

Intro to Public Relations

PBRL 3400-001, 350

T/R 1:00-2:25 p.m. - Zoom

Fall 2020

Prof. Rachel Stark

Office Hours: By appointment only or ask to stay after class

Email: : rptrsn3@memphis.edu

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

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.

Accessing the course website

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 UofM eCourseware link
6. Down on that page, in the FALL 2020 course list available to you, click on the link for PBRL 3400 - 001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Classroom format

This class will be presented in lecture and discussion formats using a variety of online platforms, including but not limited to: eCourseware, social media sites, and Zoom. 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 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. Please let me know immediately if this is a challenge for you.

I see this learning environment as an empowered learning environment, I expect that you show up ready to engage with myself and your classmates. It's important to ask questions when you're

lost, and pay attention so you don't get lost on purpose.

It is my hope that you know and believe that I am always willing to help you. Always ask for clarification(s) if you have any questions or doubts: the sooner the better. It's important to be proactive. If you're having an issue, let's work together to make sure you are doing what you can, when you can. Recognize that there's a difference between reasons and excuses. I'm always willing to work with you if you've got a good reason—see a few examples of good reasons below.

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 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:

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. This can look like taking an incomplete to work with the professor to create a plan to finish. *Honor code: no documentation required.*

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

Depending on the severity of their illness, the same rules apply as if you were ill yourself. An incomplete is a fine option if you need it. 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](#)

If you cannot afford your textbook or have issues with technology, please let me know ASAP.

Course expectation

To keep our PR, Meeman, UofM, and Memphis community as safe as possible, we will run this class as a synchronous online course. That means you are expected to attend class via video conferencing once a week (as scheduled, see below). In addition to weekly live lectures, we will have individual and team meetings, and use other digital platforms to engage with each other (e.g., social media).

Course work will be accomplished every week, which will include “in-class” exercises, quizzes, exams, individual and team assignments. Each assignment must be completed by its due date and time, which is Sunday at 11:59 p.m. CT unless otherwise noted.

You will need to get in the habit of checking eCourseware regularly. I use this platform to communicate with the class.

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%

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

Citation policy

For this class, we'll use AP Style (<https://www.apstylebook.com>) and APA style (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html).

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>.

Late work

If you are going to be late, please ask for an extension before the day that the assignment is due. If things need to be a few days late, I am more than happy to work with you just please do not make this a habit. Otherwise, I do not take late work.

Emailed assignment policy

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

Your deliverables

Team Assignments	15 Points
Classroom Twitter chat (credit/no credit)	5 points
In-class activities (credit/no credit, 5 pts each)	10 points
Individual Assignments	40 Points
Environmental scans (3 reports at 5 points each)	15 points
PRSSA Reflection (credit/no credit)	5 points
Ethics and Law reflection (credit/no credit)	5 points
PR Vlog.	15 points
Honors assignment:	
Case Study	50 Points
Exams/Quizzes	50 Points
Midterm	10
Final	20
Quizzes (2 quizzes at 10 points each)	20
Total	105 Points (155 if honors)

Assignment breakdown and important terms:

More in-depth guidelines posted to eCourseware.

Credit/no credit: 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. These assignments are exempt from the late policy (including the "last call").

Teams: You will be assigned to a team, this semester. You'll work with this buddy system on all group/partner assignments, which includes the Twitter chat and both of the group-driven in-class assignments.

Mini presentation: The goal for this assignment is to create and share with the class a short (5 to

10 minute) presentation on that weeks reading. An important part about this is to provide an example of a diverse public relations campaign that is similar to the topic of the reading (such as leadership or social media). You will identify a person in the industry or a campaign that represents minority or often marginalized voices (e.g., race, (dis)ability, gender, sexuality) and include that in your presentation.

Twitter chat: Students are responsible for attending a Twitter chat during class.

In-class assignments: These are short assignments that can be completed during the class period. These will be individual, partner, or group. More info during that particular class period. These assignments are in lieu of participation points. Exempt from late policy and are credit/no credit.

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. Relevant news can include news stories, press releases, company blogs, etc.

Reflection: After attending at least one panel for the PRSA/PRSSA ICON, please reflect on your experience. There is also one reflection about our ethics and law section. Reflect on what you have learned and how you would apply it if you had a job in PR or a related field. This is credit/no credit.

Quizzes/Midterm/Final: Exams and quizzes are open-note, open-book.

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.

Week 1, August 17: Setting us up for success, introduction to the course and PR, leadership

Readings: Chapter 1-2

T: Welcome to class!

R: Lecture

Week 2, August 24: Diversity & Inclusion

Readings: Chapters 3-4

T: Mini presentation and lecture

R: Diversity and Inclusion, right ways and wrong ways

Week 3, August 31: Ethics and law

Readings: Chapter 5, 8

T: Mini presentation and lecture

R: Ethics and Law in PR, examples

Assignments: Reflection paper due Thursday by 11:59 p.m.

Week 4, September 7: Skills and business literacy

Readings: Chapters 6

T: Mini presentation and lecture

R: Real life examples and in-class discussion (tiktok Share a Coke) Go over environmental scan assignment.

Assignments: Environmental scan 1 (of 3) due Sunday 13th at 11:59 p.m.

Week 5, September 14: Publics: Stewardship and Internal communication

Readings: Chapter 11, 14

T: Mini presentation and lecture

R: In class activity, discuss environmental scan

Assignments: Quiz 1 (of 2) due at 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, September 17th

Week 6, September 21: Research, measurement, evaluation

Readings: Chapter 9

T: Mini presentation and lecture

R: Mini campaign

Week 7, September 28: Midterm

We will run a midterm review, which will cover lectures and readings from week 1-6.

T: Review in class

R: Take home midterm due at 11:59 p.m. (see eCourseware)

Assignments: Midterm

Week 8, October 5: Crisis

Readings: Chapter 10

T: Mini presentation and lecture

R: Crisis simulations in class. Environmental scan 2 (of 3) due Sunday, October 11th at 11:59 p.m.

Assignments: environmental scan

Week 9, October 12: Content creation and social media

Readings: Chapter 7, 12

T: Mini presentation and lecture

R: Twitter chat day in class

Week 10, October 19: Health and Nonprofit PR

Readings: Chapter 15, 19

T: Mini presentation and lecture

R: "What's it like interning for a nonprofit?" lecture

Assignments: Quiz 2 (out of 2) due at 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, October 22nd

Week 11, October 26: PRSSA Conference week

Readings: Chapter 13, 21

T: Mini presentation and lecture

R: We'll attend the PRSSA program during our class
Assignment: Conference reflection. Due Sunday, November 1st at 11:59 p.m.

Week 12, November 2: Sports and Entertainment PR

Readings: Chapter 16, 17

T: Mini presentation and lecture

R: Work day (no class meeting)

Assignment: Environmental scan 3 (of 3) due Sunday, November 8th, at 11:59 p.m.

Week 13, November 9: Political and Financial PR

Readings: Chapter 18, 20

T: Mini presentation and lecture

R: Political and financial PR deconstructed

Week 14, LAST CLASS: November 17

Readings: None

T: In-class review for final exam and reflections

R: Study!

Exams week: November 18-24

Open note, open book, take home final due: Monday, November 23 at 11:59 p.m.

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

Students 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. (<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.

Student Resources

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