

**Communications 370-202 Special Topics: Media Relations (KCummings)**  
**Spring Semester 2017, 7:00PM – 9:30PM**  
**Course Syllabus**

*Instructor:* Kathy Cummings  
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*Office Hours:* By appointment

***Required Text:***

- Readings will be provided in class.

***Course Description:***

Generating positive media coverage is at the heart of public relations. This course is a study of how organizations can prepare to meet the media. Students will learn who to contact, how to reach out to the media, how to prepare a spokesperson, and how to maintain an open, productive relationship with them as a trusted resource.

***Course objectives:***

Students will gain an understanding of media relations strategies as well as learn hands-on application techniques. Students will get to meet members of the media (producers, reporters, editors) as well as media relations experts and resource providers. Students will actually pitch a story to the media.

By the end of this course students will be familiar with a range of media opportunities & challenges and understand how media relations can impact an organization's image.

***Course Outline:***

Media Relations is a course designed to expose the student to media relations and develop skills in assessing and developing effective communication solutions. The course includes these requirements and grade weightings:

***Class Participation: 25%***

Success in this class depends on the active participation of all students. Discussion and debate are ways of assuring your understanding and adding valuable perspective. The classroom setting gives you the opportunity to test your communication problem solving skills as well as hone your skills as a communicator.

Class participation includes taking part regularly in class discussions, volunteering solutions & ideas, and actively participating in group & individual in-class exercises. It is important to come

to class prepared, having read the assigned materials and ready to discuss them. Be sure to speak up in class. Share your ideas, questions and point of view with the class.

### ***Written Assignments: 50%***

Assignments will vary and are designed to expose you to communication problem solving. Some assignments may be completed in class; others will be assigned as homework. If you are absent from class it is your responsibility to get the assignment from another student. Written assignments will be due the next class session unless otherwise indicated.

You will develop media relations plans, media materials and pitches to address specified communication needs. Details will be provided in class.

Please remember that in public relations you are writing to a professional audience. Structure your writing style accordingly. Be concise. Content, quality, persuasiveness and neatness count. Use spell-check. Papers containing typos, errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation will be downgraded. Fact-check and proofread your work. Your work must look professional.

### ***Tests: 25%***

There will be a final exam. The final will test the student's knowledge of concepts and practices presented in class and readings. The test will likely include multiple-choice, short answer or even a PR case for you to analyze and solve.

### ***Course Changes:***

The instructor reserves the right to make changes in the course schedule, readings and materials to take advantage of guest speaker availability, new opportunities or timely issues. We will be working with real client communication issues so things can change. Regular attendance is your best assurance of keeping up with any changes that may occur.

### ***Attendance:***

The instructor does not recommend missing any class sessions as in-class exercises or homework assignments could be given in your absence. Making up the missed work may not be possible. If you have to miss a class, get assignments from another student and complete them by the due date. Absences on the day of a test or presentation will not be accepted. If you must be absent those days you must contact the instructor in advance. You will be required to present medical or other emergency/official documentation explaining your absence.

### ***Grading Scale***

A	93-100	B-	80-82
A-	90-92	C+	77-79
B+	87-89	C	73-76
B	83-86	C-	70-72

D+ 67-69  
D 64-66

F below 64

***Deadlines:***

Public relations professionals always meet deadlines. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** Failure to turn in an assignment in class on the day it is due will result in a grade of “F” for that assignment. Penalties for missed deadlines are even more severe in the working world.

***Original Work:***

Originality is the hallmark of the public relations industry. Anyone caught plagiarizing in this class will receive a grade of “F” for the assignment. Be aware of the strong university sanctions against plagiarism. Consult the *School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity* for more information (attached).

***Media Relations Course Schedule***

Following is a tentative working schedule. Changes will be made and announced in class.

<b><i>Week:</i></b>	<b><i>Topics To Be Covered:</i></b>
Week 1	Course introduction; review of syllabus, text and course.
Week 2	Media Relations Overview – Research, Relationships and Responsiveness
Week 3	The Art of Storytelling
Week 4	Tools of the Trade
Week 5	Working with Reporters
Week 6	Working with Spokespersons
Week 7	Ethics
Week 8	NO CLASSES SPRING BREAK
Week 9	Media Events
Week 10	Going Global
Week 11	Crisis Management
Week 12	Measurement/Evaluation

Week 13	The Future
Week 14	Wrap-Up In Class Assignment
Week 15	Review for final.
Week 16	Final Exam

### **School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity**

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents.

Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher;
- Providing information to another student during an examination;
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination;
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor;
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted;
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom;
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit; or
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at <http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source> .

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty, and will be subject to sanctions described below. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the appropriate area head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

The office of the Dean of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at:

[http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicgrievance.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml).

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's

application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.

*(The School of Communication policy is based entirely on and is consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy of the College of Arts & Sciences.)*