

Communication 314: Public Relations Cases
Fall 2018
Course Syllabus

Tu & Th 2:30-3:45 p.m.
014 SOC

Instructor

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Office Hours: Tu & Th 1:00 -2: 20 p.m. by appointment

Course Description

This course provides practical, real-world experience. Case-based instruction is not the typical lecture-style class. The spotlight is on you. Student-led discussion of cases and group activities of analyzing and applying case-specific solutions to create alternative scenarios are the central contents of this course. The cases cover a wide range of communication issues across the countries, including internal communications, media relations, corporate social responsibility, activism, financial relations, consumer relations, issues management and crisis communication.

Course Objectives

- a. To engage students in the strategic process of public relations counseling and problem solving.
- b. To give students practical, hands-on experience formulating strategies and tactics to help resolve public relations issues and capitalize on public relations opportunities.

Prerequisite

COMM 210 Principles of Public Relations

Required Textbook

Swann, P. (2014). Cases in public relations management: The rise of social media and activism. Routledge.

Discussion and Case Study Preparation

To make this an exciting learning environment, students must come prepared and have a thorough knowledge of the assigned cases. Know the characters' names, what happened, and in what order. It generally takes two readings, with note taking as you go along, to prepare each case for discussion.

There are opportunities to do your own research in a topic area or trace the case from its origins to its conclusion. Databases, such as the newspaper database LexisNexis, and organizational websites are great resources for background material. Websites often include mission statements, archived news releases, annual reports, historical information, and more. Activist sites can offer different views and their own evidence about certain issues and events.

Team Exercise and Presentation

Students will be divided into teams to work on a realistic public relations situation, problem, issue or opportunity on different topics. Teams prepare power

point presentation on their findings of assigned cases in line with course schedule.

Sakai

Lectures will be posted in advance on Sakai. This is designed to enable students to avoid having to take extensive notes in class and as an aid for studying for exams; it is not meant as a substitute for class attendance.

Expectations

Students are expected to be prepared for, attend and actively engage with all class sessions. In-class presentation, discussion and engagement count for 40 percent of a student's grade. *If you don't attend, you can't participate. Please inform me in advance if you believe you have a legitimate reason for an absence.*

Final Term Paper

The paper should be typed double spaced in a 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides and the student's name on the top of the first page. Do not insert extra lines between paragraphs. Papers should be submitted on Sakai on due date. Papers should be carefully proofread, and those with typos, factual errors or errors in grammar, punctuation or syntax will be graded down. Students are strongly advised to refer to a recent edition of the Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law (2016 edition, ISBN 978-0-917360-63-3; print edition, online subscription and mobile app are available for purchase through <https://www.apstylebook.com/>).

Mid-term Exams

The mid-term will cover material up to the mid-term; materials from lectures, assigned readings. No makeup, no retaking opportunities. Absence on mid-term exam date is given zero point.

Course Grading

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|---|---------------------|
| a. Team presentation (2 times/team) | 20 percent of grade |
| <i>(15% for team presentation & 15% for individual performance)</i> | |
| b. In-class discussion and engagement | 20 percent of grade |
| c. Midterm exam | 20 percent of grade |
| d. Final term presentation & paper | 30 percent of grade |
| <i>(15 % for Team Presentation & 15% for individual paper)</i> | |
| e. Class participation | 10 percent of grade |

Class Principles

- Not permitted to use electronic devices including cellphone and laptop during the class, except the designated dates for completing class missions.
- Attend on time: any unexcused late arrivals and absences will result in a lower participation grade.
- Meet deadlines: any work turned in after the deadline will receive one letter grade reduction for each week it is late, even if by one day.
- No plagiarism and respect academic integrity: plagiarism will result in an automatic failure in this course. Further information, refer to <http://www.luc.edu/soc/Policy.shtml>

- e. Special needs: please give me written notice in the first week of class about any medical or other conditions that may interfere with your individual performance. Further information, refer to <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>

Course Schedule

Week 1. Aug. 28, 30

Reading: CHAPTER 1. A Brief Introduction to Public Relations

How Public Relations Deals with Problems and Opportunities

Week 2. Sept. 4, 6

Reading: CHAPTER 2. Ethics and the Law

1. “In Washington, I’m Karen Ryan Reporting”: When Is a “Reporter” Not a Reporter?

Week 3. Sept. 11, 13

Reading: CHAPTER 3. Corporate Social Responsibility

2. Apple iProblem: Subcontractor Worker Issues Bring Negative Attention
3. Developing Wines with a Conscience
South African Wine Industry Confronts Societal Issues

Week 4. Sept. 18, 20

Reading: CHAPTER 4. Media Relations

4. Are You Pouring on the Pounds? Debating the Link between Sugary Drinks and Obesity
5. Two Employees with a Video Camera: Social Media and a Damaged Global Domino’s Brand

Week 5. Sept. 25, 27

Reading: CHAPTER 5. Conflict Management

6. Deepwater Horizon Blowout: Rehabilitating a Reputation after a Catastrophic Spill

Week 6. Oct. 2, 4

Reading: CHAPTER 6. Activism

7. “Beyond Disgusting”: Bacteria-Fighting Mom Takes on Restaurant Play Areas
8. Guitar Hero Strikes a Chord : Social Media Teaches Customer Service Lesson
9. Break the Silence. Make the Call. Reaching Out to Victims and Families of Domestic Violence
10. Undercover Video Captures Chicken Abuse: Animal Activist Group Targets Company

Week 7. Oct. 9 – Mid-Semester Break, No Class

Week 8. Oct. 11, 16

Reading: CHAPTER 7. Consumer Relations

11. The Five Seasons of Salem: A City Hunts for Something More than Witches

12. Making the Potato Top of Mind: Consumer Research Connects “Linda” to Potatoes

Oct. 16 (Tu) – Mid-term : short essays to multiple questions during class hour

Week 9. Oct. 18, 23

Reading: CHAPTER 8. Entertainment and Leisure

13. Tabloid Tiger: Scandal Derails Storied Career

14. What Price the Regal Reputation? Protecting the Royal Investment from Scandal

Week 10. Oct. 25, 30

Reading: CHAPTER 9. Community Relations

15. I’m Watching You...: School-Issued Laptop “Spycam” Invades Privacy Rights

16. Hallmark Writers on Tour : Connecting Employees with their Hometown Audience

Week 10. Nov. 1, 6

Reading: CHAPTER 10. Cultural and Other Considerations

17. Fukushima Nuclear Meltdown: A Disaster “Made In Japan”

18. Shark Fin Soup: Hong Kong Disneyland Loses Magic for Some

Week 11. Nov. 8, 13

Reading: CHAPTER 11. Financial Communications and Investor Relations

19. “A Plate of Black Beauty”? Burger King Worldwide Deals with Horsemeat Reports

Week 12. Nov. 15. Special topics and discussion

20. Reading : TBD

NOV. 20, 22: Thanksgiving -No Class

WEEK 13. Nov. 27, 29 : Team presentation on selected Cases

Week 14. Dec. 6 : FINAL TERM PAPER DUE