

**COM 4533**  
**PUBLIC RELATIONS PLANNING AND CAMPAIGNS**  
**Fall 2009**

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**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Public Relations Planning and Campaigns is an advanced course that represents a capstone to required study in public relations for undergraduates. In this course, you will focus on a structured approach to organizational problem solving. You will conduct research, set goals and objectives, plan and adapt strategy, target publics and supervise activities so that they contribute to organizational success in a measurable way.

This course is intended to provide you with a comprehensive experience in developing a solution to a public relations problem. It is seen as the department's "time to leave the nest" course for public relations students. You will apply skills and knowledge gained in previous courses and you will enhance your ability to make and defend public relations decisions and communicate these decisions in a professional manner. Furthermore, you will have the opportunity to:

1. Acquire skills in working with others as a member of a team.
2. Develop specific skills, competencies and points of views needed by public relations practitioners.
3. Learn how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems.
4. Appreciate the role of research in the development of a public relations plan.
5. Design a public relations plan for implementation.
6. Evaluate the productivity and profitability of public relations plan.

**COURSE FORMAT**

The instructional mode of this course will require both group and individual participation. Each student will participate within a team framework (four to five students per team). Each team will work toward a common goal of preparing a complete professional public relations plan for a specific client. Essential details on the preparation of a plans book will be provided soon. Every team needs an account executive who will be the main contact with the instructor and the client.

Every team will meet with the instructor at least once a week. While one person will be responsible for the actual presentation during each session, other members of the team are expected to participate and be able to discuss intelligently the materials being presented. Thus, attendance is required at all formal and informal class meetings and group sessions when called. Missing class and group meetings will negatively affect your final grade. A student is allowed three excused/unexcused absences without penalty. Each additional absence will lower the final grade a half-letter grade.

## **GROUP WORK**

Most, if not all, elements of the plan preparation will be done outside the class. Such an experience can be very rewarding, very frustrating, or both. That depends on your cooperation and participation. Many decisions are done collectively. Therefore, questioning, thinking, discussing and attempting to reach consensus are crucial to the group's success. Each student in the group will be assigned to a particular agency responsibility. However, you will be asked to assist in other areas when needs arise. While you may be a master in a particular area you are bound to the whole project. To put it concisely, the project is a team effort and each student benefits or fails based on his/her ability to work within the group concept and contribute to the total good.

Sometimes, group members do not perform well together because of personality conflicts or ego clashes. If this occurs in your group, it is important that the account executive bring the problem out into the open at a meeting of the entire group and try to patch up differences. Otherwise, the matter should be brought to the instructor's attention to attempt arbitration. In all circumstances, the responsibility of the group is to get the plan finished.

## **GRADING**

The bulk of your grade will be based on the project itself—the plans book and the mandatory oral presentation. The plans book will be evaluated by the instructor while the presentation will be judged by the client and invited faculty members. Another graded activity will involve an individual assignment.

Members in the group working on the same plan may receive different grades. Therefore, a system of peer evaluations will be established to assure that each member will get a fair grade. Peer evaluations will be completed by you on each member of your team. Such a system should help determine if an individual did not perform at the same level as the others in the agency. A plan that gets the highest remarks by the client does not necessarily mean that it will get the highest grade. Points will be assigned as follows to calculate your course grade:

Plans Book	60
Oral Presentation	20
Individual assignment	<u>20</u>
	100

## **VERY IMPORTANT NOTE**

All written materials must be typed and double-spaced. Your plans book and individual assignment will not only be graded on soundness of research, creativity, completeness of strategic planning, and aesthetic quality, but also on the use of proper grammar, sentence construction, punctuation, and spelling. A severe penalty will be imposed on poor grammar, confusing writing spelling errors, typographical errors, incorrect punctuation, incomplete bibliographic information, missing or out-of-order pages, and hand-written sections or corrections. There is no excuse for sloppy work. Always proofread and double-check your work.

## **ATTENDANCE, LATE ASSIGNMENTS, AND INCOMPLETES**

This course can only work if students come to class and fully participate while they are here. Missing class not only hurts you by reducing your understanding of the materials, but also prevents others from hearing your point of view. This course requires participation. Thus, regular attendance is strongly advised.

Deadlines are a fact of life and they must be met. We have all wished for more time on a project in order to get it "perfect." Unfortunately, there rarely is additional time. Assignments are due at the start of the class period. Five minutes after the class starts, the work is considered late. An assignment will be docked 20% for each day it is late. The nature of the course does not allow incompletes. Only a major medical or family emergency at the very end of the semester would warrant an incomplete.

You are responsible for any and all information missed during an absence. Handouts, notes, and lecture overheads from previous classes are not available from the instructor. Thus, you should exchange phone numbers and e-mail addresses with two classmates so that you can make copies of such materials if necessary. I do not cover any day's lecture twice. Assigned readings should be completed prior to the classes for which they are listed in the syllabus. The instructor reserves the right to add to or modify class requirements, schedules, and or materials. Any changes will be announced in class.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Develop a plans book. You will do a comprehensive analysis of target publics, competitive conditions and other relevant factors.
2. Make a polished oral presentation, complete with all necessary materials.

Your plans book and assignment must look professional. They must be typed on white paper measuring 8-1/2 inches by 11 inches. The printing should be about one inch on all sides. Here are the steps that each team must follow to successfully complete this project:

- Present a roster that includes a name for your agency in addition to name, phone number and e-mail address of each member.
- Meet with your team out of class.
- Submit a pilot research study. It should report the results of a small-scale survey, focus group, copy-test, communication audit, field observation, or similar project. This study will guide preparation of your recommendations.
- Turn in draft of objectives, strategies, tactics or media tools, messages, calendar, and budget. Make four bound copies of your plans book on time.
- Prepare and practice 20-minute professional presentations.
- Wearing business attire, present your proposal according to the schedule.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

If you have any condition, such as physical or learning disability, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as I have outlined it or which will require special academic accommodations, please see a coordinator at Disability Services (MS 2.03.18) so that accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, meet with me as soon as possible to work out a plan of action.

### **ACADEMIC WITHDRAWAL FROM THE COURSE**

Please note the final date to withdraw from an individual course. After this date, you may withdraw from the university up to the first day of the last week of classes but may no longer withdraw from an individual course. Academic withdrawal is processed and approved *by the office of the DEAN, not by your professor*, and will only be approved with evidence of extreme and unanticipated circumstances that prevent completion of an individual course.

## **INSTRUCTOR'S ROLE**

My primary role in this course is to serve as a guide. I will advise you when are heading in the right direction as well as when you are heading in the wrong one. When necessary, I will assist you in reaching a strategic decision by challenging your thinking and defenses. I will not make a decision for you. However, I will advise you to facilitate your decision making. You should become comfortable with this role to improve your chances for success in your future careers.

## **CLASSROOM CIVILITY**

We want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is especially important that we (1) display respect for all members of the classroom --including the professor and fellow classmates; (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities; (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, doing work for another class, etc.); and (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents the minimal standards that help make the classroom a productive place for all concerned. Make sure you turn off your pagers and cell phones prior to class. They are strictly prohibited. Furthermore, Lab tops can only be used for legitimate class purposes (e. g., taking notes or visiting web sites as directed by the professor). Any other usage is not permitted and may result in a disciplinary action.

## **PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING**

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure in the course. Plagiarism is the appropriation, either word for word or in substance, of the writings or works of another without due acknowledgement. Put another way, it is stealing from the writings or works of another and offering it as one's own. Plagiarism and cheating both are forms of academic dishonesty. Please see the University's *Student Code of Conduct* for information regarding this policy. Any student whom the instructor has sufficient evidence to believe has cheated or plagiarized in the course will receive an automatic "F" (failure) in the entire course.

If you suspect anyone in the class is cheating or plagiarizing, please report it to me anonymously. Since others who receive higher grades by plagiarizing or cheating may affect your grade, this is an important matter to us all. I am committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct. Falsified medical excuses and presenting another student's work as your own fall with the guidelines of this academic integrity policy.

## **PROPER USE OF E-MAILS**

E-mails are not a substitute for meeting with the instructor during office hours. Office hours are the best place to ask questions about the material and to discuss issues relating to the class. E-mails, on the other hand, can be used to schedule an appointment outside of office hours, or for *short* questions clarifying class assignments. In-depth questions about course readings or entire day's lecture, as well as questions about grades, are not appropriate for e-mails.

## **LIMITED USE OF LAPTOPS**

The use of laptops is prohibited in class unless it is directly related to that particular day's lecture, exercise and or assignment.

## **MULTI-CULTURAL AWARENESS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS**

The study of public relations requires an understanding of attitudes and audience analysis. An appreciation for others' values can help you achieve success in your career. Since favorable opinion is a primary public relations goal, you must not use racist or sexist ideas in your projects. If you are going to design, implement, manage and evaluate public relations campaigns it is imperative that you have an understanding of, and sensitivity to, cultural diversity.

By the end of the semester you should have an appreciation for the necessity of conducting audience analyses. When developing campaigns or analyzing other campaigns be sure to determine if communication must be targeted for specific cultures or publics. In addition to knowing when application to a particular audience is necessary, it is important to consider how such application will be done in a sensitive manner. Additionally, take the opportunity to apply some of the general principles discussed in class to different societal groups or target audiences.

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

Wilson, Laurie and Joseph Ogden. *Strategic Communications Planning for Effective Public Relations and Marketing* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Dubuque, IO: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2008

### **RECOMMENDED TEXTS**

Harris, Thomas and Patricia Whalen. *The Marketer's Guide to Public Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Mason, OH: Thomson/South-Western, 2006.

Mueller, Barbara. *Communicating with the Multicultural Consumer: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008.

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<b>DATE</b>	<b>CLASS CONTENT, ACTIVITIES AND TEXT READINGS</b>
Week One (Aug. 27)	Course Introduction Client Briefing Group Composition
Week Two (Sept. 1-3)	Component of the Public Relations Plan (Harris and Whalen, pp. 55-74) Communications Research Methods (Wilson and Ogden, pp. 35-48) Using Research for Effective Communications Planning (Wilson and Ogden, pp. 49-69)
Week Three (Sept. 8-10)	Formal Research Methods (Instructor's Presentation) Informal Research Methods (Instructor's Presentation) <b>SUBMIT YOUR SITUATION ANALYSIS</b>
Week Four (Sept. 15-17)	The Growth of Multicultural Markets (Mueller, pp. 1-22) Reaching Hispanic Consumers (Mueller, pp. 107-156) Reaching African American Consumers (Mueller, pp. 157-206) Reaching Asian American Consumers (Mueller, pp. 207-249) <b>TURN IN A LIST OF YOUR RESEARCH OBJECTIVES</b>

Week Five (Sept. 22-24))	Data Collection Methods (Instructor's Presentation) <b>HAND IN A DRAFT OF YOUR RESEARCH INSTRUMENT/QUESTIONNAIRE</b>
Week Six (Sept. 29-Oct. 1))	Setting Goals and Objectives (Wilson and Ogden, pp. 71-82) Group Discussion with Instructor
Week Seven (Oct. 6-8)	Key Publics and Message Design (Wilson and Ogden, pp. 83-100) <b>REPORT YOUR RESEARCH FINDINGS</b>
Week Eight (Oct. 13-15)	Designing Strategies and Tactics to Send Messages (Wilson and Ogden, pp. 101-133) <b>PRESENT CAMPAIGN GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND KEY PUBLICS</b>
Week Nine (Oct. 20-22)	Calendaring and Budgeting (Wilson and Ogden, pp. 135-144) <b>INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS DUE OCTOBER 22</b>
Week Ten (Oct. 27-29)	Implementation and Communications Management (Wilson and Ogden, pp. 145-152) <b>TURN IN DRAFT OF STRATEGIES, TACTICS OR MEDIA TOOLS, MESSAGES, CALENDAR AND BUDGET</b>
Week Eleven (Nov. 3-5)	Effective Communications Measurement and Evaluation (Wilson and Ogden, pp. 153-161) <b>PRESENT WRITTEN AND ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS, WEB PAGE, SPECIAL EVENTS, ETC.</b>
Week Twelve (Nov. 10-12)	Ethics and Professionalism (Wilson and Ogden, pp. 171-181) General Discussion of Project <b>PROPOSE EVALUATION CRITERIA AND TOOLS</b>
Week Thirteen (Nov. 17-19)	Executive Summaries and Business Presentations (Wilson and Ogden, pp. 163-169) Delivering an Effective Presentation (Instructor's Presentation)
Week Fourteen (Nov. 24)	<b>ASSEMBLE YOUR PLANS BOOK WITH YOUR TEAM</b>
Week Fifteen (Dec. 1-3)	<b>SUBMIT FOUR COPIES OF YOUR PLANS BOOK AND HAND IN YOUR TEAM EVALUATION, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1 MAKE AN ORAL PRESENTATION TO CLIENT AND INVITED FACULTY, 5:30 PM, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3</b>