

**Communications 375 | Special Topics: Media Relations (JMullman)**  
**Fall Semester 2018 | Wednesdays 7:00PM – 9:30PM**

**Course Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Jeremy Mullman  
**Classroom:** Maguire Hall 340  
**Instructor Telephone:** 773-412-6412  
**Email:** jmullman@luc.edu  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Required Texts:**

The PR Masterclass, by Alex Singleton  
News is a Verb, by Pete Hamill  
On Bullshit, by Harry Frankfurt

**Course Description:**

As paid advertising is increasingly mistrusted, organizations look to earned media for reach and credibility. The news media remains the primary –though not the only— means to that end. This course will teach students how, when and why to engage the media. Students will hear from both PR practitioners and media members, analyze best-in-class case studies and learn how to craft successful media-relations strategies.

**Course Objectives:**

Students will gain a thorough understanding of both the theory and practice of media relations. This will include understanding how journalists think and what they value; honing more impactful writing and storytelling skills; building and utilizing critical tools of the trade; and, critically, how media relations fits into an organization's larger communications strategy.

By the end of the course, students will be able to craft an effective media-relations strategy and put it into practice.

**Course Outline:**

This course designed to expose students to the theory and practice of media relations. The course includes these requirements and grade weightings:

**Class Participation: 25%**

Discussion, debate and live problem solving will be weekly features of the class and a significant component of final grades. It is important that students not only complete reading assignments prior to class, but formulate a point of view about them and arrive prepared to share and defend it, if need be.

**Tests: 25%**

There will be both a midterm and a final exam.

**Written Assignments: 50%**

Written assignments will give students an opportunity to put their learnings into practice. These will include professional documents such as media relations plans, pitches and materials, as well as analysis of case studies and readings. These will include both take-home and in-class assignments.

If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to get the assignment from another student. Written assignments will be due the next class session unless otherwise indicated.

Papers will be graded on substance and style. Media relations depends on clear, concise and persuasive writing. It also depends on accuracy. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation will result in downgrades. Any error involving a proper noun (such as misspelling a person's name) will result in a full-letter-grade downgrade. (A paper that would have earned a B+ will instead receive a C+.) Proofread accordingly.

**Course Changes:**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes in the course schedule, readings and materials to take advantage of guest speaker availability, new opportunities or timely issues. We will be working with real client communication issues so things can change. Regular attendance is your best assurance of keeping up with any changes that may occur.

**Attendance:**

The instructor does not recommend missing any class sessions because in-class exercises or homework assignments could be given in your absence. Making up the missed work may not be possible. If you must miss a class, get assignments from another student and complete them by the due date. Absences on the day of a test or presentation will not be accepted. If you must be absent those days you must contact the instructor in advance. You will be required to present medical or other emergency/official documentation explaining your absence.

## Grading Scale

A 93-100 / A- 90-92 / B+ 87-89 / B 83-86 / B- 80-82 / C+ 77-79 / C 73-76 / C- 70-72 / D+ 67-69 / D 64-66 / F below 64

## Deadlines:

PR is a deadline-oriented profession. Late assignments will not be accepted unless arrangements are made prior to the due date. (Extensions will only be granted in the event of extraordinary circumstances.)

## Original Work:

Originality is the hallmark of the public relations industry. Anyone caught plagiarizing in this class will receive a grade of "F" for the assignment. Be aware of the strong university sanctions against plagiarism. Consult the School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity for more information (attached).

## Media Relations Course Schedule

Following is a tentative working schedule. Changes will be made and announced in class.

## Tentative Schedule

### **Week 1 (8/29)**

Course Introduction: Intro to Media Relations

### **Week 2 (9/5)**

What Journalists Want

### **Week 3 (9/12)**

No Class: In-Depth Writing Assignment

### **Week 4 (9/19)**

Writing for Media Relations

### **Week 5 (9/26)**

The Art of Pitching

### **Week 6 (10/3)**

Embargoes, Exclusives and Other Distribution Strategies

### **Week 7 (10/10)**

Reactive PR

**Week 8 (10/17)**

Stunts, Spectacles and Big Ideas

**Week 7 (10/10)**

Mastering Media Interviews

**Week 8 (10/17)**

Midterm Exam

**Week 9 (10/24)**

Issues & Crisis Management

**Week 10 (10/31)**

Measurement/Evaluation

**Week 11 (11/7)**

Balancing Client & Media Needs

**Week 12 (11/14)**

Career Paths: Agency vs. In-House

**Week 13 (11/21)**

NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break

**Week 14 : (11/28)**

Live Pitching Exercise

**Week 15 (12/5)**

Final Exam Prep

**Week 16 (12/12)**

Final Exam

**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.

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;
- 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;
- 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.

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 <http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source> .

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty, and will be subject to sanctions described below. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during 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.

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 appropriate area head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

The office of the Dean 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. (The School of Communication policy is based entirely on and is consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy of the College of Arts & Sciences.)