

Loyola University Chicago  
**COMM 210 – 202: Principles of PUBLIC RELATIONS**  
Spring Semester 2020 Course Syllabus  
Corboy Law Center, Room L08  
Tuesday & Thursday 1:00 - 2:15 p.m.

Instructor: Alyssa Burns  
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Email: [aburns1@luc.edu](mailto:aburns1@luc.edu)  
Office Hours: Please call or text to make an appt. before or after class  
(\*I encourage student/faculty interaction outside of class\*)  
Required Text: Think Public Relations by Wilcox, Cameron, Reber & Shin  
ISBN# 13: 9780205857258

*AP Style will be used in developing written materials for the class. Students should access an AP Stylebook or AP Stylebook Online App. ISBN# 978-0-917360-67-1.*

- Additional readings will also be provided or recommended by the instructor in class.

### **Course Description**

The course will serve as a foundation for those interested in a career in public relations, as well as provide a helpful overview of the practice for those planning careers in other fields. It will provide an introduction to public relations and its role in American society. Basic principles and theories are reviewed, and the communications planning process is examined. Students will explore current issues/case studies and trends and analyze the ethical and legal considerations incumbent on the public relations practitioner. In addition, the student will learn basic public relations terms, tactics and the importance of writing skills and storytelling. The course is intended to teach students best practices when working as an intern or entry level associate.

Classes will consist of a mix of lectures, small group discussions, Q&A, group work and occasional guest speakers who specialize in some facet of the public relations profession.

### **Course Objectives:**

- Familiarize students with the basic terms, concepts and principles of public relations.
- Expose the student to strategies and tools of public relations.
- Provide hands-on writing experience and initial steps in developing communications planning skills.

**Class Requirements:** Over the course of the semester, students will have the chance to collaborate on plans, write, and present assignments, and learn about press releases, executive memos, media and blog pitches, and other communications collateral. Additionally, students will be required to read and give summaries on news coverage of local, national and international significance. Finally, students will learn about the field of public relations and the opportunities for specialization that exist today. I want you to develop the ability to think critically about PR. Assignments will be used to review discussions and readings. There will be a midterm and final exam. Attendance, participation and professionalism will affect the final grade. All classroom activities are designed to prepare students for the work environment and real-world professional challenges.

Students will be expected to know material covered in lectures. It will be critical to keep up with the direction regarding assigned readings, and on news here and around the world.

Please remember that in public relations you are frequently writing to a professional audience. Structure your writing style accordingly. Content, quality, persuasiveness and neatness count. Check your facts and proofread your work.

**I do not tolerate typographical errors; therefore, each spelling mistake is an automatic two-point deduction. Each punctuation error is a one-point deduction. Each error in grammar is a three-point deduction.**

### **Classroom Environment**

Students are expected to act in a professional manner in class. This includes showing up and being on time. You must let me know ahead of time if you'll be absent, not after the class has started. Unexcused absences will adversely affect your final grade.

Tips for succeeding in the course:

- Attend class. If the instructor talks about it during class, it has significance.
- Read the text but be mindful of instructor updates. If something is not clear, ask about it in class. ASKING QUESTIONS AND CLASS PARTICIPATION IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED. Please raise your hand to contribute something or ask a question, but most of all, communications must communicate, so participate!
- Proof and edit your work. Re-write, edit, and edit again. Follow AP Style. Use more than spell check. An innocent typo can make you look sloppy. *I will take points off for typos and grammar mistakes in assignments.*
- Keep up with the work and the readings.
- Style points count. A good-looking paper or presentation has a way of earning extra attention.

### **Attendance**

The instructor does not recommend missing any class sessions as in-class exercises or homework could be given in your absence. I take attendance at each class and this is factored into your grade. If you have to miss a class, make arrangements to get assignments from another student and complete them by the due date.

Absences on the day of a test or when a project is due will not be acceptable. No exceptions. You will be required to present medical or other emergency/official documentation explaining your absence before you will be permitted to make up an exam.

### **Additional Classroom Policies**

- Cell phones are not allowed to be used during class. They must be turned off and put away. No texting, tweeting, Instagramming, emailing, etc. Laptops may be used for taking notes only, not for checking your email or looking at YouTube.
- **All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced and proofread.** Errors in grammar, spelling and organization will result in a lower grade.
- Students are responsible for all readings, as directed, whether or not they are discussed in lecture.

### **Assignments and Breakdown of Grade**

Class participation and assignments are essential to a good grade in this course. If you come to class unprepared, or if you do not come to class, or fail to complete all of your assignments on time, it will be difficult to get a good grade.

A	100-94
A-	90-93
B+	89-88
B	87-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-78
C	77-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-68
D	67-64
F	below 64

*Assignments may shift or change based on class progress. Any changes will be communicated in advance and adequate preparation time will be given.*

This course consists of completing the following projects:

ASSIGNMENTS – 60%

**Please Note: I need a hard copy of every written assignment. #1: You will post it on Sakai by the due date, and #2: You will also provide a hard copy to me in class the day it's due.**

- Commentary on two news articles (25 pts)
- One-page Executive Memo to Prof. Burns on which of the “10 Skills Employers Want” you have for a job in PR (20 pts)
- “Tell Your Story” assignment (35 pts)
- Answer specific questions assigned by Prof. Burns for Chap. 5 & Chap. 10 (25 pts)
- Write a one-page paper reviewing one “brand with purpose” and if you’d buy that brand based on what it stands for (25 pts)
- Group Assignment on two (2) examples of social media campaigns that consider diverse audiences (100 pts)
- Write a 1.5 to two-page paper on a PR crisis issue and how it’s been handled (35 pts)
- Write a press release (50 pts)
- Write a pitch letter (25 pts)
- Thank you notes to Guest Speakers (10 pts each x 6 guest speakers = 60 pts)
- Write a one – two-page paper on one you follow and why you think that Influencer is persuasive. Have you bought a product he/she recommended? Why? (25 pts)
- Final PR Plan Group Presentations (175 pts)

CLASS PARTICIPATION & PROFESSIONALISM – 20%

Attendance and timeliness will be monitored each class with a point system

- Attendance (6 points per class)
- No notice of missed class = (0 points)

EXAMS – 20% (2 Exams)

- Midterm Exam (100 pts)
- Final Exam (100 pts)

## CLASS SCHEDULE

**Note:** This course schedule is likely to change throughout the semester. Assignments may shift or change based on class progress. Any changes will be communicated in advance and adequate preparation time will be given. I will also be bringing in Guest Speakers throughout the semester. They are listed on the syllabus, although schedules often change so if there are updates, I will let you know.

Week One

Tuesday, Jan. 14

WELCOME!

- Introductions
- Course Overview (bring textbook)
- Expectations and Outcomes
- Professional Goals
- AP Style
- Attendance and Participation
- Semester Topics
- Semester Teams and Plans
- Guest Speakers
- The Importance of Following the News
- What Do You Want to Learn About PR This Semester?

Homework for Thursday, Jan. 16: Read Chapters 1 & 2: What is Public Relations? & Careers in Public Relations

Thursday, Jan. 16

Discussion of Chapter 1: What is Public Relations? and Chapter 2: Careers in Public Relations in class

Discussion of news coverage of local, national and international significance

Homework for Jan. 21: Read Chapters 3 & 4: The Growth of the Profession & Today’s Practice

Assignment: Comment on two news articles that interest you and why, due Tuesday, Jan. 21

Week Two

Tuesday, Jan. 21

Turn in homework assignment: Commentary on two news articles

Review Chapter 3: The Growth of the Profession & Chapter 4: Today's Practice in class

Homework: Read Chapter 5: Research & Campaign Planning

Assignment: Write a one-page Executive Memo on which of the "10 Qualities Employers

Want" (pg. 32 in the book) that you have that would make you a good candidate for a job in PR due Thursday, Jan. 23

Thursday, Jan. 23

Turn in homework assignment: One-page Executive Memo on "10 Qualities Employers Want"

GUEST SPEAKER, Emmy Carragher, Director of Marketing, Chicago Athletic Association

Review Chapter 5: Research & Campaign Planning in class

Week Three

Tuesday, Jan. 28

Homework: Read Chapter 10: Reaching Diverse Audiences

Assignment: Answer specific questions assigned by Prof. Burns on Chapters 5 & Chapter 10, due Thursday, Jan. 30

Thursday, Jan. 30

Turn in your assignment on questions on Chapter 5 & Chap. 10

Homework: Read Chapter 6: Communication and Measurement

Assignment: "Tell Your Story," Due: Start of Class Thursday, Feb. 6

Week Four

Tuesday, Feb 4:

Assignment: Find one (1) "brand with purpose" and if you'd buy that product based on what it stands for. Write a one-page paper supporting your opinion.

Thursday, Feb. 6:

Turn in one-page assignment on brand with purpose

Read "Tell Your Story" assignment in class

Week Five

Tuesday, Feb. 11

Finish "Tell Your Story" presentations in class

Review Chapter 10: Reaching Diverse Audiences in class

Review Chapter 6: Communication and Measurement in class

Assign Group Teams for Social Media Campaign project

Assignment: Provide two (2) examples of social media campaigns that consider diverse audiences. Do you think they are effective? Why or why not? These will be divided into six (6) groups:

1. Millennial Men (born between 1981 – 1996)
2. Women Baby Boomers (born between 1946-1964)
3. LGBTQ
4. Latinx
5. African Americans,
6. Seniors (65 years and older)

Due Tuesday, Feb.18. Your group will be presenting on this date.

Homework: Work on Social Media Group Assignment

Thursday, Feb. 13

Continue review of Chap. 6: Communication and Measurement in class

Work on Social Media Group Assignment in class

Week Six

Tuesday, Feb. 18

Presentation by Groups of homework assignment on Social Media Campaigns for Diverse Audiences

Homework: Read Chapter 7: Public Opinion & Research

Review LinkedIn Profile of Guest Speaker and determine two questions to ask before, during or after speaker's presentation

Thursday, Feb. 20

Finish Presentations by Groups of homework assignment on Social Media Campaigns for Diverse Audiences  
Review Chapter 7: Public Opinion & Research in class  
GUEST SPEAKER, Astrid Greve-Spencer, Communications Manager, AkzoNobel  
Homework: Read Chapter 8: Managing Competition and Conflict

Week Seven

Tuesday, Feb. 25:

Write thank you notes to Guest Speaker  
Review Chapter 8: Managing Competition and Conflict in class  
Show examples of crisis PR  
Discuss topics to be covered on Midterm Exam  
Homework: Read Chapter 11: The Mass Media

Thursday, Feb. 27:

Review Chap. 11: The Mass Media in class  
**Midterm Exam: T/F, Open-Ended Questions + Bonus Questions**  
Homework: Read Chap. 12: The Internet & Social Media

Week Eight

Tuesday, March 3 & Thursday, March 5: NO CLASS: Spring Break

Week Nine

Tuesday, March 10:

Discuss Press Releases (good & bad)  
Review Chap 12: The Internet & Social Media in class  
Assignment: Write a 1.5 to two-page overview of a current PR crisis issue and provide an analysis of how it's been handled so far, along with your recommendation moving forward. *Note: This has to be a crisis that's happened in the past six months.* Due Tuesday, March 17

Thursday, March 12:

GUEST SPEAKER, Chip Schuman, Executive Vice President of Marketing, Sargento Foods  
Assignment: Write a one – two-page paper on one you follow and why you think that Influencer is persuasive. Have you bought a product he/she recommended? Why or why not?

Week 10

Tuesday, March 17

Write thank you note to Guest Speaker  
Turn in homework assignment: Paper on a crisis issue and how it's been handled so far, with your recs  
Discuss more specifics about writing a press release in class  
Review differences between types of releases and a format for writing them  
Assignment: Write a draft of a press release (topic provided by Professor Burns), due Tuesday, March 24

Thursday, March 19

Review other things you need to know: Influencers, Talking Points, Briefing Materials, Case Studies, Client Meetings, Tips on Dealing with Reporters, etc.  
Homework: Review LinkedIn Profile of Guest Speaker and determine two questions to ask before, during or after her presentation

Week 11

Tuesday, March 24

Turn in your press release  
GUEST SPEAKER, Jocelyn Brumbaugh, President & Owner, The Brumbaugh Group  
Assignment: Write a pitch letter, due Tuesday, March 31  
Homework: Read Chapter 15: Corporate Public Relations in class

Thursday, March 26

Write thank you note to Guest Speaker

Work on draft of pitch letter in class

Review Chapter 15: Corporate Public Relations in class

Homework: Review LinkedIn Profile of Guest Speaker and determine two questions to ask him before, during or after his presentation

Week 12

Tuesday, March 31

Turn in homework assignment: Pitch Letter

GUEST SPEAKER, Brian Weinthal, Partner, Burke, Warren, MacKay & Serritella, P.C.

Thursday, April 2:

Write thank you note to Guest Speaker

“Ask the Professor”

Assign Final Group Projects

Homework: Read Chapter 16: Entertainment, Sports & Tourism

Week 13

Tuesday, April 7

Review Chapter 16: Entertainment, Sports & Tourism in class

Homework: Write your LinkedIn Profile, due Tuesday, April 14

Thursday, April 9: NO CLASS, Easter Break

Week 14

Tuesday, April 14

GUEST SPEAKER, Alexa Ohm, Senior Account Executive, Porter Novelli

Teamwork time to prep for Final PR Plan Presentations

Thursday, April 16

Write thank you note to Guest Speaker

Teamwork time to prep for Final PR Plan Presentations

Week 15

Tuesday, April 21

Teamwork time to prep for Final PR Plan Presentations

Thursday, April 23

Teamwork time to prep for Final PR Plan Presentations

Week 16

Final Exam: **Friday, May 1 from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.**

**School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity**

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. These examples of academic dishonesty apply to both individual and group assignments.

Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher;
- Providing information to another student during an examination;
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination;
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor;
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted;
- Taking an examination by proxy. Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy.
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom;
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit; or
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.
- Submitting the same work for credit in two or more classes, even if the classes are taken in different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at [https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml).

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication. Instructors must provide the appropriate information and documentation when they suspect an instance of academic misconduct has occurred. The instructor must also notify the student of their findings and sanction.

The Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at: [http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicgrievance.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml) .

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.

**Students with Special Accommodations:** Students who need special accommodations for exams or class meetings because of a learning disability will provide you with a letter documenting the type of accommodations needed. If they claim to have a physical or psychological condition that hinders their ability to perform in class, medical documentation must be provided to the Student Accessibility Center (SAC) and that office will assess whether or not your collaboration is required. These matters are confidential.

Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Special Accommodations confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

**Military Service:** Students who have been called into the armed services of the United States and who are consequently withdrawing from the university before the end of the withdrawal period will receive a refund of all tuition and fees paid for the period in question but no academic credit. If they withdraw after the end of the withdrawal period, they will receive full academic credit for the semester with grades as of the date of withdrawal but no refund of tuition.

### **Managing Life Crises and Finding Support**

Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral ([LUC.edu/csaa](http://LUC.edu/csaa)) for yourself or a peer in need of support. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf – just email me or schedule a meeting with me during office hours. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites here: [LUC.edu/dos](http://LUC.edu/dos) or [LUC.edu/csaa](http://LUC.edu/csaa); phone number 773-508-8840, email [deanofstudents@luc.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@luc.edu).

### **About Your Instructor: Alyssa Burns**

I have had a successful career in the marketing, communications and public relations business, with experience at the top global Public Relations firm Edelman Worldwide, and the Fortune 100 company Kraft Foods. I've been the president of my own business, Alyssa Burns Communications, for six years, where I work with a wide range of clients. I learned that it's always about our clients or our audiences. Focusing on that will be a big part of what we do in this course.

I grew up in a family of journalists, so we were always discussing current events. This piqued my interest in learning as much as I could about any topic that interested me – the arts, music, sports, travel, business – you name it; I wanted to learn about it.

I love to travel and call myself a “travel adventurer.” I plan to keep traveling the world until I can't walk anymore. My favorite quote is by Saint Augustine: *“The world is a book. Those who do not travel read only a page.”*

I am former President of the Professional Women's Club of Chicago (PWCC), a 300-member networking organization promoting the professional and personal development of its members. I established the Mentorship Program and currently serve as a role model, sharing knowledge, problem-solving skills and advice to help others grow professionally.

I have taught several classes at Loyola, including Principles of Advertising, Principles of Public Relations, Ethics & Communications and Business & Professional Speaking. I will share all of my experience with you, you can be sure. I look forward to sharing this journey with each one of you. Here's to a great semester ahead!

– Professor Burns



