No assigned readings

Assignments: Midterm due Thursday, March 18 at 11:59 p.m.

Notes: Final day to withdraw ("W" assigned): March 19

*Week 10, March 22: Content creation & social media*

Readings: Chapter 7, 12

Assignments: CYOA Part 3

*Week 11, March 29: Recovery week*

You have Monday-Sunday off. I am available to meet if you'd like!

Happy Passover (March 27-April 4) and happy Easter (April 4)!

*Week 12, April 5: Health & Nonprofit PR (do something well for your Thursday/Friday wellness break April 8-9)*

Readings: Chapter 15, 19

Assignments: Environmental scan 3

Happy Ramadan (April 12-May 12)

*Week 13, April 12: Sports & Entertainment PR*

Readings: Chapters 16-17

Assignments: CYOA Part 4

*Week 14, April 19: Political & Financial PR*

Readings: Chapter 18, 20

Assignments: Group social media content

*Week 15, April 26: Ahhhh... summer break is just around the corner*

Last day of classes: Tues., April 27

Study days: April 28-29

*Final exams*

April 30-May 6

Your final exam is due: Wednesday, May 5 at 11:59 p.m.

Final grades due: May 10

## **ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES**

### **Five Pillars in PBRL 3400**

- *Critical Thinking:* Students must demonstrate an understanding of the importance of analyzing the needs, values, and attitudes of all stakeholder groups to determine the appropriate public



relations strategies to implement.

- *Media Literacy*: Students learn the vocabulary and tools of the public relations industry. Students learn how to communicate with different media outlets and the importance of selecting the appropriate media to communicate with the intended audience.
- *Multimedia*: Students learn how public relations professionals use multimedia communication and visual storytelling through class discussion and assignments that examine real-world multimedia public relations tactics.
- *Professionalism*: Students learn the professional standards and strategies of the public relations industry by discussing and participating in PR activity simulations, learning public relations theory and history, and learning industry vocabulary. Finally, in small groups, students apply public relations theory and principles to analyze how public relations is practiced in a local organization and write a team case study paper and present it to the class.
- *Writing*: Students develop writing skills related to strategic planning, crisis communication, positioning and platform specific media requirements.

### Professional values and competencies for PBRL 3400

- 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 communication.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communication 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.

### How professional values and competencies will be met

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

- Understand the definition of public relations and recognize how public relations differs from other management functions.
- Explain how public relations evolved in the United States.
- Understand the activities of public relations—what PR people do—and understand the public relations process—research, planning, implementation/communication, and evaluation.

- Recognize the importance of understanding the diversity (gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) of stakeholder groups and audience to determining the appropriate public relations strategies to implement.
- Recognize that not only do organizations operate and communicate on a global level but also that our local communities are becoming more diverse and that understanding the diversity of peoples and cultures is important to determining the appropriate public relations strategies to implement.
- Explain the major public relations theories and how they are used to inform the practice of public relations.
- Identify and understand the ethical implications of the practice of public relations, including freedoms of speech and the press.
- Recognize how to conduct public relations research to inform and evaluate public relations campaigns.

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

- Earn a passing score on periodic exams and quizzes.
- Work a public relations problem within an ethical framework.
- Write measurable objectives necessary to successful application of the public relations four-step process.
- Analyze a current issue related to public relations using public relations theory and present an oral report to the class.
- Write three critical analysis papers on topics related to public relations.
- Research and analyze how public relations is practiced in a local organization.
- Write a public relations case study report and present it to the class.

## How assessment of student learning will be met

### *Awareness*

- Learn what modern public relations is, how it differs from other management functions and how it has evolved in the United States
- Learn what a public relations professional does within an agency or organization
- Learn the four-step process of public relations
- Learn about the role of diversity in the field of public relations
- Learn public relations theories and how they are used to inform the practice of public relations
- Learn about the ethical implications of the practice of public relations
- Learn how to conduct public relations research to inform and evaluate public relations campaigns

### *Understanding*

- Understand the role of public relations and how it differs from other management functions
- Understand the four-step process of public relations
- Recognize the importance of diversity in the field of public relations
- Understand public relations theories and how they are used to inform the practice of public relations
- Recognize the ethical implications of the practice of public relations

- Understand how research is conducted to inform and evaluate public relations campaigns

### *Application*

- Work a public relations problem within an ethical framework
- Write measurable objectives necessary to successful application of the public relations four-step process
- Analyze a current issue related to public relations using public relations theory and present an oral report to the class
- Analyze current topics related to public relations
- Research and analyze how public relations is practiced in a local organization
- Write a group public relations case study report that applies the public relations four-step process and present it to the class

## 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 be required 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.

## COVID-19 protocols for this course

### Student Accommodations

Students with accessibility issues or learning accommodation issues due to a disability should contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) to submit an official request for course accommodations. Contact DRS at 901.678.2880 or at [drs@memphis.edu](mailto:drs@memphis.edu). (<https://www.memphis.edu/drs/index.php>)

### Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly, through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class in addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed through the regular institutional disciplinary procedures. (<https://www.memphis.edu/osa/students/academic-misconduct.php>)

### Student Health

Students who have a positive COVID-19 test should contact the Dean of Students at [deanofstudents@memphis.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@memphis.edu).

### Student Resources

Students who need additional resources can visit the Dean of Students Office website at <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php>.

## Guidelines for classes, labs and equipment in Meeman Journalism Building in Spring 2021

- Anyone feeling sick should stay home and join class virtually.
- Social distance from all others at least 6 feet.
- Wear a mask at all times when in University buildings and on campus.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer regularly.
- No more than one person in the elevator at a time.
- Disinfect your workstation before and after use, including desks, keyboards, mice and screens. Wash your hands after cleaning.
- Have phone or Zoom meetings with professors and classmates. Do not meet face to face, if possible.