

Communication 431 - Public Relations Campaigns
Tuesday / Thursday 12:35 - 1:50
Room 236 (CAC)

Nathan Rodriguez, Ph.D.

nathan.rodriguez@uwsp.edu

Office: 329 CAC

Office Hours: Tuesday/Wednesday 11:00-12:30, After Class & By Appointment

Required Texts:

David Meerman Scott (2015) *The New Rules of Marketing & PR* (5th edition).

Additional required readings will be made available online.

Course Overview:

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 textbook should prove to be a valuable resource in this class and beyond. Other required readings will be made available online, and those lend additional perspectives on the field.

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.

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 two free absences. 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 two "free" absences, your professionalism score will drop a full letter grade for being absent a third time. 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 only 75 minutes, so lose the phone. 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).

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."

Course Requirements and Grading

| ASSIGNMENT | POINTS |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Online Presence | 20 |
| Resume / Cover 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) |

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 & 24/7 Rule

I will 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.

I encourage you to talk to me about any grade you found to be questionable or unfair. I have a 24/7 rule, which means you should contact me at least 24 hours but no more than 7 days after receiving the grade. Waiting 24 hours will allow you to read the feedback and formulate a response. Waiting no more than a week will allow the assignment to be fresh in both our minds.

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.

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.

*Readings listed on a particular date should be completed before class begins.

*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.

Tues., Jan. 24 - Course Overview

Syllabus

Introductions

Thurs., Jan. 26 - The State of Public Relations

Readings:

New Rules - Introduction, pp. 1-12

Assignment: Online Presence

Tues., Jan. 31 - Your First Year

Due: Online Presence Assignment

Readings: (On D2L)

* Ed Zitron, "The First Year Sucks," pp. 23-45 in *This is How You Pitch* (2013)

* Guth/Marsh/Short, "Jobs in Strategic Writing," pp. 37-39 in *Strategic Writing* (2012).

Assignment: Cover Letter & Resume

Thurs., Feb. 2 - Understanding Audiences: Breaking Through the Noise Part I

Due: Cover Letter & Resume

Readings:

* *New Rules* Chapter 13: How to Write for Your Buyers (pp. 235-244)

* (On D2L) - Smith, "A Common Sense Stylebook for Public Relations Writers," pp. 399-416 in *Becoming a Public Relations Writer* (2017).

* (On D2L) Guth/Marsh/Short, "10 tips for writing better sentences," pp. 3-5 in *Strategic Writing* (2012).

Tues., Feb. 7 - Understanding Audiences: Breaking Through the Noise Part II

Readings:

* *New Rules*, Chapter 21 & 22: "New Rules for Reaching the Media" and "Newsjacking Your Way Into the Media," pp. 366-394.

Thurs., Feb. 9 - Best Practices Part I: News Releases

Readings (On D2L):

* (On D2L) Guth/Marsh/Short, "News Release Guidelines," pp. 43-69 in *Strategic Writing* (2012).

In-Class Assignment: News Release due by end of class

Tues., Feb. 14 - Revise & Resubmit

Readings (On D2L):

* Ed Zitron, "Pitching," pp. 77-99 in *This is How You Pitch* (2013).

In-Class Assignment: Revised News Release + Pitch due by end of class

Thurs., Feb. 16 - Best Practices Part II: Research & Evaluative Metrics

Readings (On D2L):

* Brian Solis, "The New Media Scorecard," pp. 271-293 in *Engage*, (2011)

Tues., Feb. 21 - Client Considerations & Branding

Readings (On D2L):

* Debbie Millman, Foreword & Introduction: vii-5 in *Brand Thinking* (2013).

* Jeremy Miller, pp. 11-23 in *Sticky Branding* (2015).

In-class Assignment: Branding Activity due by end of class

Thurs., Feb. 23 - Best Practices Part III: B2B

Readings (On D2L):

* Bodnar & Cohen, "Why B2B is Better at Social Media Than B2C," pp. 3-12 in *The B2B Social Media Book*, (2012).

* Gillin & Schwartzman, "The Changing Rules of B2B Marketing," pp. 3-14 in *Social Marketing to the Business Customer*, 2011.

* Bodnar & Cohen, "Reach: More is Always Better," pp. 55-62 in *The B2B Social Media Book*, (2012).

Tues., Feb. 28 - Client Visit & Consultation Session

Readings:

- * **Learn about the client** - <http://www.worthco.com> & everything else you can find.
- * (On D2L): Gillin & Schwartzman, "Learning by Listening," pp. 67-86 in *Social Marketing to the Business Customer*, (2011).

Thurs., March 2 - Roundtable Discussion / Group Work

Readings (On D2L):

- * Gillin & Schwartzman, "Pick Your Spots: Planning Social Marketing Campaigns," pp. 142-155 in *Social Marketing to the Business Customer*, (2011).

Tues., March 7 - Creativity

Readings (On D2L):

- * Austin Kleon, "Steal Like an Artist," pp. 1-23 and "Creativity is Subtraction," pp. 134-140 in *Steal Like an Artist* (2012).

Thurs., March 9 - In-Class Work Period

Readings (On D2L):

- * Gillin & Schwartzman, "What's Next for B2B Social Media?" and "Elements of a Social Media Policy," pp. 215-237 in *Social Marketing to the Business Customer*, (2011).

Tues., March 14 - In-Class Presentation to Client

Thurs., March 16 - Flex Period / Assessment

Tues., March 28 - Ethics

Readings (On D2L):

- * Richard Perloff, Section - "Ethical and Legal Issues," in Ch. 13, Advertising, Marketing and Persuasion, pp. 525-535 in *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century*, (2017).

Assignment: Historical Campaign

Thurs., March 30 - Best Practices Part IV: Visual Design & Broadcast Style

Readings (On D2L):

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

Tues., April 4 - Historical Campaign Presentation & Paper Due

Thurs., April 6 - Historical Campaign Presentation

Assignment: Final Campaign

Tues., April 11 - Putting it All Together: Executive Summary & Strategy Document

Readings (On D2L):

* Guth/Marsh/Short, "Integrated Marketing Communications," pp. 24-25 in *Strategic Writing* (2012).

* Cameron/Wilcox/Reber, "Program Planning," pp. 152-170 in *Public Relations Strategies and Tactics* (2015)

Thurs., April 13 - Putting it All Together: Deliverables & Appendices

Readings (On D2L):

* Ronald Smith, "Selecting Communication Tactics" in *Strategic Planning for Public Relations*, pp. 227-303 (2013)

Tues., April 18 - Presentation Prep: In-Class Working Period

Readings (On D2L):

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

Thurs., April 20 - Presentation Prep: In-Class Working Period

*Email me items/ideas for review before midnight on Sunday so we have something to discuss on 4/25 or 4/27.

Tues., April 25 - Group Strategy Session (Meet with me in lieu of class)

Thurs., April 27 - Group Strategy Session (Meet with me in lieu of class)

Tues., May 2 - Remote Working Session & Update

Thurs., May 4 - Remote Working Session & Update

Tues., May 9 - Final Presentations

Thurs., May 11 - Final Presentations

Instructions for Take-Home Final

Let me know if you have questions - I'm here to help!

-nathan