

JMC 3413-001: Principles of Public Relations

T/Th 1:30–2:45 p.m. | Aug. 20–Dec. 7 (Final: Dec. 10, 1:30–3:30) | Dale Hall, 0206

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Course Description 3423

Introduction to Public relations reviews the history, scope, ethics, definitions, and everyday practices of public relations. Particular attention is given to ways of gaining public support for activities, causes, movements and institutions. Students learn about the subtleties of the professions, about the role of theory in public relations, and how to create effective messages. Students also learn about the importance of relationship building, mutually beneficial relationships, rhetoric, goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics, stakeholders, and publics. Students should come away from the class with an understanding of, and appreciation for, the field of public relations.

Objectives

- To teach students about the history of public relations.
- To introduce students to the basic writing activities and practices.
- To teach students about the PRSA Code of Ethics, and about ethical issues associated with communicating with multiple publics.
- To teach about new technologies useful in public relations.
- To teach students about the role of theory and research, as well as the RACE acronym.
- To teach the basics of AP style.

Note Carefully: At the heart of effective public relations is creating and maintaining relationships between an organization and its publics. We build relationships not because we have to, but because it allows us to be effective communicators. I encourage you to take advantage of office hours and to come by and see me, my assistant, and your other professors as often as you can. Even if all we do is talk about current events (I hate sports, no sports), I can get to know you better as a professional.

Miscellaneous

- **Come up with a method to help me remember your name.** Out of 75 students I will probably only get to know half-a-dozen of you—those who sit in the front usually—unless you help me out.
- *Spell-check all your work! Having even one spelling error will result in a zero on the assignment.*
- Late work will be discounted 10% per calendar day. After 5 days, late work will not be accepted.
- *Assignments are due at the start of class. Bring assignments to class printed and ready to go.* If you don't have an assignment ready, don't skip class! Come to class anyway and turn the assignment in later that day or the next day. The grade reduction will be the same. No need to miss class.
- *No assignment will be accepted via e-mail, except when noted in the assignment.* In an emergency, an e-mail version may be used to prove that your assignment was in on time, however, a printed copy must be provided the next class day or the assignment will not be graded, and will begin losing points for being late. I will also compare the copies to ensure they are the same.
- All assignments should be typed and printed (in color if appropriate), spell checked, and proofread.
- Come see me in office hours with questions or for feedback *before* assignments are due.
- Missed exams cannot be made up for *any* reason.
- Exams may only be taken early with permission.
- Familiarize yourself with Associated Press (AP) style and follow it for all assignments.

Required Texts (Plus readings distributed via Learn.OU.edu or Dropbox.com)

Heath, R. L., & Coombs, W. T. (2006). *Today's Public Relations: An Introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 1-4129-2635-1. You can get a used copy online for a few dollars if you act fast.

Christian, D., Jacobsen, S. & Minthorn, D. (Ed.) (2011). *The Associated Press stylebook and libel manual and briefing on media law with internet guide and glossary*. New York: Associated Press. ISBN: 0917360508. \$11.75 for the spiral bound book (recommended), \$25 online access (when it expires you have no book).

Class Policies

Use of D2L and “Dropbox.com”

We will use D2L for grades and occasionally discussion forums. However, for sharing files, I will be using <www.Dropbox.com>. Dropbox requires you to create a free account, and based on the link I send to you, you'll be able to access the course folder and upload/download files. Note: Do not drag files from the dropbox folder to your desktop, that will MOVE them there, and everyone else will not be able to see them. Dropbox works like a big networked folder that everyone has access and permission to. Use it carefully. Hold down the option key when you drag and you can make copies of files.

Formatting and Writing Expectations

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.*

One-inch margins all around are standard for professional (non-creative) documents. For all printed assignments in my class, use Bookman or Bookman Old Style 11 pt (*not 12 point*). **Never use Times or Times New Roman, for any assignment.** Times is difficult to read. I will not accept it, and your assignment may be late after I return it to be fixed.

Attendance Policy

In the business world, attendance is an important aspect of professionalism. Indeed, “just showing up” is sometimes the most important aspect of job performance and can mean the difference between a promotion or a layoff. You should make an effort to come to every class.

Oklahoma University’s attendance policy reads as follows: “A student is responsible for the content of any course in which he or she is officially enrolled. The establishment of a specific policy concerning class attendance requirements, as well as announced and unannounced examinations, is the responsibility of the individual instructor.” *In other words, having an attendance policy is the instructor’s prerogative.* All Strategic Communication faculty endorse a strict attendance policy in order to provide continuity in classes and maximize the learning opportunities for all students.

You may miss one week of classes without penalty. If you miss a third class, your final grade will be reduced by 5%. Missing a fourth class will result in a 10% reduction of your final grade. *Missing a fifth class will result in a failing grade for the course. There are no excused absences.* Being sick, getting in an automobile accident, having your car break down, going on a job interview, attending an extracurricular event or conference, going to a funeral, getting arrested, etc., will not be excused. *Coming late or leaving early 2 times equals an absence.*

If you must miss class for a university-sanctioned event, please be prepared to make up the missed class during office hours. I *may* consider excusing non university-sanctioned events if they are relevant to your academic major/minor, if you come see me at the beginning of the semester, and if you prepare a memo requesting release for the activity. *The only activities officially excused by OU are Debate, and NCAA related events for staff, athletes, and other support staff.*

You do not have to ask permission to miss class, nor do you need an excuse—although providing one is a professional courtesy. Use your absences wisely.

Note: if you experience a death in the family or have a long-term or chronic illness (Mononucleosis, Pneumonia, Lyme disease, etc.) which prevents your from coming to class for more than seven to ten days, you are advised to drop the course. The registrar’s office has a procedure for compensating students who experience serious illnesses, deaths in the family, etc. There is no reason to sacrifice your education and fail my class if you are ill, or have a family tragedy.

The only activities that I will excuse, besides religious holidays, are *academic* conferences in our area, if you have a paper (PRSSA, IABC, NCA, ICA, etc.), and jury duty (and only if you are on a jury—some notice from the court will be required).

If you plan to miss a day because of a religious holiday, you should tell me early in the semester what day(s) you would miss. Prepare a one-page memo indicating the religious holidays and dates that you will miss. Notifying me the day *before*, or the day of, a religious holiday is unacceptable. All religions know the dates of religious holidays weeks or months in advance.

Plagiarism Policy

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 ideas, speech, presentation, essay, book review, or news release as original. Plagiarism also includes failing to document or cite the source of word-for-word or paraphrased material in oral presentations or written assignments. *It is my policy to pursue plagiarism vigorously, to fail students who plagiarize for the entire class, and to report cases of plagiarism to the university administration.*

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. Similarly, work that was conducted for another class should not be passed off as original.

Additionally, anytime a student or professional attempts to deceive another by pretending to do work, or take credit for work that s/he did not actually complete, including changing the font size or style, triple spacing, claiming to have submitted an assignment on time that the professor must have "lost" etc., s/he is engaging in academic dishonesty or "cheating." What you are attempting to do is no different than copying from someone else's test. The consequences of this will be just as serious as plagiarism.

NB: Many students are caught each semester and failed for plagiarism. If even one student in one hundred cheats, the number is too high. As you all know, the number is much higher than that. For students planning to graduate, plagiarizing an assignment is quite possibly the stupidest thing they could do. Do not engage in plagiarism in any form. If you are ever unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, ask me or someone else in the department. At the very least, send an e-mail out to me at two in the morning with your question to CYA and explain what you will do to try to be accurate with your citations. When you enter the business world, plagiarism will not only get you fired, but also may ruin your career and get you sued, depending upon what ideas/content you steal.

There is a very simple rule to follow in order to avoid plagiarism and never get in trouble. ***Cite everything that is not your own words or idea.*** If

you know that someone else said it, wrote it, or thought it, anywhere, even someone at a party, cite the source. Do this and you will never get in trouble for plagiarism.

Using lengthy paragraphs of content from the Internet, even if you rewrite it and cite it at the end of the paragraph is plagiarism. You will get a zero for the assignment and be failed for the class. Except for direct quotations with quotation marks, do all your writing with books, websites, articles closed. You write from what is in *your* head, not what someone else wrote.

† **NB:** I will give you 5% extra credit on your final grade for turning in someone who cheats. You will obviously need more than just the claim, but any evidence that can be verified or followed up on will be sufficient and as long as it is possible (i.e., I am not compelled by a court, etc.), your name would not be mentioned.

OU's ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

All work submitted for this course must be your work. All sources used for information must be properly cited. Students should adhere to the *Student's Guide to Academic Integrity* as defined by the office of the Senior Vice President and Provost at www.ou.edu/content/dam/provost/documents/ouncfhb.pdf:

STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. The basic assumptions regarding student academic work at the University are:

- (A) Students attend the University in order to learn and grow intellectually.
- (B) Academic assignments exist for the sake of this goal and grades exist to show how fully the goal is attained.
- (C) A student's academic work and grades should result from the student's own effort to learn and grow. Academic work completed any other way is pointless, and grades obtained any other way are fraudulent.

Academic integrity means understanding and respecting these basic truths, without which no university can exist. Academic misconduct violates the assumptions at the heart of all learning. It destroys the mutual trust and respect that should exist between student and professor. Academic misconduct is unfair to students who earn their grades honestly. cf., also, integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html

School Closings, Swine Flu, School Crises, etc.

Since school closing because of illness or weather are essentially unpredictable, my grading policy is as follows: *If school is cancelled or delayed beyond the end of the normal semester for whatever reason, weather, crisis, disease outbreak, terrorism, etc., your final grade will be based on whatever work you had submitted up to the time of the closure announcement. Any late work that is not in by the closure date will not be factored into your grade. However, work due on the day of the closure may be submitted electronically until midnight. In other words, be sure to do your best on every assignment.*

Diversity and Ethics Policy

The University of Oklahoma and the Gaylord College respect diversity in all of its forms: race, sex, gender, age, religion, political orientation, country of origin, economic status, etc. Everyone in the United States has a right to their opinion and should feel comfortable expressing their opinion. As citizens, we are under no obligation to agree with what others believe, however, we must, as a civil society, support people's right to worship, act, look, and think, as they want. In this classroom, we will not tolerate any mistreatment of others because of how they look, what they believe, where they come from, or because of a lack of knowledge or skills. The only thing that we will not be tolerant of is a lack of ethical and moral fiber. As Donald M. Erb wrote:

Do not be tolerant of misrepresentation, of superficiality,
of the parading of false issues as though they were real issues.
Tolerance does not extend to intellectual dishonesty or ineptitude.
—Plaque, Erb Memorial Union, University of Oregon, 1990

Technology Policy

Since you all want to be professionals some day, you should behave as one now. If you want to know the time, buy a watch, but do not use your cellular telephone as a clock, do not check your messages during class, and be sure that your telephone is turned *off* before class. I taught a professional Master's course in Prague a few years ago in which I had the Iranian "Charge D'Affaires," Hossein Rezvani, essentially the Ambassador to the Czech Republic, in my class. At the beginning of class, Rezvani would turn off his cell phone, as would every student. More recently, while lecturing in Virginia to the U.S. Defense Information School (DINFOS), every officer in the class (Captains, Majors, Colonials, etc.) turned off his/her cellular telephone before class started. When I attend professional meetings and conferences with leaders in business and communication, professionals also turn off their telephones. Ambassadors, military officers, and professional communicators are more important than you and I are, and yet, they respectfully turn off their cell phones during classes and professional meetings.

E-mail and Communication Policy

I check e-mail regularly each weekday and once each weekend day (sometimes more frequently). You should treat any e-mail to me as a professional correspondence. All communication should include your name, your class, and a clear, professionally worded, message. Create a "signature file" (ask me how if you need help) so that your messages have complete information on them automatically.

Grade Questions Policy

You need to wait 24-hours before inquiring about any exam grade. If you have concerns about a grade, I expect you to explain your question in writing (memo form). Please outline your concern and provide evidence to support your claim (e.g., "On p. 65 of the textbook it says...." or "On the assignment sheet you said we should...").

Assignments & Descriptions JMC 3413–001: Principles of Public Relations

| Assignments | Points |
|--|-----------------|
| Ness Release w/ Situation Analysis (News release 10, situational analysis 15%) | 25% |
| <i>Best three out of five exams</i> | |
| Exam I (format and content TBA) | 25% |
| Exam II (format and content TBA) | 25% |
| Exam III (Take-home: format and content TBA) | 25% |
| Exam IV (Take-home: format and content TBA) | 25% |
| Exam V (format and content TBA) | 25% |
| News Conferences (Opening 1 min., Closing, 30 sec. Questions and Answers 3–5 min.) | NG |
| Extra Credit: (XC) (Questions on readings—in memo form 1 p. ss.; added value; blog entry) † | 0–5% |
| Total | 100–105% |

† Extra Credit

Each option is worth .5% on your final grade. Do something every third class and you can get full credit.

Questions on readings: Requires that you ask some of your questions in class. *To get credit you need to write 50 lines of questions* (11 pt. Bookman Old Style, 1" margins), upload your questions to D2L, and bring in a printed copy at the beginning of class. Your questions should focus on requests for clarification or elaboration, and identifying links to other courses, theories, and communication principles, etc. Do not attempt to write exam questions. Critical thinking questions, musing, etc. are what I want to see.

Added Value involves you finding public relations or strategic communication related articles, materials, etc. that you share with your fellow students. You act as a resource for information. The information must be timely (i.e., stories or articles should be from the same week that you share the document with me), and should be sent to Adam Saffer first for approval. Write a 100–200 word introduction for the document, and we will distribute it and share it with your fellow students via Dropbox.com.

Blog entries must be substantive (500+ words) commentaries on public relations or communication issues. Reposting other people's content is not a blog entry you can receive credit for. You need to write something of your own. You start with something interesting/controversial, and then do more with it (see my blog for examples).

Participation in research: When opportunities arise to participate in faculty or graduate student research in Gaylord, you should take advantage of it. I am not responsible for informing you of opportunities. If they arise, I will tell you. Be sure to record your name, class, and complete any surveys, etc. to get credit.

Exams

The exams will be traditional, in-class or take-home exams, based on AP Style, the class readings, and lecture. Exams will consist of a combination of multiple-choice questions and short essay questions. To do well you need to have done your readings as well as come to class. I will provide a study guide if you want one—remind me a week ahead of time in class. Some of the exams might be take home exams. If this occurs, you will have one week to get the exam done.

News Release and Situation Analysis.

You will write a standard 5-paragraph news release (explained in class), plus a 5–7 page, detailed, situation analysis. Assignment details will be provided in September (see schedule).

News Conference

The news conference is a fun, voluntary assignment in which you will deliver an opening statement, a closing statement, and answer questions from the media. The situation will be related to your news release so you will already be up-to-speed on the issue. Participation is voluntary. I will have a signup sheet the class before.

Tentative Course Calendar

All reading due for the date indicated

| DATE | DAY | ACTIVITY/READING | ASSIGNMENT DUE |
|--------------------------------|------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Aug. 21 | 1 | Read: Front matter and Chapter 1: Relationship Building..... | Overview Syllabus |
| Aug. 23 | 2 | Ch. 1 Cont: An ethical organization communicating effectively | |
| Aug. 28 | 3 | Read: Chapter 2: History | |
| Aug. 30 | 4 | Activities | |
| Sep. 4 | 5 | Read: Chapter 3: Managing MBRs | |
| Sep. 6 | 6 | | Exam I |
| Sep. 11 | 7 | Read: Chapter 4: The Value of Research | |
| Sep. 13 | 8 | News Release Assigned | |
| Sep. 18 | 9 | Read: Chapter 5: Planning | |
| Sep. 20 | 10 | Writing Headlines Planning | |
| Sep. 25 | 11 | Read: Chapter 6: Strategic Messaging | |
| Sep. 27 | 12 | | Exam II |
| Oct. 2 | 13 | Read: Chapter 7: Evaluation | |
| Oct. 4 | 14 | Writing Leads Evaluation | |
| Oct. 9 | 15 | Read: Chapter 8: Theory | |
| Oct. 11 | 16 | Writing Quotes Theory | |
| Oct. 16 | 17 | Read: Chapter 9: Ethical and Legal | |
| Oct. 18 | 18 | Writing Boilerplates ¶s Ethical and Legal..... | Exam III |
| Oct. 23 | 19 | Read: Chapter 10: Issues Management | |
| Oct. 25 | 20 | Writing in AP Style Issues Management | |
| Oct. 30 | 21 | Read: Chapter 11: Media and Technology Tools | |
| Nov. 1 | 22 | Writing a Situation Analysis News Conferences | |
| Nov. 6 | 23 | Read: Chapter 12: Publicity, Promotion, Writing | |
| Nov. 8 | 24 | | Exam IV |
| Nov. 12, Gaylord Prize. | | <i>(Attend & write a one-page ss. commentary on Judy Woodruff's speech for x/c.)</i> | |
| Nov. 13 | 25 | Read: Chapter 13: Collaborative Decision Making | |
| Nov. 15 | 26 | NCA Work on News Release and Situation Analysis | |
| Nov. 20 | 27 | Read: Chapter 14: Building a Career | |
| Nov. 22 | 28 | Thanksgiving: Nov. 21-25 | |
| Nov. 27 | 29 | Read: Chapter 15: The Future, Globalism, Cyberspace..... | News Release & SA Due |
| Nov. 29 | 30 | The Future, Globalism, Cyberspace | |
| Dec. 4 | 31 | TBA..... | News Conferences |
| Dec. 6 | 32 | TBA | |
| Dec. 10: | | Final Exam Day..... | Exam V |

Typical Public Relations Activities, Strategies, and Tactics[†]

- Write a news release, backgrounder, fact sheet, pitch letter, flier, pamphlet, bulletin, blog, or brochure.
- Write an op-ed article, letter to the editor, feature story, or issue advertisement.
- Write material for an annual report.
- Write a public service announcement or a film script.
- Write or deliver a speech.
- Write a White Paper (position/research paper).
- Write a research paper for a professional conference.
- Buy space for an issues advertisement in a newspapers and magazine.
- Buy advertising to support a new corporate initiative.
- Conduct environmental scanning: read local/national newspapers and industry periodicals, visit chat rooms, monitor Blogs and RSS feeds, watch the local/-national news and news programs.
- Commission research, articles, or reports.
- Choose the graphics and color scheme for an organizational logo.
- Conduct lobbying on behalf of your organization.
- Coordinate/organize/host a special event, news conference, exhibit, open house, or annual stockholder meeting.
- Create or design a poster, billboard, transit sign, advertisement, point-of-purchase display, or direct mail package.
- Develop educational materials for public schools.
- Develop, design, or select advertising specialties: pens, magnet, tote bags, coffee mugs, coasters, stress balls, etc.
- Develop or design a Web site, chat room, or electronic information site.
- Edit/Proofread documents: news release, annual report, brochure, magazine article, position paper, speech, advertisement, etc.
- Implement and manage communication initiatives for employees—e.g., a telephone hot line, a bulletin board system, a company newspaper or newsletter, a quarterly video update, etc.
- Meet with city/state/national politician: congressperson, governor, senator, etc.
- Meet with community, city, state or federal leaders, or officials: mayor, school board member, city council member, police chief, ombudsperson, CDC official, etc.
- Meet with a journalist to discuss story ideas.
- Meet with a government bureaucrat, local/state inspector, etc.
- Meet with a spokesperson of a special interest group.
- Negotiate with individuals, organizations, publics, activists, etc.
- Organize or staff a speakers bureau.
- Organize a workshop, professional conference, or news conference.
- Pitch story ideas to a reporter or editor.
- Prepare slides, take photographs, or commission an illustration or artwork.
- Prepare and advise a witness who will give testimony to government committee.
- Prepare and advise an executive who is to be interviewed on a local news network, cable television, or sixty minutes (“Mike Wallace is here to see you sir . . .”).
- Represent your organization on a radio or television talk show.
- Send (mail, e-mail, fax, courier) news releases, pitch letters, invitations, etc.
- Sponsor book, magazine, or television advertising or editorials.
- Testify before Congress or at a public hearing.
- Testify before a citizens advisory panel or committee.

[†] Based loosely on Ron Pearson’s Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, *A Theory of Public Relations Ethics* (1989), Ohio University.

Sample Writing Activities

1. News release (basic 5–7¶ release).
2. Backgrounder.
3. Letter (cover, fundraising, invitation, information gathering, pitch, recommendation, solicitation, thank you, etc.).
4. Fliers (tent signs, name badges, event signs, etc.).
5. Advertising copy (more than a few sentences, like an issue advertisement).
6. *Design* a poster, banner, billboard, transit sign, advertisement, etc.
7. Write a series of PSAs (10, 20, 30, 60 second).
8. Write a memo.
9. Pamphlet.
10. Create/design infographics.
11. Create/design stationery/business cards.
12. Create/design a Bulletin/Program.
13. Meet/Interview community leaders, government officials, journalists, politicians, professionals/experts, etc.
14. Design a direct mail package.
15. Take photographs, or oversee a commission for an illustration or artwork.
16. Write a feature story.
17. Create a fact sheet.
18. Organize a speakers bureau or ongoing event (Blog, Web site, etc.).
19. Write/create a brochure.
20. Write or deliver a speech or presentation.
21. Write a report.
22. Write a white paper or research paper (position paper).
23. Editing/proofreading.
24. Design a point-of-purchase display.
25. Developing/creating media and informational kits.
26. Design/create an online portfolio, website, chat room, knowledge network, etc.
27. Write content for, create/design, etc., a newsletter.
28. Plan a news conference or special event.
29. Research for a campaign, etc.

Speeches

- Biography
- Debate
- Demonstration
- Informative
- Persuasion
- Persuasive sales
- Special occasion (introduction, motivational, celebration, memorial, eulogy, etc.)

Propaganda, Advertising, Marketing, Merchandizing & Public Relations

Propaganda

- Tries to generate conditioned reflexes that replace reasoned actions. The end justifies the means.
- Accomplishes goals through propagandistic strategies: appeal to authority, bandwagon, fear, glittering generalities, name-calling (ad hominem), plain folks, testimonials, transfer (substitution), slippery slope.
- *Controlled* use of the media.

Advertising

- Tries to create desire and to motivate demand for a product or idea.
- Design advertisements, write messages, purchase broadcast time, and conduct research (readership, persuasion, analysis of publics, etc.).
- May supplement public relations/marketing efforts.
- *Controlled* use of the media.

Marketing

- The process of planning and executing the conception (product), pricing, promotion and distribution (place) of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives (American Marketing Association).
- Interested in two questions: (1) is there a need or desire for this product? (2) If a need exists, among what audiences and in what form is it likely to be well received?
- Marketing is targeted primarily to *consumers*, although some internal marketing does occur.
- Marketing often employs press agency (special events, special appearances), and publicity (announcements of new products, etc.).
- Advertising, copy testing, and market research are staples of marketing.
- *Controlled* use of the media.

Merchandizing

- Concerned with the *packaging* of products, ideas, services, and individuals.
- Merchandizing research explores the impact that packaging, texture, shape, color, scent, and images have on the acceptance, satisfaction, desire, and attraction to products.
- Merchandizing examines what types of in-store, and point-of-purchase displays best attract consumers/clients.
- Merchandizing also creates sales scripts, and answers to FAQs for suppliers, dealers, and sales people.
- *Controlled* use of the media.

Public Relations:

- Works to create and maintain relationships between organizations and publics.
- Uses research, analysis/planning, communication, and evaluation.
- Dialogic communication and two-way communication are staples of successful public relations.
- *Uncontrolled* use of the media.