

PUBLIC RELATIONS CAPSTONE:

Public Relations Campaigns

Communication 431, Sec. 1

Fall 2015

Instructor: Dr. R. M. Dubiel

Office: 303A CAC. Hours: Tuesday: 3:00 – 4:15 p.m.

Wednesday: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. And by appointment.

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NOTE: This is not an introductory course. Please note that it is now listed as a **CAPSTONE** class. It is not intended for students coming straight from an introductory course. The class is not lecture-based; it is activity-based. You will be doing public relations and largely on your own, though it will be in close and constant consultation with the instructor. This is a group project class. An ideal student will have had Writing for Public Relations (Comm. 334, now required), a broadcasting course or two, desktop publishing, and perhaps an internship. Extra-curricular work in the media is another plus.

Course Objectives:

- Heighten knowledge of the creative and planning processes in the formulation of a public relations campaign.
- Develop a sense of strategy and tactics in a public relations campaign.
- Appreciate the practical business considerations in formulating a campaign.
- Develop a sense of critical standards with regard to various media executions.
- Advance knowledge of the new technologies used in public relations.
- Begin development of a professional portfolio.
- Appreciate the interaction between advertising and public relations in a campaign.
- Understand the nature of Integrated Marketing Communications.

This course will also strive to attain the **Program Competencies for the Division of Communication.**

By the time students graduate, they 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.

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Specific course requirements:

The general level of experience in the class will determine the specific requirements. The main work in the class consists of two major projects. This is the breakdown:

- 52 %/38% of the grade will be for a project involving a local business or non-profit organization approved by the instructor.
- 52%/38% of the grade will be for the second student-choice project.

Explanation: Whichever project receives a higher grade will be awarded the 52%.

- 5% of the grade will be determined by participation. I observe the class closely. I also listen to group members. Your participation is not a given. A student can get a lower project grade than the group if that student does not pull her/his weight. Just because your group earns an A does not automatically mean that you will also receive an A. Excessive absences are dangerous. (Going to your friend's destination wedding does not count as a legitimate absence.)
- 5 % of the grade will be determined by the journal each student will keep. This will be a log of time actually spent working on the projects, both in and out of class. Examples will be furnished.
- The journal will be due on **Wednesday, November 18**, at the beginning of class. We will consider the journal complete as of that time.
- Each student will furnish the instructor a statement testifying that she/he has proofread the entire project. This will be handed in with the project itself. A sample form will be available. This is a pass/fail requirement.

Ground rules: The class will be conducted as though you are working in a public relations agency. All work must be turned in on time. Late work will be penalized a whole letter grade for each day it is not turned in.

A careful reading of the sheet entitled "Campaigns According to Dubiel" is critical to understanding the instructor's expectations in this class.

All work must be typed. **Spelling, usage, and grammatical errors count against you. This will be rigidly and ruthlessly enforced. Substandard English will not be tolerated.**

NOTE: The structure of this class is informal, but its expectations are professional. You must operate in an environment that seems to have little structure. But this is deceptive. You must be responsible to yourself and your group. And you must be able to tolerate uncertainty. Part of this stems from the subjective evaluation of the projects, subjective both from the instructor and your peers. While we will articulate standards and strive

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towards them, the subjective element in your final evaluation is as undeniable as it is inevitable.

And this should be noted: *If you find this type of work environment uncomfortable, more than likely public relations/advertising/marketing is not a career path for you.*

Deadlines:

+ First Project, Local Organization: **October 21, Wednesday, at the beginning of class.** You will present your project on this date. You may fine-tune it (if needed) and actually hand it in on Thursday, October 22, by 5 p.m. even though that isn't a scheduled class period.

+ Second Project, Student Choice: **December 9, Wednesday,** also at the beginning of class. We will begin presentations on that day. It will also be handed in on the 9th.

+ The following is due on **Wednesday, November 18:** Your Journal. All deadlines mean that the work is due at the beginning of the scheduled class period on that date.

Note: You are responsible for the scheduling of your time. Getting work done on time is a major part of this class as it is in the world of public relations. It is a world of deadlines.

Groups: Generally you will work in groups of three. The first group will be for the nonprofit project. We will change groups once. The second group you will be in will work on the "your-choice" project. (Don't fret. I'll explain what I mean by "your-choice" in class.) The makeup of the second group will be *announced* during the first week of March.

The final exam period is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 22, 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. in the regular classroom. The use of this period will be discussed in class.

Texts: There is a text rental book available, largely used for reference: *Public Relations Campaign Strategies: Planning for Implementation* (Harper Collins, 1992) by Robert Kendall. This book is very general and obsolete.

In that this is a capstone class, the instructor assumes that you own or have readily access to one of the latest editions of the *AP Stylebook* and the *Publicity Handbook* (David R. Yale, McGraw Hill, 2001 and later). If you don't, or don't know what this refers to, you shouldn't be taking this class.

It is also strongly recommend that each student have a copy of a good grammar/usage book. An example: *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* (Gotham Books, 2003) by Lynne Truss. There are good books of this sort used in English 101 and 102.

