

Communication 431 – Public Relations Campaigns
Wednesday, 2:00-3:50
Room 300

Nathan Rodriguez, Ph.D.

nathan.rodriquez@uwsp.edu

Office 329 (CAC)

Office Hours: T 9:15-10:45

W 12:00-1:00 and by appointment

Course Description:

This is the final course in the Public Relations track, and you are expected to apply the skills and knowledge acquired in your classes to date. Successful students will be adept at synthesizing concepts in a way that ultimately benefits a local client.

Each element of the course has been designed to enhance your ability to not just land a job in public relations, but excel at it. This requires a balance between theory and application. The required readings should prove to be a valuable resource in this class and beyond.

By the end of the semester, you should have multiple pieces of work to add to your portfolio. More importantly, you will have the opportunity to set yourself up for success beyond graduation. Make good use of the time you have.

Course Objectives:

When you complete Comm 431, you will be able to:

1. Assess and improve your own online presence;
2. Produce a strategically constructed job-request cover letter;
3. Construct a professional-quality news release;
4. Consult with, and produce work for local clients and organizations;
5. Understand the elements of a quality campaign, and evaluate influential campaigns in history;
6. Demonstrate teamwork while working on behalf of a client;
7. Develop and Deliver an Integrated Marketing Campaign.

Readings:

All readings are available online via D2L.

Attendance Policy

Attending class is important, if only to get used to the notion of being expected to be at a certain place at a certain time. Sometimes life happens, and you can't make class. For that—and whatever reason, really—I'm giving you one free absence. That does not mean you aren't responsible for what we cover that day, it only means I won't take additional points off your grade for being absent.

Please note that class periods in which you are scheduled to present are particularly important: Not showing up and not emailing me in advance on those dates means you will receive a zero for that presentation.

After your one “free” absence, your professionalism score will drop a full letter grade for being absent. Being late to class matters as well. If you’re late three times, it counts as an absence.

My Expectations

* **NO PHONES:** Take care of personal business before and after class. It’s less than two hours. Don’t have it on your desk. Don’t have it on your lap. I’ve been around the block and know the tricks. Former students will tell you this is my only real pet peeve. I have zero problems with you tapping screens before class, but once we get going, put it away and forget about it.

* Respect your classmates. We will learn from and with one another, so be good to each other.

* Show up on time and ready to go. (See attendance policy).

Course Requirements and Grading

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS
Online Presence	20
Job Request Letter	20
News Release	20
Revised Release + Pitch	20
Branding Activity	20
Local Client Project	100
Historical Campaign	50
Final Campaign	150
Campaign Reflection	50
Professionalism	50
<hr/>	
TOTAL	500

A:	94%+	(470+)
A-:	90-93%	(450-469)
B+:	87-89%	(435-449)
B:	84-86%	(420-434)
B-:	80-83%	(400-419)

C+:	77-79%	(385-399)
C:	74-76%	(370-384)
C-:	70-73%	(350-369)
D:	65%	(325-349)
F:	<65%	(Below 325)

Grading

In general, all work will be graded against a publication standard, and will be evaluated for grammar and usage (15%), content (60%), and organization/clarity (25%). Any changes to this basic formula will be made clear in particular assignments.

An "A" is Outstanding. This grade rewards work that is of a professional caliber. The writing is clear, well organized and precise, and requires virtually no editing. Any edits are relatively cosmetic and subjective. In short, the work would not require changes prior to being submitted to a client or editor.

A "B" is Good. This grade reflects work that could be raised to professional standards without extensive editing. The work needs minor revisions in terms of reorganizing, rewriting and/or reformatting. A "B" doesn't necessarily have anything wrong, but there are identifiable areas for improvement.

A "C" is Adequate. This work indicates a relatively significant problem in at least one area, such as research, analysis, grammar, strategy, or formatting. It does not measure up to professional quality but might be saved with extensive revisions. This is work that a boss might consider a first draft.

A "D" is Unacceptable. This work is substandard, even for a classroom setting. The research and analysis may be unprofessional, the writing may be unclear, and/or ungrammatical. The work may contain factual errors and/or critical omissions, or may show little concept of basic strategic judgment.

An "F" is Failing. This grade reflects completely unacceptable work, and conveys the impression that the student did not take the assignment seriously.

Late Work

Deadlines matter in the workplace, and there are consequences if you fail to deliver. Work submitted after the deadline has passed will receive a 20 percent deduction. For each subsequent 24-hour period that elapses, an additional 5 percent will be deducted. Finally, any work turned in more than a week late should be accompanied by either a written note or face-to-face discussion.

Feedback I provide detailed feedback via D2L for each assignment during the semester. This will include suggestions related to grammar as well as content. Reviewing these comments should help recalibrate your output for future assignments, which will boost your grade.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

You are expected to do original work. Recycling work you have previously done is known as self-plagiarism. When you use information or images that you did not create, you need to indicate that.

Section 14.03 of the UWSP code defines academic misconduct as occurring when a student takes any of the following actions:

- ◇ Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- ◇ Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- ◇ Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- ◇ Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- ◇ Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
- ◇ Assists other students in any of these acts.

The potential consequences of academic misconduct include failing the class, being placed on disciplinary probation, being suspended, or being expelled from UWSP.

The stakes are far too high to take risks in this area. Let me know if you need clarification.

Beyond the ethical considerations, part of the fun in this class and in the field is playing with ideas. It is far more rewarding to be inspired and find your own voice than it is to steal someone else's effort and hope you don't get caught. It's a better way to live; as Mark Twain put it, "If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything."

Additional Resources

The [Mary K. Croft Tutoring-Learning Center](#) offers assistance with writing, technology, and study skills. It is located in room 018 of the Learning Resource Center (in the basement of the library), and you can set up an appointment by stopping by or calling 715-346-3568.

Any student who anticipates they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) should contact me privately to discuss specific needs.

The [Disability and Assistive Technology Center](#) offers assistance and documentation for students with disabilities. It is located in room 609 of the Learning Resource Center. You can contact them at 715-346-3365 or via email at datctr@uwsp.edu. Students

registered with the DATC may provide their Notice of Accommodation letter (yellow forms) during office hours, via email, or after class.

The [UWSP Counseling Center](#) is available to help you deal with the stresses of college life. There are licensed mental health professionals who can help. It is located on the 3rd floor of Delzell Hall at 910 Fremont Street. Contact them at 715-346-3553, or via email at counsel@uwsp.edu.

SCHEDULE

Subject to change. Students are responsible for noting changes announced during class.

*Due indicates an assignment is due before class begins that day.

*Discussion/Readings indicates which readings should be completed before class.

*Assignment denotes something that will be discussed & assigned (but due later).

*In-Class designates an assignment that will be done in class & due that day.

Week 1 – Course Overview

Weds., Sept. 6

Syllabus, Introductions, Art & Copy

Week 2 –The State of Public Relations / Your First Year

Weds., Sept. 13

Discussion:

1. David Meerman Scott, "Introduction," (pp. 1-12) in *The New Rules of Marketing & PR* (2015)
2. Ed Zitron, "The First Year Sucks," (pp. 23-45) in *This is How You Pitch* (2013)

Assignment: Online Presence

Week 3 – In-Class News Release

Weds., Sept. 20

Due: Online Presence Assignment

Readings (no discussion, but will be open-book, open-note):

1. David Meerman Scott, Chapter 19, "Use News Releases to Reach Buyers Directly," (pp. 337-350) in *The New Rules of Marketing & PR* (2015).
2. Guth/Marsh/Short, "News Release Guidelines," pp. 43-69 in *Strategic Writing* (2012).

Week 4 – In-Class Pitch & Revised Release

Weds., Sept. 27

Readings (no discussion, but it will be open-book, open-note)

1. Ed Zitron, “Pitching,” (pp. 77-99) in *This is How You Pitch* (2013).
2. David Meerman Scott, Chapter 21, “New Rules for Reaching the Media,” (pp. 366-378) in *The New Rules of Marketing & PR* (2015).

Week 5 – Branding/In-Class Branding Activity

Weds., Oct. 4

Readings (no discussion, but it will be open-book, open-note)

1. Debbie Millman, “Foreword and Introduction,” (pp. vii-5) in *Brand Thinking* (2013).
2. Jeremy Miller, “Introduction” (pp. 11-23) in *Sticky Branding* (2015).

Week 6 – Campaign Strategy Document & Tactics

Weds., Oct. 11

Assign: Job Request Letter

Readings (no discussion, but very important)

1. Ronald Smith, “Selecting Communication Tactics” (pp. 227-303) in *Strategic Planning for Public Relations* (2013).
2. Cameron/Wilcox/Reber, “Program Planning,” (pp. 152-170) in *Public Relations Strategies and Tactics* (2015).

Week 7 – Visual Design & Broadcast Style / Guest Visitor

Weds., Oct. 18

Due: Job Request Letter

Readings (no discussion, but very important)

1. Guth/Marsh/Short, “Broadcast & Podcast Writing,” (pp. 11-15) in *Strategic Writing* (2012).
2. Guth/Marsh/Short, “Print Advertisements,” (pp. 133-138) in *Strategic Writing* (2012).

Week 8 – Creativity, Ethics & Metrics

Weds., Oct. 25

Discussion:

1. Austin Kleon, “Steal Like an Artist,” (pp. 1-23) in *Steal Like an Artist* (2012).
2. Austin Kleon, “Creativity is Subtraction,” (pp. 134-140) in *Steal Like an Artist* (2012).
3. Brian Solis, “The New Media Scorecard,” (pp. 271-293) in *Engage* (2011).

Assignment: Historical Campaign

Assignment: Final Campaign

Week 9 – In-Class Work Period

Weds., Nov. 1

Week 10 – Service Learning Project Presentation to Client

Weds., Nov. 8

Readings (no discussion, but helpful)

1. Pete Barry, “Presenting and Selling Your Work,” (pp. 269-273) in *The Advertising Concept Book* (2012).

Week 11 – Historical Campaign Presentations

Weds., Nov. 15

Week 12 – Flex Period / Final Campaign Update

Weds., Nov. 22

Week 13 – In-Class Work Period

Weds., Nov. 29

Week 14 – Strategy Session (Sign up for your time)

Weds., Dec. 6

Week 15 –Final Campaign Presentations

Weds., Dec. 13

Last Day of Class: Instructions for Reflection/Participation scores