

# Nonprofit Public Relations

PBRL 4432 001

Fall 2023

Monday/Wednesday 12:40 - 2:05 p.m.

Meeman Room 202

Professor Taylor Nicole Ackerman, APR

Preferred Pronouns: She/Her

**Office:** Meeman Journalism Building Room 332

**Office Hours:** Mondays, 10:40 am - 12:40 pm  
Tuesdays, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm  
Wednesdays, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

If you'd like to meet for my office hours listed or at any other time, reach out via email or text prior to dropping by so I can make sure I'm in my office. I'm also available via Zoom outside of office hours. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

**Email:** [tkerman@memphis.edu](mailto:tkerman@memphis.edu)

**Phone:** 731-225-7656 Text only.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Catalog description

Examines the concepts, methods, and writing tactics that help nonprofit professionals strategically communicate and promote their organization's mission and goals. Explores various techniques and channels to communicate for nonprofits, and develop an academic, creative and strategic understanding of nonprofits.

### Prerequisites

None

### Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

*Nonprofit Management 101*(2nd edition) by Darian Rodriguez Heyman. (2019) Wiley. ISBN 9781119585473

*PR Lessons Learned Along the Way* by Marc C. Whitt. ISBN 9798638516901

### Classroom Format

This class will be presented through lectures, discussions, multimedia, independent reading, guest speakers and case studies both in class and utilizing online platforms including Canvas. This class will

meet in person twice a week in room 202. Regular attendance and participation in class is expected and will affect your grade. Part of being successful in this class is contributing to class discussions and activities. Your learning in this class will be directly tied to hands-on activities and interactions that will better help prepare you for nonprofit work, rather than to pursue a career or help a cause you're passionate about.

Class discussions taking place both online and in person should remain respectful and professional, and show respect to all people regardless of background, sex, race, or any other factor. Hate speech will not be tolerated in my classroom and I reserve the right to ask any student to leave if they violate this boundary. Remember: Public relations is all about creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships and our classroom should be no different.

This class will explore some of the special considerations and relationships specific to the nonprofit world as well as practice strategic planning and creativity.

Students will upload all required assignments to Canvas, and feedback will be given to encourage student improvement. Access to a computer or an electronic device will be required. Please be sure to read the instructions for each assignment carefully, as requirements for each assignment will vary. Assignments being turned in will all need to be submitted as a .doc, .pdf or .pptx file unless otherwise noted. Reach out in class or via email if anything is unclear to you. All individual assignments will be due Sunday nights at 11:59 p.m. central time unless otherwise noted. To allow time for response and clarification, please reach out with any assignment questions at least 48 hours prior to the deadline.

Occasionally, we will have activities during class time that won't be able to be made up outside of class. While these activities will count for a grade, I will drop the lowest in class activity grade for each student.

Remember, I'm here to help you succeed. If at any point you feel yourself falling behind, unclear about a course topic/assignment requirement, or needing support, don't hesitate to reach out. Communication is key - the earlier you reach out, the more likely I am to be able to help.

### Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis Canvas home page: <https://memphis.instructure.com/>
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 4432 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

### Course and Assignment Expectations

Course work will be accomplished every week, including readings, assignments and quizzes to check your learning and comprehension.

### 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 original, meaning it's yours. If you quote anything or get

information from any other source, it should be fully cited. If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources.

### **Chat GPT & AI Software**

You must obtain permission from the instructor before using ChatGPT or other AI tools to assist with assignments in this course. Once permission is granted, AI may only be used as directed. Assignment submissions may run through AI detection software. Unauthorized use may result in a failing grade or a request to resubmit an assignment. Be prepared to submit any prompts you used for assistance with your assignment as well as the original ChatGPT output and to be able to explain/show how you fact-checked and improved upon the AI's work.

### **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.

Additionally, you are responsible for tracking your grade 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%, warning

*Second offense:* Automatic 0, no redo

*Third offense:* Automatic class fail

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

**\*\*Any instances of plagiarism may result in a note being added to your department file.**

### **Late work**

**\*\*\*Please note that the below late policy applies only to weekly assignments and projects. In class work, discussions, surveys, quizzes and exams will not be accepted late.**

<24 hours late: -5%

24-48 hours late: -10%

1 Week late: -20%

2-3 Weeks late: -30%

I will not accept late work after three weeks, as at that point the work is no longer helpful to current course concepts. Waiting until the end of the semester and submitting everything at

once is not an option.

If at any point you feel yourself falling behind, please reach out to me as soon as possible so we can work together to make a plan for you to get caught up. I'm happy to help each and every student catch up and not fall behind, but that help requires you to take on the responsibility of communication. If I don't know you're struggling, I can't help you.

## Grading

There are 1,000 possible points in this class. At the end of the semester, your class points will be calculated and rounded up to the nearest whole number. Letter grades will be determined according to the scale below. If additional points are added or subtracted from this possible point total, students will be provided with an updated point to letter grade scale.

**A+** = 967 – 1,000 points, **A** = 934 – 966, **A-** = 900 – 933 points  
**B+** = 867 – 899 points, **B** = 834 – 866 points, **B-** = 800 – 833 points  
**C+** = 767 – 799 points, **C** = 734 – 766 points, **C-** = 700 – 733 points  
**D** = 667 – 600 points  
**F** = 600 and fewer points

### Grading Philosophy.

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 requirements

### Individual Assignments

Individual Assignments	<b>340 points</b>
In Class Activities & Discussions	<b>120 points</b>
Quizzes	<b>160 points</b>
Reflections	<b>240 points</b>
Final Strategic Plan	<b>140 points</b>

**Total: 1,000 points**

## Honors and/or Graduate Component

If you are taking this class as an honors class or for graduate coursework credit, you will need to fulfill an additional requirement. You are required to pitch me on a special project. A few examples of such specials projects would be:

1. Creating work for a nonprofit incorporating strategies and concepts discussed in this class (for example, a newsletter, social media posts, blogs, etc.)
2. Performing an audit on a nonprofit and providing specific goals, recommendations and strategies to achieve a desired outcome
3. Creating an educational guide to nonprofit public relations work for nonprofit use

Any additional requirement must be agreed upon with myself by the end of week four and completed by an agreed upon deadline. The responsibility of pitching a project, creating the work and getting it turned in on time will fall solely on the student.

## Assignment Breakdown

More in-depth guidelines posted to Canvas.

**In Class Assignments:** In class activities will be completed to build on course concepts through experiential learning and discussion. Students must be present in class to complete the in class assignment.

**Individual Assignments:** Individual assignments will vary in nature as well as points and be used to build on the concepts we are learning each week in class, as well as gauge your progress in the course.

**Quizzes:** A total of four quizzes will be given throughout the semester to test your understanding of course concepts and make sure you are staying current with the material. Quizzes will be given on Canvas with a time limit.. You will have two attempts for each quiz with the highest grade taken. You are welcome to use your notes or book to help assist you on the quiz, but working with another student is prohibited.

**Reflections:** A total of eight reflections will be required throughout the semester to delve deeper into insights gained from class readings, special guests or podcasts/multimedia. Some reflections will have a prompt accompanying it. Be sure to write the reflection specifically on the prompt/material provided.

**Strategic Plan:** Throughout the semester, students will work on a strategic plan for a nonprofit incorporating course concepts, research and strategic media tactics. A final plan will be turned in at the end of the semester and may be shared with a nonprofit partner

**Formatting:** All assignments should be turned in as a .DOC or .PDF file unless otherwise stated. If a file is submitted in a format that is not accessible to the professor, the student will have one warning to turn in the correct file within 48 hours of contact. If the file is not turned in within this time frame, faculty is not responsible for grading the assignment.

When assignments ask a specific question, student is encouraged to write out the question before answering.

## COURSE SCHEDULE.

This is a basic weekly 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.

*Week 1, August 28 - September 3: Introduction to the Course, Nonprofit Special Considerations*

Readings: Make sure you order your textbook this week!

Assignments: Start of Semester Survey Due (A1)

*Week 2, September 4 - 10: Nonprofit Terms & Basics*

No Class Monday (Labor Day)

Readings: Chapter 1

Assignments: Reflection 1

*Week 3, September 11 - 17: Building Strong Social Movements & Advocacy*

Readings: Chapters 3, 9, 11, 25

Assignments: In Class Activity (Wednesday)

Reflection 2

*Week 4, September 18 - 24: Strategic Planning for Advocacy*

Readings: Chapters 5, 15

Assignments: Nonprofit Campaign Draft

Quiz 1

*Week 5, September 25 - October 1: Partnerships*

Readings: Chapters 19 & 21

Assignments: In Class Activity (Wednesday)

Creating Partnerships Assignment

*Week 6, October 2 - 8: Key Publics - Board*

Readings: Chapters 30, 31

Assignments: Reflection 3

*Week 7, October 9 - 15: Key Publics - Volunteers*

Readings: Chapter 32

Assignments: Volunteer Outreach Assignment

\*\*Fall Break Oct. 14 - 17 - Assignments Due Friday, Oct. 13

*Week 8, October 16 - 22: Volunteer Considerations & Engagement*

Readings: Chapter 33

Assignments: Reflection 4

Quiz 2

\*\*Fall Break, no class Monday, Oct. 16

*Week 9, October 23 - 29: Key Publics - Donors*

Readings: Chapter 18

Assignments: Stewardship Assignment

*Week 10, October 30 - November 5: Fundraising*

Readings: Chapters 17, 21

Assignments: Reflection 5

*Week 11, November 6 - 12 Fundraising (Grants, Peer to Peer)*

Readings: Chapters 19, 22

Assignments: In class activity

Reflection 6

Fundraising Assignment

*Week 12, November 13 - 19: Online Giving & Digital Presence*

Readings: Chapters 20, 14, 26, 27

Assignments: 'Tis the Season of Online Giving

Quiz 3

*Week 13, November 20 - 26: Promoting Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*

Readings: Chapter 9

Assignments: Reflection 7

Thanksgiving Break - Nov. 23 - 26 (No Class Wednesday)

*Week 14, November 27 - December 2: PR for Nonprofits, Media Relations*

Readings: Chapter 24, 29

Assignments: Media Relations Assignment

*Week 15, December 3 - 5: You made it!*

Readings: None

Assignments: Quiz 4

Reflection 8

Final Campaign Due December 10

## ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

### Professional Values and Competencies in PBRL 4432

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, both in a global context and in the United States
- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.
- Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

- Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply current 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)*

- Develop an understanding around the strategies and tactics related to strategic goals and objectives.
- Understand the difference between for-profits and nonprofits, and how that affects communication tactics, resources, goals, and target publics and audiences.
- Analyze and evaluate nonprofit campaign case studies to determine efficacy and success.
- Understand how journalism and other strategic communication fields (e.g., advertising, creative mass media, marketing, organizational communication) work alongside public relations.
- Recognize the role of media in influencing the political and cultural dynamics on the global stage and how this influences nonprofit communication.
- Be sensitive to the needs of diverse and under-represented groups in programming and creating messages.
- Recognize the ethical and philosophical issues that arise in media culture and understand the range of viewpoints regarding these issues.

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

- Earn a passing score on assignments, quizzes, and/or exams.
- Collaborate with peers and community members to identify problems and solutions facing local and national nonprofit organizations.
- Participate in one or more outside service-based activities.

## How assessment of student learning will be met

### *Awareness*

- Define and understand what makes nonprofit communication and its functions, limitations, and opportunities.
- Associate successful outcomes with the importance of understanding the diversity and cultural differences of an organization's stakeholders and target audience when developing public relations content for a nonprofit.

### *Understanding*

- Recognize how the diversity and cultural difference of an organization's stakeholders and target audience inform the development of public relations content for nonprofits.
- Discuss and summarize how special topics within nonprofit communication (e.g., gamification, fundraising, global NGO perspectives) influence how public relations and communication professionals develop their goals, and choose their medium, audience, and outcomes.

### *Application*

- Choose a nonprofit to work with during the semester and manage a mini-campaign on their behalf.



- This mini-campaign will result in the creation of at least five projects, which might include a media audit, environmental scans, grant proposal, donor letter, newsletter, op-ed, podcast script, and infographic.

## JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

### Portfolio requirement

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, 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
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

### Email

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

### Electronic devices

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

### AI/Chat GPT

The use of artificial intelligence software, such as Chat GPT, is prohibited in some courses and required in others in Journalism & Strategic Media. Please refer to specific guidelines for this course in the course-specific part of the syllabus.

## Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

## Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C-) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You 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. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

## Academic integrity

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and 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, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws 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 and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). 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.

## Online SETEs

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; 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 seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

## **Deadlines**

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. 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.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

## **AP Style and grammar**

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. You are responsible for learning these rules and checking your work for errors.

## **Disability and accommodations**

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

## **Diversity and inclusivity**

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

## **Weather policy**

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website and the LiveSafe App regarding inclement weather.

## **Student support**

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.