

PBRL 2100 | Fundamentals of Strategic Communications and PR

Course Syllabus – Eight Week Course

Instructor – Gary Ford

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Course Description

This course focuses on strategic and tactical communications skills necessary for the practice of corporate communications and public relations in business, organizational, and non-profit settings. Topics covered include the history and theory of public relations, strategic communications processes, stakeholder analysis and issues management, and communications tactics such as media relations, publications, community relations, consumer relations, employee communications and online Internet communications.

Incoming Competency

Students are expected to be self-motivated, prepared for all discussions and assignments, and enthusiastic about the practice of public relations.

Learning Outcomes

- Full understanding and mastery of the public relations and corporate communications functions employed in both business and non-profit organizations including problem analysis, strategic planning, message development and tactical solutions.
- Knowledge of the communications strategic planning processes including stakeholder analysis and message development.
- Ability to prepare a comprehensive communications plan addressing strategy and tactics necessary to resolve a communications problem or achieve a communications goal.
- Understanding of communications strategic planning tools including research and issues management.
- Knowledge of various tactics and processes employed in corporate communications including media relations, publications, community relations, consumer relations, employee communications and online Internet communications programs.
- Understanding of methods used to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of corporation communications functions and programming.

Required Text

Public Relations: The Profession and the Practice by Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, Toth and Van Leuven. McGraw-Hill. ISBN: 0-07-242402-8 This book comes with a student CD-ROM which is also required.

Expectations

Concepts presented in the course will serve as the basis for other public relations courses in the major and are very important to your success.

- *Read In Advance.* Students are expected to read all text materials assigned for the week before arriving at the first class session of the week.
- *Turn In Work On Time.* Weekly ILAs (Individual Learning Assignments) will be due at the beginning of the first class session the following week. **LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** Assignments are due in person – no email attachments will be accepted.
- *Attendance Is Expected.* Excused absences must be approved in advance by the instructor. Missing four or more classes will result in a failing grade.
- *Respect Others.* Behavior that disrupts the class or distracts other students will not be tolerated. This includes cell phones, pagers, PDAs and tardiness.
- *Thou Shalt Not Cheat.* Only your best, original work is acceptable for class assignments. Plagiarism is a sin of dismissal for students in the class. Work taken from the Internet and other sources must be properly cited. Penalties for submitting non-original work will range from failing the assignment to dismissal from the course.

Grading

Attendance/Participation ICA (In Class Activity)	10%
Weekly ILAs (Individual Learning Activity)	10%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam.....	20%
Term Project.....	40%

Significant penalty for poor grammar, typos and misspelling.

Course Schedule

Week One

What Is Public Relations

Communications Skills • PR Professionals • PR Leadership • No, It's Not Being Good with People It's about the Messages • PR versus Related Fields

Where Did PR Come From?

Bless Us For We Have Promoted • Educating the Masses about the Masses • Publicity Press Agents • Building Relations • Thomas Edison and the Electric Chair

The Formal Theories of PR

*Situational • Systems • Action • Exchange • Diffusion
Elaborate Likelihood • Agenda Setting*

Reading – Chapter 1, 2, 3

ICA No. 1 – *Find Some PR*

ILA No. 1 – *Case of the Untrained Coal*

Week Two

Ethics and The Law Apply to PR Too

*First Amendment • Litigation and PR • Ethics • Professional Standards
Codes of Conduct • Government Regulations*

Getting To The Bottom of Public Opinion Through Research

*Informal Research • Scientific Research • Measuring Opinion • PR Audits
Image Surveys • Focus Groups*

Putting The Plan Together: Strategic Planning for PR

*Four Step Plan • What's The Problem • What's The Message • What's the Approach
What Do We Do? • How Did We Do?*

Reading – Chapter 4, 5, 6

ICA No. 2 – *Focusing on the Focus Group*

ILA No. 2 – *Defend Yourself*

Week Three

Delivering The Message

*Who Are The Stakeholders? • Influencing Decisions • Determining the Tactics
Writing • Media Selection • Getting The Right Attention*

Evaluating Effectiveness: So How Did We Do?

Measurements • Proving Your Worth • Quantifying Results

Reading – Chapter 7, 8

ICA No. 3 – *Stakeholder Analysis | Review, Review, Review*

ILA No. 3 – *Case of the Coronado Corn Fries*

Week Four

Media Relations

*Media Mentality • Make A Friend Before You Need One • Newspapers • Magazines
Radio/TV • Internet • News Releases • Crisis Communications*

Reading – Chapter 9

ICA No. 4 – ***Mid-Term Exam***

ILA No. 4 – *Case of the Toxic Shock*

Week Five

Employee Communications

Culture In Organizations • Developing An Internal Policy • What Shall We Tell 'Em? Communications Programming • Internal Media

Community Relations

Good Neighbors • Community Channels • Working The Grass Roots Philanthropy • Activism

Consumer Relations and Marketing

Promoting Products • Building Awareness • Free versus Paid Placement Consumer Education • Building a Brand

Reading – Chapter 10, 11, 12

ICA No. 5 – Selling Scooters

ILA No. 5 – *Business to Business: Case of the Soy Ink*

Week Six

Financial and Corporate Communications

Investor Relations • Disclosure • Working with Wall Street • Annual Reports Annual Meeting • Issues Management

Public Affairs and Government Relations

Public Relations and the Political Process • Lobbying Issues Management • Government Relations

Reading – Chapters 13, 14, 16

ICA No. 6 – *Annual Report*

ILA No. 6 – *Financial versus Mainstream Press*

Week Seven

Public Relations and Non-Profit Organizations

Associations • Educational Institutions • Religious Organizations • Charitable Organizations Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers • Donor Development

Trends In PR

Technology • Blogs • Podcasts

Reading – Chapter 15, 17

ICA No. 7 – *Review, Review, Review For Final*

ICA No. 7 – *Race For The Cure*

Week Eight

ICA No. 8 – ***Final Exam***

ILA No. 8 – ***Term Project Due***