

Communication 240: Public Relations Principles and Practices
TTh 9:30 – 10:45 a.m. Fall 2017

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Office:	ADM 24B (2 nd floor, Comm. Dept.)		TTh: 10:45-1:00 *Please make appointment
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Required Readings

Diggs-Brown, B. (2012). *Strategic public relations: An audience-focused approach*.
Boston, MA: Wadsworth.

Catalog Description

An introduction to the principles, processes, history, and practice of public relations. Students will learn the nature of public opinion, the application of problem-solving processes to case studies, and the use of persuasion and marketing skills in public relations practice by developing a public relations plan for a client.

Course Goals

After successfully completing this course, student competencies should include:

1. The ability to define public relations and its various functions in organizations and society.
2. An understanding of the historical development of public relations.
3. an understanding of the characteristics and roles of public relations practitioners within the various venues where they practice
4. The ability to implement the four-step public relations process.
5. The ability to design PR plans and proposals.
6. An understanding of the differences between internal and external publics and the various media and methods used to reach them.
7. An appreciation of the importance of positive and ethical media relations for public relations practitioners.
8. The ability to work with a group to develop and present a proposal that addresses a public relations problem and/or opportunity for a client.

Attendance

Your attendance will be factored into your final grade. Attendance will be taken. Because COMM 240 emphasizes cognitive as well as experiential learning, it is important you attend every class. Students may miss up to three classes without penalty. If you must, use absences for illness, emergencies, field trips, or sporting event commitments. Every missed class counts as one absence regardless of the reason for the absence. Therefore, if you know you will miss class due to sports, performing arts, other academic or extracurricular activities, etc. plan your class attendance wisely. **After the third absence, five points will be deducted per absence beyond the third** from your final course grade.

Students with excessive absences will be strongly encouraged to drop the course since a passing grade will be difficult to attain. Punctuality is defined as being no more than five minutes late at the beginning of class and remaining until the class is officially dismissed. Being more than five minutes late to class constitutes an absence. Being late to class (less than five minutes) will count as being tardy. Once you are tardy three times, you will be credited as being absent from class for one day. Late assignments are not accepted.

Class assignments:

You are responsible for all material covered and for submitting all assignments on time whether or not you are in class. All written assignments must be submitted by the due date and time and must conform to assignment guidelines. Be sure to read all of the assignment guidelines carefully.

Participation:

Student interaction is an essential part of the learning process. Active participation is necessary for increasing communication competence! Participation in class discussions and exercises is designed to provide a clearer understanding of course concepts.

You are expected to actively participate in class. This includes, but is not limited to, being prepared to discuss the assigned readings, participating in class discussions, as well as participating in group discussions and activities.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Policy

“A true community requires that all participants share common goals and respect the particular contributions that each member makes toward achieving them. The common enterprise of a college is learning, which is a discipline of the mind, not merely a manipulation of assignments, activities, and information. This process involves interacting with teachers and fellow learners on the one hand, and personal reflection and critical inquiry on the other. In all cases, it demands integrity. Thus, claiming another person’s work as one’s own is a serious offense, subject to disciplinary action.

The College considers academic dishonesty a serious offense as it diminishes the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who eventually depend upon our knowledge and integrity. The penalties for violating these standards are based on our firm belief in academic integrity.” (Student Handbook, p. 10).

<http://www.wvwc.edu/students/pdf/StudentHandbook.pdf>

Any violation of academic integrity is subject to disciplinary action, including failure of this course.

Technology Policy

All non-class related technological devices (including laptops unless otherwise stated) should be off when class begins and should remain off until class ends.

Behavior Policy

Students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct. Please review it on pages 20-36 of the student handbook: <http://www.wvwc.edu/students/pdf/StudentHandbook.pdf>. Any student who constantly disrupts the learning process will be asked to leave the classroom, possibly be asked to withdraw from the course, and will be referred to the Dean of Students. Also see <http://www.wvwc.edu/campus/judicial> and pages 36-44 of the student handbook: <http://www.wvwc.edu/students/pdf/StudentHandbook.pdf>.

Evaluation

Final grades in the course will be determined by performance on the following assignments:

Attendance	(see above policy)
(CB) Case Briefs	60 points
(PRE) PR Examples	90 points
PR Presentation*	50 points
Class Participation	30 points
Chapter quizzes/Final Exam	75 points
Team Project*	<u>155 points</u>
	350 points

*Majors only-Keep a copy for the COMM. 495/496 Internship/Capstone Portfolio

Description of Assignments

(CB) Case Briefs (60 points: 20 points each)

Each student writes 3 case briefs – two (2) paragraphs each – pertaining to three case studies in public relations. Each student will find their own case studies from a list of predetermined sources. This assignment appears deceptively simple, but do not be fooled, as it is often more difficult to express ideas in a paragraph than it is to do in three pages. Each of the paragraphs should be no longer than 150 words in length.

The first paragraph should summarize what happened in the case, why it happened, and what you see as the most important lesson from the case. The second paragraph should explain how the case study related to the major concepts in the book. Five points will be assigned for the case brief's spelling, grammar and clarity of thought, and the remaining five points on succinct and accurate answering of the above questions. Prior to handing in this assignment, you may be asked to read one or both of your paragraphs to the class. Because this assignment is linked to in-class discussions, late submission will not be accepted for this assignment without prior instructor approval.

(PRE) Public Relations Examples in a Portfolio (90 points). Each student is required to collect a minimum of 30 public relations examples throughout the semester and to organize them into a 1" sleeved binder. For each example, record the name of the organization; the specific intended public(s); the type of public relations; the tactic; its purpose; and then a brief critique of its effectiveness. The critique will be on the right with the example immediately to the left of the critique. No more than 15 examples can be from Internet sources. Also, no more than five examples can be strictly marketing. Aside from the described requirements above, the marketing examples should also include a summary as to why it is not PR.

(PRCA) Public Relations Content and Application Presentation (50 points)

Students will create and give 12-minute presentations using an audio-visual presentation device (e.g., PowerPoint, Slideshare, Prezi) on specific areas of PR practice from assigned topics using sources outside of the textbook. For the presentation you will need to prepare a list of thought-provoking questions to ask the class, a one-page summary handout that your classmates can use in their professional life, and at least five professional quality audio-visual slides.

Your presentation should summarize the key points about this particular PR practice as well as what any PR practitioner should know about this area of PR. Remember: the entire class will have already read the related material in the texts so your job is to advance further thought and discussion on the assigned topic. Topics and dates will be assigned in class. You will need to dress professionally for the presentation occasion and follow all class guidelines for effective presentations. This is your opportunity to practice for future presentations in your career and at the end of this class. Your presentation will be video recorded.

Presentation Grade Criteria:

A. Questions and Handout (20 points):

1. Ten type-written short-answer questions covering the primary content of the chapter plus additional issues to be used to stimulate your classmates to become involved in the discussion (do not hand out these questions). (10 points)
2. A one-page summary handout to be distributed to the class. (10 points)

B. Actual Presentation (30 points):

1. **Introduction (5 points):** Start your presentation by getting the audience's attention! Also, be sure to explain your purpose in today's presentation.
2. **Main Ideas (15 points):** Be certain to cover each of the main points in your presentation (not necessarily the main points in your sources) in a clear and orderly manner. For example: What is this

basic practice area of PR? Overview of what it does. What are the basic tasks of this component? Strategies used? Most practiced where? Where are opportunities?

3. Conclusion (5 points): What are the implications for all public relations practitioners concerning this topic? Tell the audience. Leave the class with a brief closing summary of what you found and your personal assessment of this area of PR as a career option. You may use your ten questions within the presentation or at the conclusion. Both delivery and content will be evaluated.

C. Presentation Slides (5 points):

Must be of professional quality and follow all guidelines for effective slides. A minimum of five slides.

Chapter Quizzes OR FINAL EXAM (75 Points: 15 points each)

For this assignment, you will be given random questions throughout the semester to answer. These questions will be selected from the questions listed at the end of each chapter in the textbook. If the class is unable to successfully complete these quizzes, then a final exam will be given during the final exam time scheduled for this class.

Team Project (200 points)

Each student will participate as a group and prepare a public relations plan proposal for a client. Clients will be assigned by the instructor. Specific instructions for the project will be distributed at the time the project is assigned.

Each student group will be part of the COMM 240 PR Agency that will research, prepare and present a plan and proposal that addresses public relations problems and/or opportunities for our client.

Every group member must make a substantial contribution to each group's effort. Each student in the group will receive the same grade for group assignments. *Each student will be required to submit an evaluation of both his or her contributions as well as every other group member's contribution to the team project.* Thus, each individual's grade is subject to a performance adjustment based on student evaluations and conversations with the instructor and the client, and other measures of evaluation. When such an adjustment occurs, an individual's group-project grade may be higher or lower than the grade assigned to the group.

Course Grading Scale

Final grades will be assigned on the following basis:

93% and above = A	90-92.99% = A-	87 – 89.99% = B+
83 – 86.99% = B	80-82.99% = B-	77 – 79.99% = C+
73 – 76.99% = C	70 – 72.99% = C-	67 – 69.99% = D+
63 – 66.99% = D	60 – 62.99% = D-	59.99% and below = F

Below you will find a tentative course schedule. The schedule is subject to change. The class will be notified in class and/or via email of changes.

WEEK	DATE	CHAPTER & TOPIC	READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS	INDIVIDUAL DUE DATES
1	8/22	Course Overview/What is PR?	-Read Ch 1	
	8/24	Ch 1: What is Public Relations?	-Read Ch 2 -Assign PRE	
2	8/29	Ch 2: Who are PR Practitioners?	-Read Ch 3	
	8/31	Ch 3: PR History	-Read Ch 4 -Quiz #1 (1, 2, 3)	
3	9/5	Ch 4: Strategy in PR	-Read Ch 14	Quiz #1 (Blackboard)
	9/7	Ch 14: Written Tactics		
4	9/12	Discuss Case Brief #1 Review PRCA Presentation	-Read Ch 10 -Quiz #2 (4, 14) -Assign 4 teams (Due week 7)	Bring PRE binder to class- 5 PRE's (5/30) Case Brief #1
	9/14	Ch 10: Discovery & Analysis	-Read Ch 5	Quiz #2 (Blackboard)
5	9/19	Ch 5: Understanding Audiences		
	9/21	PRCA Work		
6	9/26	PRCA Presentation		Bring PRE binder to class- 5 PRE's (10/30)
	9/28	PRCA Presentation	-Read Ch 6	
7	10/3	Ch 6: Researching Effectively		
	10/5	Ch 6: Researching Effectively		
8	10/10	Discuss Case Brief #2 Review Team Projects	-Read Ch 12 -Assign teams (Due week 15) -Quiz #3 (5, 6)	Case Brief #2
	10/12	Ch 12: Campaign Implementation		Quiz #3 (Blackboard)
9	10/17	Ch 12: Campaign Implementation	-Read Ch 15	Bring PRE binder to class- 5 PRE's (15/30)
	10/19	No Class- Fall Recess		
10	10/24	Ch 15: Spoken Tactics		
	10/26	Ch 16: Visual Media	-Quiz #4 (12, 15, 16)	
11	10/31	Possible Guest/ Groupwork		Quiz #4 (Blackboard) Bring PRE binder to class- 5 PRE's (20/30)
	11/2	Ch 9: Understanding PR Theory		
12	11/7	Ch 7: Ethics	-Quiz #5 (7, 9)	
	11/9	No Class		Quiz #5 (Blackboard)
13	11/14	Discuss Case Brief #3 Work on Final Projects		Case Brief #3 Bring PRE binder to class- 5 PRE's (25/30)
	11/16	Finalize Team Projects		
14	11/21	THANKSGIVING BREAK		
	11/23	(No Class) ☺		
15	11/28	Team Projects (Teams 1 & 2)		
	11/30	Team Projects (Teams 3 & 4)		
16	12/5	Catch-up		Bring PRE binder to class- 5 PRE's (30/30)
	12/11	FINAL Monday, December 11th @ 10:30		

