Communication 314: Public Relations Cases and Strategies  
Fall 2016  
Course Syllabus

M, W, F 1:40-2:30 p.m.  
014 SOC

Instructor  
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Office Hours: M & W 12:15-1:15 p.m., M 2:30-3:30 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description  
This course focuses on the challenges, opportunities, strategies, solutions, and outcomes organizations experience in managing their reputations. It builds on students’ existing knowledge of public relations, tools and techniques used by public relations professionals, and the concept that public relations is a strategic management function that can build and sustain positive relationships with key publics through genuine engagement. This course provides practical, real-world experience analyzing and applying case-specific solutions. The cases cover a wide range of communication issues, including internal communications, media relations, community relations, investor and financial relations, consumer relations, issues management and crisis communication.

Course Objectives  
- To expose students to the range of communication issues organizations face, and how public relations can play a vital role in accomplishing organizational objectives.  
- To engage students in the strategic process of public relations counseling and problem solving.  
- To critique actual public relations challenges and how they were addressed by public relations practitioners.  
- 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  

Additional Assigned Readings  
Additional required course reading and case studies will be available on Sakai.
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 participate in all class sessions. Class will begin promptly at 1:40 p.m. and students who arrive after attendance has been taken will be marked absent. Class participation counts for 10 percent of a student’s grade, and 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.

Assignments
There will be six short (2-3 page) written assignments during the semester. All assignments 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 stapled.

Public relations practitioners write for professional audiences. Students should aim to produce high-quality work: accuracy, quality, format and neatness all count. 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/). In addition, students are urged to have and use a reference book on English grammar for guidance on writing style.

Since public relations practitioners are held to deadlines, hard copies of all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the specified date. No email copies will be accepted without prior approval of the instructor.

Late assignments will be graded down one grade per day. For example, an assignment that would have received an A if it been turned in on time would receive a B+ if it was received between the class meeting time and midnight on the date due, a B if it was turned in on the following day, a C if it was turned in two days late, etc. No make-up assignments will be available.

Discussions
Lectures on a public relations topic will be followed by a class discussion of real-world cases on that topic. All students are expected to come to class prepared to actively discuss the cases and to respond to questions from the instructor and classmates. Students who do not attend discussion sessions and/or do not participate will receive a participation grade of zero for that session.
In-Class Team Exercises
Students will be divided into teams to work on a realistic public relations situation, problem, issue or opportunity on different topics. Teams will spend one class session working on the exercise and another presenting their solutions. Students who do not attend both the team exercise session and presentation will receive a grade of zero for that exercise.

Exams
The mid-term will cover material up to the mid-term; the final will cover material from after the mid-term to the end of the semester. Both exams will be in essay form. Both will cover materials from lectures, assigned readings and guest speakers. Neither exam may be made up at another time. Please note the dates and times of the midterm and final exam and plan your spring and summer break travel accordingly.

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   61-66
F   60 or below

Course Grading
Written assignments  30 percent of grade
In-class team exercises  20 percent of grade
Mid-term  20 percent of grade
Final exam  20 percent of grade
Class participation  10 percent of grade

Academic Integrity
Each student is expected to do his or her own work in the course. Allegations of academic misconduct will be forwarded to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication for possible disciplinary action. Loyola regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter with consequences ranging from failure of the course to probation to expulsion.

Academic misconduct includes:
• Cheating on exams or aiding other students to cheat. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful.
• Stealing the intellectual property of others and passing it off as your own work (this includes material found on the Internet). Software will be used to identify plagiarism.
• Failing to quote directly if you use someone else’s words, and to cite that particular work and author. If you paraphrase the ideas of another, credit the source with a
citation. Please ask me if you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism and/or how to cite sources.

- For closed-book exams, academic misconduct includes conferring with other class members, copying or reading someone else’s test, and using notes and materials without prior permission of the instructor.
- Turning in the same work for two classes, whether in the same or different semesters.

**Classroom Behavior**

To help create a positive learning community, this will be a device-free class – no phones, laptops or tablets – except on days with in-class team exercises. In several research studies, students in classes in which devices were allowed (but not required for class use) reported greater levels of distraction and lower levels of engagement and learning. In addition, at least one study found a negative correlation between laptop use in class and course grade.

Please be respectful of fellow students and be in your seat when class begins.

**Accommodations**

Any student with a learning disability who needs accommodation during class sessions or exams should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities to the instructor during the first week of class; this information will be treated in complete confidence. The instructor will accommodate students’ needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the responsibility of each student to plan in advance to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

Students are excused for recognized religious holidays. Please let me know in advance.
Course Schedule

(Reading assignments are to be completed before class on the date shown)

Week 1
Jan. 18
Course Overview and Introductions

Jan. 20
Foundations of Public Relations
Reading: Ch. 1 & 2
Miltenberg, “Public Relations Redefined and Deconstructed”

Week 2
Jan. 23
Public Relations from Theory to Practice

Jan. 25
Employee Communication
Reading: Ch. 3, p. 21-28
McAdams, “How Deloitte’s Social Network Beat the Isolation Blues”
Ovaitt, “Top Brands Offer a Roadmap for Communicating with Rank and File”

Jan. 27
Guest speaker on change management: Pamela Davies, senior communication strategist,
Pam Davies 365

Week 3
Jan. 30
Discussion of Employee Communication Cases
Reading: Ch. 3, TBD
Bush, “Counting Every Drop”
Leung, “The Mensch of Malden Mills”

Feb. 1
In-class team employee communication exercise

Feb. 3
Presentations of team employee communication exercise

Week 4
Feb. 6
Community Relations
Reading: Ch. 4, p. 49-54
Kane, Fichman, Gallagher & Glaser, “Community Relations 2.0”
Employee communication problem due
Feb. 8
Discussion of Community Relations Cases
Reading: Ch. 4, TBD

Feb. 10
In-class team community relations exercise

**Week 5**
Feb. 13
Presentations of team community relations exercise

Feb. 15
Financial Communication
Reading: Ch. 5, p. 76-82
  - Safdar & Connaughton, “Investor Communications Strategies in the Age of Online Activist Shareholders”
  - Karp & York, “McDonald’s: Ronald isn’t Going Anywhere”
  - Wardell, “Scuffles, Protests Mar BP Shareholder Meeting”
Community relations problem due

Feb. 17
Case Study: This Bud’s for Who?

**Week 6**
Feb. 20
Discussion of Financial Communication Cases
Reading: Ch. 5, TBD
  - Dayton Hudson case
  - SDG&E takeover case

Feb. 22
Consumer Relations
Reading: Ch. 6, p. 107-111
  - Goel, “G.M. Uses Social Media to Manage Customers and its Reputation”
  - Morrissey, “These Brands Build Community” (excerpt)
  - Stelter, “Griping Online? Comcast Hears and Talks Back”
  - Working, “Southwest Airlines’ New Listening Center Making an Immediate Mark”

Feb. 24
Discussion of Consumer Relations Cases
Reading: Ch. 6, TBD
**Week 7**

Feb. 27
In-class team consumer relations exercise
Financial communication problem due

March 1
Presentations of team consumer relations exercise

March 3
Mid-term exam
Consumer relations problem due

**Week 8**

March 6, 8 and 10
*Spring break, no classes*

**Week 9**

March 13
*Media Relations*
Reading: Ch. 7, p. 142-147
  - Bush, “As Media Market Shrinks, PR Passes up Reporters, Pitches Directly to Consumers”
  - Edgecliffe-Johnson, “The Invasion of Corporate News”
  - Stoller, “Creating an Online Newsroom”
  - 2016 Online Newsroom Survey Report

March 15
*Getting Your Story in the News*
  - Sprung, “Five Real-Life Examples of Awful PR Pitches”

March 17
Guest speaker on media relations

**Week 10**

March 20
*Discussion of Media Relations Cases*
Reading: Ch. 7, TBD
  - Alar case
  - GM vs. NBC case

March 22
*Public Issue Campaigns and Debates*
Reading: Ch. 8, p. 167-172
  - Blair, “Under the Radar, PR’s Political Savvy”
Hopkinson, “Monsanto Confronts Devilish Public Image Problem”

**March 24**
*Issues Management from A to Z*
Reading: Eng & Cancino, “Debate over Chain's Marketing of Burgers, Fries with Toys Likely to Ramp up, with Group Threatening Lawsuit”

**Week 11**
**March 27**
*Discussion of Public Issue Campaigns and Debates Cases*
Reading: Ch. 8, TBD
Kruvand & Silver, “Zombies Gone Viral: How a Fictional Zombie Invasion Helped CDC Promote Emergency Awareness”
Media relations problem due

**March 29**
In-class team public issues and debates exercise

**March 31**
Presentations of team public issues and debates exercise

**Week 12**
**April 3**
*Crisis Communication*
Reading: Ch. 9, p. 207-209
Barnett, “The PR Response to Virginia Tech and Beyond”
Bernstein, “Making a Crisis Worse: The Eleven Biggest Mistakes in Crisis Communications”
Goodman, “In Case of Emergency: What Not to Do”
Hannah, “In Hudson River Landing, PR Pros Were Not First Responders”
Public issue campaigns and debates problem due

**April 5**
*Crisis Management*

**April 7**
*Discussion of Crisis Communication Cases*
Reading: Ch. 9, TBD
Young & Flowers, “Fight Viral with Viral: A Case Study of Domino’s Pizza’s Crisis Communication Strategies”
Week 13
April 10
In-class team crisis communication exercise

April 12
Presentation of team crisis communication exercise

April 14
*Easter break, no class*

Week 14
April 17
*Easter break, no class*

April 19
Guest speaker on crisis communication
Crisis communication problem due

April 21
*Standards, Ethics and Values*
Reading: Ch. 10, p. 239-242
   Berfield, “The One Lie That Brought Down Walmart's PR Chief”
   Gunther, “Climate Changeable: Waffling Lands PR Firm Edelman in Hot Water”
   Newman, “Bloggers Don’t Follow the Script, to ConAgra’s Chagrin”
   Reuters, “FTC Settles Complaint about Fake Video Game Testimonials”
   Somaiya, “PR Firm for Putin’s Russia Now Walking a Fine Line”
   Stelter, “When Chevron Hires Ex-Reporter to Investigate Pollution, Chevron Looks Good”
   Winchel, “5 Lessons in Ethics from PR Disasters”

Week 15
April 24
*Discussion of Standards, Ethics and Values Cases*
Reading: Ch. 10, TBD

April 26
In-class team standards, ethics and values exercise

April 28
Presentation of team standards, ethics and values exercise

**FINAL EXAM: Thurs. May 4, 1-3 p.m.**