

COMM 210
Principals of Public Relations
Loyola University – Department of Communication

Course Syllabus
Spring 2016

Instructor: Veronica Marshall
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Schedule:
Tuesdays and Thursdays
1:00 – 2:15 p.m.
Jan. 19, 2016– April 29, 2016

Course Description:

This course is designed to equip students with the applicable skills and knowledge to successfully manage entry-level communication functions at public, private and non-profit organizations. Students learn how to create compelling narratives for use on various communication platforms, assess and plan for communication challenges, engage media and influencers with the express goal of driving positive awareness and brand reputation, among other skills.

Course Goals & Objectives:

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the theoretical and practical underpinnings of public relations and help them master the foundational elements required to enter the field of communication.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop communication tools and materials
2. Differentiate between the roles of internal and external organizational communications
3. Identify the right audience, message, and channel for a PR campaign
4. Understand the media relations and influencer engagement process

Success in this course hinges on students connecting critical and analytical thinking to best practices and communication theories. Students will be required to use the knowledge offered in class to solve problems, make decisions and strategize.

Required Text:

The following books are required:

1. **Wilcox, Cameron (2014). *Public Relations Strategies and Tactics*. New York, NY: Pearson Education Inc. ISBN-13: 978-0205857258.**
2. **Associated Press (2013). *Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN-13: 978-0465082995**

Office Hours:

Individual consultations can be scheduled on Monday- Friday from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Consultations may happen by phone, over email or in person.

Assignment Grading:

Course assignments and exams will be reviewed with the following in mind:

- Writing proficiency - grammatically correct; coherent & succinct without spelling or typographical errors
- Use of scholarly data and research - all major conclusions and analyses are justified and supported using class literature.
- Content – thorough and accurate and comprehensive analyses consistent with undergraduate-level work
- Insightful thinking – consistently identifies important implications and consequences

I will return a graded assignment no later than seven calendar days after the deadline. If you submit your assignment late, I will finish grading it no later than seven calendar days after I receive it. In general, when grading an assignment, I will provide feedback, an itemized and total number of potential and actual points.

Assignments:

The table below provides a quick overview of the assignments, their point values, and their deadlines.

Assignment	Points	Deadline
Weekly News Items	30	2x a Week
Personal Statement + Biography	25	February 11
Midterm Exam	50	March 1
Consumer Psychograph	25	March 3
Influencer + Media Recommendations	25	March 24
Crisis Case Study	25	April 7
Strategic Communication Plan	100	April 26 + 28
Final Exam	50	May 3
Total	330	

Late Assignments:

All assignments are due on Thursdays unless otherwise noted. Late assignments will receive an automatic reduction of one letter grade or a reduction of 10 points (whichever is greater depending on the value of the assignment). A documented medical emergency that occurs to you (or a person within your care) can be discussed with the faculty member for consideration of acceptance of the assignment with no grading penalty.

Course Grade:

At the end of this course, you will receive a letter grade. To determine your grade, divide your total number of actual points across all assignments by the total number of potential points for this course to get a percentage, and use the following chart:

Percentage Range	Letter Grade
98% and higher	A+
94% to less than 98%	A
90% to less than 94%	A-
88% to less than 90%	B+
84% to less than 88%	B
80% to less than 84%	B-
70% to less than 80%	C
Less than 70%	F

Policies:

Inclement Weather

If the University cancels class our class will be cancelled. You can check the LUC website to determine the University's status. In addition, on any "questionable" days I will send out an email by 9:00 am letting you know of our specific class' status.

If class is cancelled, any assignments due on that day should be emailed to me by 11:59 p.m.

If a student feels that his/her safety would be compromised by attending class during inclement weather and remains home, his/her grade will not be penalized. Any student who is unable to attend class due to weather conditions should contact me as soon as possible to arrange the submission of any missed work.

Attendance

Attendance is required. You are responsible for all materials covered in class, including readings, class discussions, quizzes, video presentations, assignments, and any other material covered. Students missing class must obtain notes from another student; notes are not available from the instructor.

Having more than two (2) absences is considered excessive, no matter the reason. You are not required to justify the first two absences, but you have to turn in missed writing exercises that same week (by Friday at 5 p.m.). If you miss three classes you will receive a deduction of 5% on your final class average. For example, a person who has an 80% (B-) average but has missed three classes will receive a 75% (C) grade for the semester. If you miss four or more classes you will receive a deduction of 15% on your final class average.

Dropping the Course

You are responsible for understanding the university's policies and procedures regarding withdrawing from courses found in the current catalog. You should be aware of the current deadlines.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to follow all University guidelines and policies with respect to academic integrity and honesty, even if it's not addressed in this syllabus.

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml

Weekly Overview:

Week 1 Jan. 17	Introduction to Course Syllabus (Policies & Procedures) Introduction to Public Relations Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 1: What Is Public Relations?
Week 2 Jan. 24	Evolution of Public Relations Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 2: Evolution of Public Relations In Class: Group Assignments Announced
Week 3 Jan. 31	Sectors of PR + Careers Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 16: Meetings + Events Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 18: Entertainment, Sports + Tourism Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 19: Government + Politics Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 21: Nonprofit, Health and Education
Week 4 Feb. 7	Building + Managing Your Personal Brand Read: 14 Steps to Building Your Personal Brand (Salary.com)
Week 5 Feb. 14	Communication and Public Persuasion Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 7: Communication Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 9: Public Opinion + Persuasion Due: Personal Statement + Biography
Week 6 Feb. 21	Best Practices: Research + Planning Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 5: Research Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 6: Program Planning In Class: Midterm Review
Week 7 Feb. 28	Midterm Exam Due: Consumer Psychograph
Week 8 Mar. 6	Spring Break – No Classes
Week 9 Mar. 13	The Mass Media and The Internet and Social Media Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 13: The Internet and Social Media Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 14: Preparing Materials for Mass Media

Week 10 Mar. 20	Creativity + Brainstorming In-Class: Brainstorming Exercise In-Class: Final Project Briefing In-Class: Group Discussions Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 11: Reaching Diverse Audiences Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 8: Evaluation Due: Influencer/Media Recommendation
Week 11 Mar. 27	Corporate PR + Crisis + Issues Management Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 10: Conflict Management Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 17: Corporations
Week 12 Apr. 3	Ethics + The Law Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 3: Ethics and Professionalism Read: Cameron/Wilcox: Chapter 12: Public Relations and the Law Due: Crisis Case Study In-Class: Crisis Exercise
Week 13 Apr. 10	Class dedicated to group project discussions In Class: Client Briefing
Week 14 Apr. 17	Class dedicated to group project discussions
Week 15 Apr. 24	Communication Plan Presentations Final exam review
Week 16 May 1	Final Exam

Class Assignments and Instructions:

Weekly News Items

Points: 30

Due: Tuesdays + Thursdays

Each week students will be responsible for bringing in a summary of two (one for each scheduled class) news items of interest. Items can be something that was in the news, a notable PR campaign, an organizational crisis or reputational challenge, ethics fiasco or trend/insight. In 1-2 paragraphs summarize what the item is and why it's relevant to PR and to the class. Be sure to think beyond traditional PR and look for items of interest in social/digital, marketing, etc.

Personal Mission Statement + Biography

Points: 25

Due: February 11

Every brand has a mission and vision and so should you. A personal statement helps both organizations and individuals define their values, understand their purpose and discover unique points of interest. For this assignment you will create your own mission statement as a way to help define your personal brand.

Using readings, class discussion and the personal branding lecture, draft your personal mission statement. In **5-7 sentences** bring to life your professional and personal values, ensuring that it's useful and based on your reality. Think in terms of how this mission statement can be useful to you in making decisions about your short-term future and beyond.

Questions you should consider asking yourself as you develop your personal mission statement are:

- What are my core values?
- What do I want to be known for?
- What are my short- and long-term goals?
- What is my purpose and passion?

As students enter the real world, prospective employers will want to know who you are as a potential candidate and as a person. As such, a biography is a critical component to your success. This assignment will yield a professional biography for students to use in a portfolio, in a cover letter and on social networking sites like LinkedIn. **Each biography should be between 300 – 450 words.**

Question you might ask as you draft your biography are:

- Who am I and what has shaped the person I am today?
- What are my best qualities?
- What do I believe in?
- What are some awards I've won?
- What's the most important thing someone should know about me?

Consumer Psychograph

Points: 25

Due: March 3

During class, students will be provided a communication scenario and will be asked to develop a consumer psychograph. Using a variety of research methods such as one-on-one interviews, surveys, focus groups, media analysis, among others, develop a consumer psychograph that:

- Highlights the consumer opportunity
- Identifies media channels that reach the consumer
- Includes key attributes and activities that differentiate the consumer from the masses

Your psychograph should not only provide critical details about the consumer but also tell a compelling story as to why this consumer is relevant to the brand and/or organization. For example, Edelman and Unilever determined through research that “real” women were tired of seeing unrealistic standards of beauty in the media. Using this key insight and other psychographic information, Edelman and Unilever launched The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty.

The psychograph should be high-level and 3-5 slides in length. Students should use PowerPoint (preferred) or a similar program.

Media + Influencer Identification

Points: 25

Due: March 24

The Nike® Air Jordan franchise generates \$1.75 billion annually. Price per pair ranges from \$130-\$250 in mainstream circles with authentic vintage pairs fetching in the thousands of dollars. This spring, Nike will unveil its “Alternate” collection, a retro line that re-imagines early best-selling Air Jordans, such as Air Jordan 2 (1987), Air Jordan 4 (1989) and Air Jordan 5 (1990). The launch is going to be huge with “sneaker heads” already buzzing.

Your assignment (and you have to accept it) is to identify 10 journalists and 10 influencers (20 total) who should get a sneak preview of the new collection of Air Jordans. Using techniques discussed in class, students should use a variety of media search tools, research and instincts to develop their list.

Students should provide the following when submitting their assignment:

1. Journalist's/influencer's name and the beat/area of interest they cover
2. One paragraph biography on the journalist/influencer
3. Brief rationale as to why you selected them
4. Their social media footprint (their social stats)

Success in this assignment is ensuring you are reaching the right media with the right message on the right channel. Your end goal – sell out the “Alternate” collection before it even hits stores.

Crisis Case Study

Points: 50

Due: April 7

Identify an organization or individual that has recently suffered a crisis – a major event that everyone is talking about, including you. The crisis could be a product recall, a spokesperson gone rogue, a financial or political scandal, etc. Develop a comprehensive case study that highlights the following:

- Situation analysis
- Fallout from crisis – consumer, media and influencer response
- Organization/individual initial communication approach and challenges
- Analysis of the channels most impacted – social media buzz or local media coverage, for example
- Identify audience(s) targeted by organization
- Organization's message and how it was distributed and received

When writing the case study you should:

- Take into consideration timing, specific actions undertaken, accusations being made and issues needing to be addressed, etc.
- Consider the approaches undertaken by various organizations that may be connected to the crisis. For example, think Lance Armstrong (celebrity) and The Livestrong Foundation (organization). Think about how their approaches are similar and where they differ.
- Review social and traditional media response and how they may differ. Look through the lens of the consumer – which channel has more impact on their opinion.
- Briefly discuss what the consumer, media and organization's response was and highlight what impact it may or may not have had on the organization.

Written response to the case study should show understanding of the issues reflected in the text, additional articles, etc. Response should be 3-5 pages (double spaced, 12 point font).

Communication Plan

Points: 100

Due: April 26 + 28

As a group, you will work together to develop a robust communication plan for a pre-determined organization. Each team will use the creative brief to develop a campaign that tackles a real-world challenge and/or opportunity the organization is facing.

Students will apply lessons learned in the classroom to develop plans that should include:

- Brief overview of the challenge and/or opportunity
- Objectives, strategies
- Message/campaign platform
- Primary and secondary tactics that support the strategy
- Media strategy
- Measurement and evaluation

Keep in mind that most communication plans are developed in PowerPoint. Therefore your plan should be created using the industry standard. The key to PowerPoint, and what the instructor will be looking for, is compelling ideas that are communicated succinctly but make a compelling case. If additional explanation is needed, please add context by including comments in the notes section or examples to an appendix. Your plan should include the above elements, in addition to any other elements that support your strategy.

Students will present their plans to the class and the client. Presentations should be limited to 30 minutes. Upon completion of the presentations, the client and professor will select a winner and announce at the end of class.