

Comm. 680-100 | 14435 | Dunbar, 2209 | W, 6:30-9 p.m.

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Course Description

Communication 680 is essentially a “Special Topics In...” course. This semester, 680 will focus on Public Relations. As communication professionals, you need to understand theory and how it relates to professional practice.

The media often naively portray public relations as being about talk. Most mass media portrayals involve public relations professionals planning and arranging events, staging publicity, giving news conferences, “spinning” the truth and deceiving publics. All of these depictions are off track. The lion’s share of a public relations professional’s time is devoted to interpersonal and group communication, conducting environmental scanning and research, and writing.

This semester we will focus on covering the basics of public relations: understanding practice, and the more advanced aspects of the profession: understanding theory.

Objectives

- To understand the history, professional and philosophical assumptions, and basic theories of public relations.
- To understand the role of public relations in society.
- To understand the role of relationship building, two-way communication, and persuasion in public relations.
- To demonstrate familiarity with professional definitions, key public relations terminology, and a variety of approaches to public relations research and practice.
- To demonstrate substantial familiarity with one of the major strands of public relations research or practice.
- To demonstrate awareness of, and competence in, AP and APA style.
- To demonstrate improvement in academic and professional writing skills.

Catalog Description (not mine), Seminar in Organizational Communication: Exploration of selected topics in organizational communication. Possible topics may include corporate advocacy, public relations, global organizations, training and development, dialogue, climate and culture in organizations. May be repeated for credit under different topics.

Miscellaneous

- All readings and reading questions are due on the date indicated.
- Missed exams cannot be made up for any reason.
- Exams may only be taken early with prior permission.
- *Having even one spelling error will result in a zero for an assignment.*
- Late assignments will be discounted 10% per *calendar day*.
- If you do not have an assignment ready to turn in, don’t skip class. Come to class anyway. There is no value in skipping class.
- Come see me in office hours with questions or for feedback before assignments are due. Office hours are there for you; you pay for them so use them.
- Familiarize yourself with my handout on APA style and follow it for all assignments.
- ***Come up with a method to help me remember your name.***

Required Texts

Goldstein, N. (Ed.) (2006). *The Associated Press stylebook and libel manual and briefing on media law with internet guide and glossary*. New York: Associated Press. ISBN: 0917360508.

Copies of Readings in one of the following areas will be provided: Activism, Apologia, Culture, Crisis, Dialogue, Gender, International, Issue Management, New Technology, and Relationship Management.

Select, obtain, and read, one of the following introductory public relations textbooks (note: the edition is not important as long as the book is not more than about five years old):

Heath, R., & Coombs, W. T. (2006). *Today's Public Relations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 1412926351.

Newsom, D., Turk, J. V., & Kruckeberg, D. (2004). *This is PR: The Realities of Public Relations*. Belmont CA: Thomson/Wadsworth. 0-534-56263-9

Wilcox, D., Cameron, G., Ault, P., Agee, W. (2003). *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics*. New York: Longman. 0205368514.

Recommended

Diggs-Brown, B., & Glou, J. L. (2006). *The pr styleguide: Formats for public relations practice (2nd edition)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning. ISBN: 0495006432.

Class Policies

Formatting and Writing Expectations

Public relations is characterized by effective writing. As a result, 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 (27 lines-per-page), have one-inch margins all around, and be written in Bookman or Bookman Old Style 11 pt. **Never use** Arial, Helvetica, Times or Times New Roman, for any assignment in my class. I will not accept it and your assignment will be late when I send you back to fix it.

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. Additionally, attribution theory tells us that even the best employees/professors/students in the world will be perceived as slackers if they do not come to class. Getting all As on tests/assignments is necessary but not sufficient. Attendance is also a required aspect of my class just like doing the reading and taking tests.

Western Michigan’s attendance policy reads as follows: “Students are responsible directly to their instructors for class and laboratory attendance, and for petitions to excuse absences” (Catalog, 2003–2005, p. 29). In light of this, and because of the importance of attendance noted above, my attendance policy is as follows: *Students may miss the equivalent of one week of classes without penalty (one class on a one day a week schedule). If a second class is missed, your final grade will be reduced by 10%. Missing a third class will result in a failing grade for the course.*

Note: There are no excused absences. Being sick, in an automobile accident, going on a job interview, attending a conference or funeral, getting arrested, visiting a friend in the hospital,

etc., will not be excused. Coming late or leaving early twice equals an absence. Arriving “very late” or leaving “very early” (my judgment) may count as an absence.

† **NB:** If you plan to miss a day because of a religious holiday, you need to tell me early in the semester what day you will miss. The day *before* a religious holiday is unacceptable. All religions know the dates of religious holidays several months in advance.

The only other activity that I will excuse besides religious holidays is jury duty, and only if you are on a jury—you report for jury duty early and are assigned or excused in plenty of time to make my class.

For all other reasons that you might miss class, be sure that you have not used your allotted absences so that you can afford to miss a class with no penalty when you need one.

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 from 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. In a typical semester, a couple hundred students are caught cheating at a school this size. 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 land you in jail 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 some guy at a party, cite the source. Do this and you will never get in trouble for plagiarism. Always cite *source, year and page numbers* in text.

Calculating Grades

To calculate your overall grade throughout the semester, you simply multiply the points you earned on a particular assignment by the points the assignment was worth, add all of the

points up for each assignment, and then divide by the total. For example, say you received 75% on your presentation, which is worth 10% of the course total, so you earned 7.5 points ($.75 \times 10 = 7.5$). Similarly, if you received an 85% on your first exam, worth 15% of the total, you have 12.75 more points ($.85 \times 15 = 12.75$). Finally, if you earned a 90% on a research paper you'd have 18 more points ($.90 \times 20 = 18$). Finally, if you add all of the points that you have earned, and divide by the possible points for the assignments completed ($7.5 + 12.5 + 18 = 38.25$)/45=85% overall. Here are several samples of how to calculate your current grade:

80% (10 pts.) $.80 \times 10 =$ 8.0 pts	83% (10 pts.) $.83 \times 10 =$ 8.3 pts	86% (10 pts.) $.86 \times 10 =$ 8.6 pts
85% (15 pts.) $.85 \times 15 =$ 12.75 pts	65% (15 pts.) $.84 \times 15 =$ 9.75 pts	88% (15 pts.) $.88 \times 15 =$ 13.2 pts
88% (20 pts.) $.88 \times 20 =$ 17.6 pts	80% (20 pts.) $.80 \times 20 =$ 16.0 pts	95% (20 pts.) $.95 \times 20 =$ 19.0 pts
$(8 + 12.75 + 17.6 = 38.35) / 45 =$ 85.2%	$(8.3 + 9.75 + 16 = 34.05) / 45 =$ 75.7%	$(8.6 + 13.2 + 19 = 40.8) / 45 =$ 91.7%

Grading Scale

A 93–100	BA 87–92	CB 77–82	DC 67–72		
	B 83–86	C 73–76	D 60–66	F/E 0–59	

Assignments

Assignments	Points
Exam I: (AP Style, History, etc.)	10%
Exam II: (Public Relations Writing, etc.)	10%
Exam III: (Theories, etc.)	10%
Presentation I: (3 chapters, 3 articles, 4–7 p. packet, 12–15 minutes) ††	10%
Presentation: II (One of the areas below, 4–7 p. packet, 12–15 minutes) †††	10%
Research/Critical Essay: (15+ double-spaced pages, 15+ scholarly sources)	25%
Participation/Preparedness: (My Discretion) †	25%
Total	100%

† For each class' readings, you will prepare a list of discussion questions. You should have a minimum of 25 lines of questions—not counting your header information and citations. Include complete contact information and citation information (using APA style) on everything you produce. Format your questions like the samples provided. I am not looking for “test” questions that you know the answer to, nor am I looking for “what are the three features of X?” questions. If the answer is in the chapter/article, then it is not something for which you have a question. Pose questions about issues that interest you or for which you want clarification. Questions submitted late will receive partial credit. All questions must be submitted within one week of their due date to receive any credit at all.

†† Select three related chapters from Heath & Vasquez, read them, and then read three or more of the seminal/ovular articles identified by the authors in Heath & Vasquez. Prepare a 4–7 page (single-spaced) informational packet highlighting key issues, explaining concepts, quoting key phrases, etc. *Do not simply summarize each chapter/article.* Your task is to explain the issues/concepts involved to the rest of the class so that they understand the basic assumptions, theories, etc. guiding the area examined. Make copies for everyone. Be sure to include a bibliography of all sources in APA style, and a proper title page with complete contact information, etc. Be sure to create an aesthetically pleasing, useful, packet of information.

††† You will be assigned one of the following central areas: Activism, Apologia, Culture, Crisis, Dialogue, Gender, International, Issue Management, or New Technology. As with the last presentation, prepare a 4–7 page (single-spaced) informational packet highlighting key issues, explaining concepts, quoting key phrases, etc. Since we will not be able to cover every area in great depth in class, your task is to explain the issues/concepts involved to the rest of the class so that they understand the basic assumptions, theories, types of research, goals, etc. guiding the area examined. Make copies for everyone. Be sure to include a bibliography of all sources in APA style, and a proper title page with complete contact information, etc. Be sure to create an aesthetically pleasing, useful, packet of information.

Date	Day	Activity/Reading	Assignment Due
Jan. 10	1	Read: Syllabus, Kent’s Writing Rules.....	Obtain Introductory Textbook
Jan. 17	2	Read: First third of introductory textbook. Kent, M. L. (under review). Chapter 7, Theories. In, Book: <i>A Rhetorical Approach to Public Relations Writing</i> .	
Jan. 24	3	Read: Second third of introductory textbook; Case Studies (provided) Kent, M. L. (under review). Chapter 8, MBO. In, Book: <i>A Rhetorical Approach to Public Relations Writing</i> .	
Jan. 31	4	Read: Last third of introductory textbook; Taylor, & Kent (2006). Issue management and policy justification in Malaysia. Kent, M. L. (under review). Chapter 5, Persuasion. In, Book: <i>A Rhetorical Approach to Public Relations Writing</i> .	
Feb. 7	5	Gender Submit Abstract of Research Paper W/ Subject/Topic	Presentation I
		Nothstine, W. L., Blair, C., & Copeland, G. A. (1994). Invention in media and rhetorical criticism: A general orientation. In W. L. Nothstine, C. Blair, & G. A. Copeland (Eds.), <i>Critical questions: Invention, creativity, and the criticism of discourse and media</i> (pp. 3-14). New York: St. Martin’s Press.	
		Blair, C., Brown, J. R., & Baxter, L. A. (1994). Disciplining the feminine. <i>The Quarterly Journal of Speech</i> , 80(4), 383-409.	
		O’Neil, J. (2003). An analysis of the relationships among structure, influence, and gender: Helping to build a feminist theory of public relations. <i>Journal Of Public Relations Research</i> , 15(2), 151–179.	
		Sha, B-L, & Toth, E. (2005). Future professionals’ perceptions of work, life, and gender issues in public relations. <i>Public Relations Review</i> 31, 93–99.	
Feb. 14	6	Activism	
		Smith, M. F., & Ferguson, D. P. (2001). Activism. In R. L. Heath (Ed.), <i>Handbook of public relations</i> (pp. 291–300). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.	
		Taylor, M., Kent, M., & White, W. (2001). How activist organizations are using the Internet to build relationships. <i>Public Relations Review</i> 27(3), 263–284.	
		Kent, M. L., Taylor, M., & White, W. (2003). The relationship between Web site design and organizational responsiveness to stakeholders. <i>Public Relations Review</i> 29(1), 63–77.	
		Kent, M. L. (under review). Chapter 6: Dialogue. In, <i>A Rhetorical Approach to Public Relations Writing</i> .	
Feb. 21	7	Culture	Exam I (AP Terms, APA Style)
		Hofstede, G. (1997). <i>Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind</i> . New York: McGraw-Hill.	
		Taylor, M. (2000). Cultural variance as a challenge to global public relations: A case study of the Coca-Cola scare. <i>Public Relations Review</i> 26(3), 277–293.	
Feb. 28	8	International Research Paper Bibliography—15+ sources	
		Taylor, M. (2001). International public relations opportunities and challenges for the 21 st century. In R. L. Heath (Ed.), <i>Handbook of public relations</i> (pp. 629–638). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.	
		Taylor, M., & Kent, M. L. (1999). Challenging assumptions of international public relations: When government is the most important public. <i>Public Relations Review</i> 25(2), 131–144.	
		Taylor, M., & Kent, M. L. (2000). Media transition in Bosnia: From propagandistic past to uncertain future. <i>Gazette</i> 62(5), 355–378.	
		Kent, M. L., & Taylor, M. (In Press). Beyond “excellence” in international public relations research: An examination of generic theory in Bosnian public relations. <i>Public Relations Review</i> .	
Mar. 7	9	Spring Break, No Classes This Week.	

Mar. 14 10 Apologia Presentation II

- Aly, B. (1969). The gallows speech: A lost genre. *Southern Speech Journal* XXXIV(3), 204–213.
- Ware, B. L., & Linkugel, W. A. (1973). They spoke in defense of themselves: On the generic criticism of apologia. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59, 273–283.
- Benoit, W. L. (1995). *Accounts, excuses, and apologies: A theory of image restoration strategies*. Albany NY: State University of New York Press.—pp. vii–61.
- Hearit, K. M. (2001). Corporate apologia: When an organization speaks in defense of itself. In R. L. Heath, & G. Vasquez (Eds.), *Handbook of public relations* (pp. 501–511). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Mar. 21 11 Relationship Mgmt. | Res. P. Thesis, Lit. Review, and Method Exam II

- Cheney, G., Dionisopoulos, G. N. (1989). Public relations? No, relations with publics: A rhetorical-organizational approach to contemporary corporate communications. In C. H. Botan, & V. Hazleton, Jr., (Eds.), *Public relations theory* (111–131). Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Broom, G. M., Casey, S., & Richey, J. (2000). Concept and theory of organization–public relationships. In J. A. Ledingham, & S. D. Bruning (Eds.), *Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations* (pp. 3–22). Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Grunig, J. E., Huang, Y-H. (2000). From organizational effectiveness to relationship indicators: Antecedents of relationships, public relations strategies, and relational outcomes. In J. A. Ledingham, & S. D. Bruning (Eds.), *Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations* (pp. 23–53). Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ledingham, J. A. (2006). Relationship management: A general theory of public relations. In V. Hazelton & C. Botan (Eds.), *Public relations theory II*, (pp. 465–483). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Mar. 28 12 Crisis

- Burnet, J. J. (1998). A strategic approach to managing crisis. *Public Relations Review*, 24(4), 475–488.
- Coombs, W. T. (1999). *Ongoing crisis communication: Planning managing and responding*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.—pp. ix–58.
- Coombs, W. T. (2002). Deep and surface threats: Conceptual and practical implications for “crisis” vs. “problem.” *Public Relations Review* 28, 339–345.
- Ulmer, R. R., & Sellnow, T. L. (2002). Crisis management and the discourse of renewal: Understanding the potential for positive outcomes of crisis. *Public Relations Review* 28, 361–365.

Apr. 4 13 Issue Management | Research Paper Discussion/Findings/Critique

- Jones, B. L., & Chase, W. H. (1979). Managing public policy issues. *Public Relations Review* 2, 3–23.
- Crable, R. E., & Vibbert, S. L. (1985). Managing issues and influencing public policy. *Public Relations Review* XI(2), 3–16.
- Bostdorff, D. M. (1992). “The decision is yours” campaign: Planned Parenthood’s characteristic argument of moral virtue. In E. L. Toth, & R. L. Heath (Eds.), *Rhetorical and critical approaches to public relations* (pp. 301–313). Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Dionisopoulos, G. N, & Goldzwig, S. R. (1992). The atomic power industry and the new woman. In E. L. Toth, & R. L. Heath (Eds.), *Rhetorical and critical approaches to public relations* (pp. 205–224). Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Apr. 11 14 New Technology.....

- Kent, M. L. (2001). Managerial rhetoric and the metaphor of the World Wide Web. *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18(3), 359–375.
- Taylor, M., & Kent, M. L. (2004). Congressional Web sites and their potential for public dialogue. *Atlantic Journal of Communication* 12(2), 59–76.

Kent, M. L., Harrison, T. R., & Taylor, M. (2006). A critique of Internet polls as symbolic representation and pseudo-events. *Communication Studies* 57(3), 299–315.

Kent, M. L., (2006). *The state of Blogging in public relations: Definitions, discussion, directions*. Manuscript Submitted to the 2007 Meeting of The International Communication Association Public Relations Division, Chicago Illinois.

Apr. 18 15 Dialogue Class Evaluations | Exam III

Stewart, J. (1978). Foundations of dialogic communication. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 64, 183–201.

Pearson, R. (1989). Business ethics as communication ethics: Public relations practice and the idea of dialogue. In C. H. Botan, & V. Hazleton, Jr., (Eds.), *Public relations theory* (111–131). Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Jia, W. (1999). From Kaihui to Duihua: The Transformation of Chinese civic discourse. In, R. Kluver & J. H. Powers, (Eds.), *Civic Discourse, Civil Society, and Chinese Communities*. Stamford, Connecticut: Ablex Publishing.

Kent, M. L., & Taylor, M. (2002). Toward a dialogic theory of public relations. *Public Relations Review* 28(1), 21–37.

Apr. 25 16 Final Exam Day 7:15–9:15 p.m. Presentation & Research Paper