

**Communication 333  
Case Studies in Public Relations  
Fall 2015**

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This course will examine public relations as a communication management function within an organization. We will analyze important contemporary and historical case studies in the public relations field in order to understand successful and unsuccessful communication strategies.

The program competencies for the Division of Communication detail that by the time they graduate, students should be able to:

1. Communicate effectively using appropriate technologies for diverse audiences;
2. Plan, evaluate and conduct basic (quantitative and qualitative) communication research;
3. Use communication theories to understand and solve communication problems;
4. Apply historical communication perspectives to contemporary issues and practices; and
5. Apply principles of ethical decision making in communication contexts.

Our objective in this course is to develop decision-making and problem-solving skills related to public relations principles and practices in a variety of situations. By analyzing relevant case studies, we also will attempt to understand the social impact and ethical dimensions of public relations. This course should enable students to enhance their abilities in achieving learning outcomes/competencies 2 through 5 for the communication major.

**TEXTS:**

Alan H. Center, Patrick Jackson, Stacey Smith and Frank R. Stansberry, *Public Relations Practices: Managerial Case Studies and Problems*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Educational, 2014). [Available through UWSP Text Rental]

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**EXAMINATION:** One in-class examination will be given during the semester. It will utilize short answer/short essay questions and will cover assigned readings and class discussions.

**TAKE HOME EXAMINATION:** One take home examination will be assigned near the end of the semester.

**PAPER:** Students will be asked to complete a paper (about 6-8 pages) on a specific case study in public relations. Specific requirements for the paper will be discussed when it is assigned.

CASE STUDY REPORT: Students will be required to present one brief oral report and help lead class discussions on significant contemporary public relations case studies. Students will prepare short (2-page) written assessments of the cases they are assigned to evaluate.

CRISIS RESPONSE CASE EXERCISE: Students will be asked to assess a challenging crisis situation and participate in a news conference about the situation. All students will need to prepare an opening statement for the news conference, construct appropriate questions for their exercise and other scenarios, and answer difficult questions about their organization's response to the crisis.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: You must regularly attend and actively participate in this class. It is vital that students come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material. Your failure to contribute to class discussions will adversely affect your grade. Since we will often discuss important public relations issues taking place in the news, it is very important to keep up on current events.

**GRADES:**

Student grades will be determined as follows:

In-Class Examination	30%
Take Home Examination	10%
Paper	30%
Case Study Report	10%
Crisis Response Case Exercise	10%
Class Participation	10%

**FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD:**

The final exam period for this class is scheduled for 8-10 a.m. on Monday, December 21, 2015.

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:**

Plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Students are expected to comply with all relevant Wisconsin statutes, the state administrative code and UW System academic policies.

**LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:**

Any assignment not handed in at the class period it is due will be lowered a full letter grade. Your grade for the assignment will continue to drop a full letter grade for each subsequent 24-hour period it is late. Exceptions will only be made in emergency cases. Students should never assume that leaving a voice mail message or sending an email message to the instructor constitutes an acceptable excuse. It is always the student's responsibility to obtain an excuse from the instructor personally (either in person or via a telephone conversation).

**OTHER COURSE POLICIES:**

Activities you should **not** engage in:

- Using cell phones, tablets, or laptops during class;
- Failing to attend class;
- Arriving late for class or leaving early;
- Talking during class when others are speaking; and
- Being disrespectful to others in the classroom.

**IMPORTANT DUE DATES:**

Case Study Report is due	October 13
Crisis Response Case Exercise is due	November 3
In-Class Examination	November 17
Paper is due	December 8
Take Home Examination is due	December 21

**STUDENT CONSULTATIONS:**

Students are strongly encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss any concerns or questions they have about the class.

**COURSE OUTLINE/READING ASSIGNMENTS:**

September 8	Introduction to the Course
September 15	Public Relations Cases: Problems and Opportunities & Employee Relations Read: Center, Jackson, et al., pp. 1-48.
September 22	Consumer Relations Read: Center, Jackson, et al., pp. 107-141.
September 29	Media Relations Read: Center, Jackson, et al., pp. 142-166.
October 6	Media Relations Continued Preparation for Case Study Reports

October 13	<u>Case Study Report is due.</u> Readings to be distributed
October 20	Crisis Management Center, Jackson, et al., pp. 207-238.
October 27	Preparing for Crisis Response Case Exercise
November 3	<u>Crisis Response Case Exercise is due.</u>
November 10	Crisis TV News Conference Case Exercise Review
November 17	<u>In-Class Examination</u> Investor Relations Read: Center, Jackson, et al., pp. 76-106.
November 24	Community Relations Read: Center, Jackson, et al., pp. 49-75.
December 1	Some Public Issue Campaigns and Debates Read: Center, Jackson, et al., pp. 167-178 and 195-203.
December 8	<u>Paper is due.</u> More Public Issue Campaigns and Debates Read: Center, Jackson, et al., pp. 179-194 and 204-206.
December 15	Standards, Ethics and Values Read: Center, Jackson, et al., pp. 239-268.
December 21*	<u>Take Home Examination is Due.</u>

\*This class takes place during the final examination period from 8-10 a.m.

Please note: This is a tentative schedule. The timing of the discussion topics might be adjusted slightly, but due dates for assignments should not change.