

**Michael L. Kent, Ph.D.**

**Communication Studies**

**SPCM 520: Introduction to Public Relations**

**Office Location:** Life Hall 231C

Th 5:30–8 p.m. | Life Hall, 051

**Office Hours:** TBA, & by appointment

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**Course Description:** Introduction to Public Relations deals with issues of communication as they relate to mediated and public relations contexts. The course will be organized as a graduate level “introduction to public relations” course. The first part of the semester will be devoted to an introduction (or refresher) on public relations and public relations writing. The remainder of the course will be devoted to public relations theory and the current state of research in the field.

**Objectives**

- To learn the basic research and writing skills involved in the practice of public relations.
- To become familiar with recent research and theoretical assumptions as well as the basic historical tenants of the field.
- To learn to critically examine the theoretical assumptions of public relations.
- To gain detailed insight into individual areas of study through readings.

**The Department of Communication’s attendance policy:** Students may miss the equivalent of one week of classes without penalty. If three classes are missed (on a two day a week schedule), your final grade will be reduced by 5%; if four classes are missed, your final grade will be reduced by 10%. Missing more than four classes will result in a failing grade for the course. Coming late or leaving early 3 times equals an absence.

**Required Texts**

- Heath, R. L. & Vasquez, G. (eds.) (2001). *Handbook of public relations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ISBN: 0-7619-1286-x
- Cutlip, S. M., Center, A. H., & Broom, G. M. (2000). *Effective public relations* (8th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0-13-025616-1
- Treadwell D., & Treadwell, J. B. (2000). *Public relations writing: Principles in practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. ISBN: 0-205-30015-4
- Goldstein, N. (ed.) (2000, or latest edition). *Associated press stylebook and briefing on media law*. New York: Associated Press. ISBN: 0-917360-19-2
- *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th edition) (2001). Washington DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 1-55798-791-2

**NB:** Professional writing standards are expected on all assignments. Professional standards include: correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and careful proofreading. No spelling errors are allowed—having even one spelling error will result in a zero for the assignment. Except when otherwise noted, all assignments should be double-spaced (23–25 lines-per-page), have one-inch (1”) margins all around, and be written in one of the following fonts: Bookman or Bookman Old Style 11 pt., Palatino 11 pt., New Century Schoolbook 11 pt., or Garamond 12 pt.

For headings, use **boldface type**, **Arial Black**, or **Helvetica Black**.

**Assignments**

	<b>Points</b>
<b>Participation/Preparedness/Professionalism</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Reaction Papers to Readings</b> (4 @ 5%, 2–3 pp. each)	<b>20%</b>
<b>Public Relations Writing Assignments</b> (4 @ 10%)	<b>40%</b>
<b>Research/Critical Essay w/ pres.</b> (15+ pp. of text + bib./10-15 min.)	<b>30%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Academic Dishonesty:** The University is an academic community of scholars. Academic dishonesty is a very serious offense against the integrity of this community and will not be tolerated. All academic work submitted by you is assumed to be your own original work and to contain your own thought, research, and self-expression. Work that borrows the ideas, organization, or wording, from others must be properly acknowledged.

**Plagiarism** is the unauthorized or inappropriate use of the words or ideas of others. Plagiarism occurs when written or spoken material is borrowed (even from oneself), in whole or in part, and passed off as original by a writer or speaker. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, presenting someone else's speech, presentation, essay, or news release as original. It also includes failing to document the source of word-for-word or paraphrased material in oral presentations or papers.

It is my policy to pursue plagiarism vigorously, to fail students who plagiarize, and to report cases of plagiarism to the university administration.

### Course Schedule

Day 1:	1.16	Overview of Class   History of Public Relations   Theories	
Day 2:	1.23	<b>Read:</b> Cutlip, Center, & Broom   Assign Fact Sheet	
Day 3:	1.30†	<b>Read:</b> Cutlip, Center, & Broom   Assign Pitch Letter	
Day 4:	2.6†	<b>Read:</b> See Handout   Assign News Release	<b>Fact Sheet Due</b>
Day 5:	2.13†	<b>Read:</b> See Handout   Assign Backgrounder	
Day 6:	2.20†	<b>Read:</b> See Handout	<b>Pitch Letter Due</b>
Day 7:	2.27†	<b>Read:</b> See Handout	
Day 8:	3.6†	<b>TBA</b>	
<b>Day 9:</b>	<b>3.13†</b>	<b>Spring Break—no class</b>	
Day 10:	3.20†	<b>Read:</b> See Handout	<b>News Release Due</b>
Day 11:	3.27†	<b>Read:</b> See Handout	
Day 12:	4.3†	<b>Read:</b> See Handout	<b>Backgrounders Due</b>
Day 13:	4.10†	<b>Read:</b> See Handout	
Day 14:	4.17†	Activity	<b>All Reaction Papers Due</b>
Day 15:	4.24	<b>Wrap-up   Evaluations</b>	
<b>Day 16:</b>		<b>Final Exam Day   Presentations</b>	<b>All Essays Due</b>

†: Reaction Papers may be submitted.

**Note on public relations writing assignments:** Multiple drafts and editing are hallmarks of effective public relations writing. My undergraduate students must complete (and usually need) three required drafts—several students require four or five drafts to make their releases perfect. I would be happy to look over your “drafts” (provided that they're typed). I recommend that you take advantage of the offer.