COMM 5580
PUBLIC RELATIONS CASES & CAMPAIGNS
Fall 2012, M-W, 12:55-2:50, M LI 1735

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday, 3:15-4:15 p.m., or by appointment.

READINGS: Strategic Planning for Public Relations, 3rd ed., by Ronald D. Smith,
AND readings accessed via Canvass/WebCT, as assigned.

OBJECTIVE: This course is for public relations majors who are now ready for more
rigorous and intense study of the issues and challenges of modern public relations
practice. As in the real world, written and oral presentation skills will be tested under
deadline pressure. This course is designed:

- to apply communication principles to public relations in the context of actual
  practice
- to increase understanding of how public relations problem-solving works
- to increase oral and written skills necessary to deal with public relations
  problems
- to increase awareness of current critical issues in public relations
- to strengthen awareness and application of ethical principles while doing all
  the above.

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY: I make no content accommodations for this class.

ORGANIZATION: See the course schedule. This course is discussion-based and pivots
upon critical and analytical thinking. I expect each class member to have read all the
designated readings and to have prepared answers on all the assigned cases and problems,
for preparation and participation are essential to the class discussion format. We learn
through our discussion and application of the material. Remember, being prepared is
the key to a successful professional life. Begin now.

To stimulate discussion and assure participation, I call upon students regularly and at
random to describe and interpret assigned material. This class, however, is an open
discussion, which means I expect you to initiate the engagement, as well as respond to it.

The class sessions will generally include a mix of lecture, in-class group problem-
solving, discussion, writing, and presentations. I will discuss assignments in class.
ATTENDANCE and TARDINESS: As per university standards, I expect regular attendance at all class meetings. By registering for this class you have thus contracted to be here, and I expect you to accept and fulfill that responsibility. If you’re not in class, you can’t participate, and participation is a major grade factor. I will take roll.

To demonstrate how serious I view attendance and how important I believe in-class learning is—and to motivate you—attendance is equal in value to written questions, assignments, presentations, final projects, and participation. You earn these points: six points for each class attended. However, miss five classes (2.5 weeks) and you fail the class. Make no mistake. I’m not rewarding seat time. I respect students who take seriously their responsibility, so I reward the intellectual engagement necessary to complete this course. Remember, too, others rely upon you. Teamwork means being present and responsible to your teammates.

I do not tolerate tardiness. Late arrivals are disruptive and, simply, impolite. I arrive at class ten minutes early to take roll. I will begin class precisely at 12:55 p.m. Be present by then to make the roll and earn your points.

Documented death, family tragedy, and medical conditions may excuse an absence. Do not talk to me about employment. If you registered for the class, I assume you have made arrangements to be here, and I expect you to be present.

University Attendance Policy (Student Handbook, U of U Home Page):

“The University expects regular attendance at all class meetings. You are not automatically dropped from your classes if you do not attend. You must officially drop your classes by the published deadline to avoid a “W” on your record.

“You are responsible for satisfying the entire range of academic objectives, requirements and prerequisites as defined by the instructor. If you miss the first 2 class meetings, or if you have not taken the appropriate requisites, you may be required to withdraw from the course.

“If you are absent from class to participate in officially sanctioned University activities (e.g. band, debate, student government, intercollegiate athletics), religious obligations, or with instructor’s approval, you will be permitted to make up both assignments and examinations.”

Vergobbi’s Attendance Statement:

CONTACT ME IMMEDIATELY if you “participate in officially sanctioned University activities.” You have the responsibility to inform me of your status and provide the proper documentation to “be permitted to make up both assignments and examinations.” This permission does not operate after-the-fact. Talk to me now. This concerns any other anticipated and legitimate absences. Again, talk to me now.

YES, I’m a hardcase concerning attendance—for your benefit. Attendance is vital to your understanding the material. But get here and, believe it or not, we’ll have an enjoyable time in this class. For, you see, I’m a delightful hardcase.
CLASS PREPARATION/PARTICIPATION: I expect you to come to class prepared. When evaluating your in-class participation, I’ll consider such factors as physical presence, evident knowledge of and preparation for the material being discussed, willingness and eagerness to participate, willingness to allow others to participate, quality of contributions (e.g., insight versus summary, irrelevant sarcasm versus constructive critical sarcasm), general promptness and respect for one another. “Participation” involves class discussion, small group problems, and various assignments/activities. It also includes three discussion questions/comments for EACH assigned reading/class session. Two copies: one for you, one for me at the start of each class. I’ll explain.

Yes, this is a subjective category. But after sixteen weeks together, I understand each of your personalities and assess accordingly. What I look for is EFFORT. Regardless of your personality, I can see whether or not you are making an effort to prepare for class and to engage in the class. Talk with me at any time during the semester if you are concerned with your participation.

GRADUATE STUDENT CREDIT: Students taking this course for graduate credit will meet a higher level of requirements. Talk with me.

ADA STATEMENT: The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact the instructor of this course at the beginning of the semester to discuss any such accommodations for this course.

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

GRADING: Your overall performance (point total) determines your final grade. I calculate final course grades by a curve based upon the highest student score.

- Attendance……………………………………………………. 145 pts.
- Participation……………………………………………………. 145 pts.
- Readings Questions/Discussion Points (3 pts. each)…..145 pts.
- Written assignments (4/36 pts. each)......................... 145 pts.
- Midterm Team oral/written presentation (145 each)… 290 pts.
- Final Team oral presentation………………………………. 145 pts.
- Final Team written project………………………………… 145 pts.
- Others………………………………………………………. 160 pts.

Other random opportunities for extra points will appear throughout the semester during class sessions, including on-time points. Be prepared and you’ll reward yourself.

I calculate final course grades by a curve based upon the highest student score. Also, see “A Note on Assignments” on penultimate page of syllabus.
TWO STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS: Your best strategy is to have your readings/assignments prepared for each day’s discussion. Keep up and you’ll do fine. A second strategy is to use your final project team as a study group. Challenging each other with application of the material will stimulate long-term understanding and recall.

COURSE SCHEDULE: Flexible and subject to change; course material is fluid and overlapping. We will be doing many in-class exercises, as individuals and teams. This is truly a class of participatory learning.

WEEK ONE:
Aug. 20, Orientation and Acquaintance
Aug. 22, Project teams discussed.
  P*O*W*E*R Writing

WEEK TWO:
Aug. 27, Writing: Clarity and Simplicity
  The Final Case Project introduced.
Aug. 29, Media Relations and Placement – Canvass/WebCT Reading 1
  Project teams assigned.
  Team Assignment One: Project Organization, DUE Sept. 10

WEEK THREE:
Sept. 3, No Class, Labor Day
Sept. 5, News Releases – Canvass/WebCT Reading 2
  Individual Assignment One: news release, DUE MONDAY

WEEK FOUR:
Sept. 10, News Releases – Individual Assignment One DUE
  Discussed/peer edited/rewritten/filed
  Team Assignment One DUE: Name your organization
Sept. 12, The Strategic Plan: Research – Strategic Planning for P.R., Smith:
  Preface, Introduction, Step 1
  Final Case Project discussed [Team Assignment Four, DUE Dec. 3]

WEEK FIVE:
Sept. 17, The Strategic Plan: Research – Smith: Steps 2 & 3
  Team Assignment Two: Formative Research, DUE Oct. 29
Sept. 19, Research & Backgrounders – Canvass/WebCT Reading 1
  Team Assignment Three: historical backgrounder on project organization, DUE Oct. 1
WEEK SIX:
Sept. 24, News Release Redux – Canvass/WebCT Reading 2
  *Individual Assignment Two: news release rewrite, DUE end of class*
Sept. 26, Persuasive Writing: Opinion/Editorials – Canvass/WebCT Reading 3
  *Individual Assignment Three: Op/Ed piece re project org. DUE: Friday, Oct. 19*

WEEK SEVEN:
Oct. 1, *Team Assignment Three DUE/discussed: the backgrounder*  
  Electronic Media – Canvass/WebCT Reading 4

FALL BREAK: Oct. 8-12

WEEK EIGHT:
Oct. 15, Features, Bios, Backgrounders, Position Papers – Canvass/WebCT Reading 1
Oct. 17, Message Design: Brochure Spotlight – Canvass/WebCT Reading 5
  *Team Assignment Four: Final Case Project, DUE Dec. 3*
  *Individual Assignment Four: An element of Final Case Project*
Oct. 19, *Friday, 4:30 p.m., Individual Assignment Three DUE: Op/Ed piece*

WEEK NINE:
Oct. 22, Team meetings with professor
Oct. 24, Team meetings with professor

WEEK TEN:
Oct. 29, *Team Assignment Two DUE: Research presentations*
Oct. 31, Research presentations continued

WEEK ELEVEN:
Nov. 5, Strategic Campaigns: Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Action  
  Smith: Steps 4 & 5
Nov. 7, Strategic Campaigns cont. – Smith: Steps 4, 5 and **ADD** Step 6
WEEK TWELVE:
   Nov. 12, Choosing Tactics – Smith: Step 7
   Nov. 14, Tactics: Implementing the Plan – Smith: Step 8

WEEK THIRTEEN:
   Nov. 19, Evaluation – Smith: Step 9
   Nov. 21, No class. A gift. Give thanks for teamwork time.

WEEK FOURTEEN:
   Nov. 26, IN-CLASS case project team work and professor consultation
   Nov. 28, IN-CLASS case project team work and professor consultation

WEEK FIFTEEN:
   Dec. 3, FINAL CASE PROJECT DUE FOR ALL TEAMS
      Student presentations of final project.
      Dec. 8th and 15th presenters must be present to obtain full credit.
   Dec. 5, Student presentations of final project
      Dec. 6th and 15th presenters must be present to obtain full credit.

WEEK SIXTEEN: [if needed]
   Dec. 14, FRIDAY, this room, 1:00-3:00 [final exam schedule]
      Student presentations of final project
      Dec. 6th and 8th presenters must be present to obtain full credit.

A NOTE ON ASSIGNMENTS: I will fully explain your assignments in class with handouts, webCT files, and discussion.

For the “Readings Questions/Discussion Points” assignment listed above under “Grading” you will develop three (3) written questions or discussion points from EACH assigned reading. Each question/point must be typed and you must state the concept and page you are addressing in the reading. Each Q/P is worth three (3) points, for a total of nine (9) points possible per reading. These points add up quickly. Do not shirk them. We will use these Q/Ps for class discussion and application during certain sessions. My primary point of this assignment is to ensure that you have reviewed in some way the necessary reading material for each class session.
TEAM ASSIGNMENTS SCHEDULE:

Team Assignment One: Name of Project Organization
- Assigned Aug. 29
- DUE Sept. 10

Team Assignment Two: Formative Research & Presentation
- Assigned Sept. 17
- DUE Oct. 29

Team Assignment Three: Historical Backgrounder on Project Organization
- Assigned Sept. 19
- DUE Oct. 1

Team Assignment Four: Final Case Project & Presentation
- Assigned Sept. 12
- DUE Dec. 3

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS SCHEDULE:

Individual Assignment One: news release
- Assigned Sept. 5
- DUE Sept. 10

Individual Assignment Two: news release rewrite
- Assigned Sept. 24
- DUE end of class

Individual Assignment Three: Op/Ed piece re project org.
- Assigned Sept. 26
- DUE: Friday, Oct. 19

Individual Assignment Four: A tactical piece of Final Case Project
- Assigned Sept. 12, reminder Oct. 17
- DUE Dec. 3