

**Principles of Public Relations – Journalism 61-211  
Fall Semester 2007**

Department of Journalism  
University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh

Class: 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Tuesday  
Instructor: Jim Streed, APR  
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Office hours: Tuesday 2:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. & by appointment after class

Please note: Assignments and other aspects of this syllabus may change during the course of the semester. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to determine what announcements or assignments you may have missed.

**1. Course Description**

The course provides a broad look at the field of public relations, emphasizing theory and reviewing concepts, issues, techniques and practices. The course is designed primarily to provide a background for future public relations professionals and for individuals who will enter other careers and work with public relations professionals. In the end, both groups will have an accurate picture of the public relations field, which may require them to let go of previously held concepts of what public relations entails. There is no prerequisite.

**2. Course Objectives**

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- a. Understand the role of values and ethics in public relations;
- b. Understand and apply the standard processes used in the practice of public relations;
- c. Understand the laws that govern the practice of public relations;
- d. Explain public relations, its different roles and functions, and how they have changed over time;
- e. Outline the types of public relations practices and relate these types to different functions of public relations;
- f. Understand communication theories as they relate to public relations practice;
- g. Understand the components of a public relations plan and demonstrate a cohesive, strategic approach to a problem;
- h. Understand the symbiotic nature and relationship of the news media and public relations;
- i. Evaluate contemporary public relations practices and their effects on the news and on political and social agendas; and
- j. Understand the importance of professional ethics and be able to defend your definition of what constitutes ethical public relations practice.

### **3. Readings**

Required Text:

Public Relations: a Values-Driven Approach - Cases Edition  
by D. Guth and C. Marsh (2007) (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)

Readings on Reserve:

Mass Media in 2025 by E. Thomas and B. Carpenter (2001), Chapter 6: Public Relations

Emerging Issues in Contemporary Journalism by B. Musa (2006), Chapter 7: The Role of Advertising and Public Relations in American Journalism: Blessing or Curse?

Other readings beyond those listed on the syllabus may be assigned as the semester progresses.

### **4. Approach**

This will be an interactive learning environment. Lectures will complement and/or supplement the topics in the reading assignments. All reading assignments must be completed ahead of time. In addition, we will draw from the numerous case studies featured in the text to provide depth and real-world context for the topics.

A typical class session will include:

- Discussion-oriented lecture related to the week's reading
- Public Relations in the News – a look at the profession in current events
- Individual presentations on relevant topics
- Case discussion – a critical look at case studies relevant to that week's reading

Students are encouraged to contribute to all of the above.

### **5. Attendance**

The class and the instructor will take discussions beyond the text and the readings. A great deal of learning occurs in these discussions. Therefore, attendance at each session is very important. In addition, unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade. If you have to miss a session, it is your responsibility to obtain the information covered in that session, including any changes to the schedule or syllabus.

Attendance, as important as it is, is not enough to earn high marks or to distill the knowledge available in class. You must come prepared, participate in the discussion and take all assignments seriously.

### **6. Academic Integrity**

The University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh is committed to a standard of academic integrity for all students. The system guidelines state: “Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their own work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others’ academic endeavors.” (s. UWS 14.01, Wis. Adm. Code).

Students are subject to disciplinary action for academic misconduct, which is defined in s. UWS 14.03, Wis. Adm. code. Students on the UW – Oshkosh campus have been suspended from the University for Academic Misconduct.

You are encouraged to review the procedures related to violations of academic honesty as outlined in chapter UWS 14, Wisconsin Administrative Code. The system guidelines and local procedures are printed in the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh Student Discipline Code.

Specific questions regarding the provisions in Chapter UWS 14 (and institutional procedures approved to implement Chapter UWS 14) should be directed to the Dean of Students.

## 7. Grading

Final grades will be based on the following:

- 3 exams 150 points
- Class Participation 25 points
- Topic Presentation 25 points

Grades will be distributed on this basis:

- A 90 – 100%
- AB 88 – 89%
- B 80 – 87%
- BC 78 – 79%
- C 70 – 77%
- CD 68 – 69%
- D 60 – 67%
- F Less than 60%

### Quizzes and Examinations

Missed examinations may **not** be made up and will result in a grade of zero on that test. In those rare cases when an emergency occurs that prevents you from coming to a scheduled exam, notify the professor before the test. The Department of Journalism's voicemail operates 24 hours a day: (920) 424-1042. You may also use my office voicemail system, although it's a long-distance call from Oshkosh: (920) 433-5786.

### Class Presentations

Each week, a number of students will give individual presentations relevant to that week's reading. The information should be a summary of information from the current issue of *Public Relations Tactics*, *PR Week*, *Public Relations Strategist* or other appropriate trade publication. Copies of these are available in the Journalism Reading Room.

You may also use an appropriate Silver Anvil case study. A list of the 2007 Silver Anvil Award winners is available at <http://www.prsa.org/awards/silverAnvil/awardWinners.html>. You can retrieve a synopsis of the winning entries by using links along the left side of the page.

These presentations have several purposes. They allow you to pursue a topic of interest to you and, possibly, take it to a deeper level than is possible in class. They allow you to practice research techniques, writing skills and presentation techniques. They bring information to the rest of the class that might not otherwise have been discovered.

You will sign up for a presentation date on the first night of class. The second week, you will turn in the Presentation Summary Sheet with the following information:

1. Your name and e-mail address
2. A few facts about the topic you will present:
  - a. The name of your topic
  - b. Why you chose it
  - c. A brief statement about why you think this topic relates to our study of Public Relations Principles.

**Bonus Activities: PRSSA**

Extra credit will be awarded for your active participation in the school's chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). This is the only extra credit activity to be awarded in this class. "Active" means holding an officer or committee chair position and attending events regularly. Attending the national conference will not be sufficient for extra credit. To receive credit, you must turn in a short (one page or less) description of your relevant activities by the final class day.

**8. Schedule of course and assignments**

Introduction and Overview:  
Public Relations Principles and Theoretical Foundations

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|-------------|--------------|---|
| Session I   | September 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Introduction to the Course</li><li>▪ Videotape: Public Relations</li><li>▪ Discussion of Group Presentation Guidelines</li><li>▪ Selection of Groups and Presentation Topics</li></ul>                              |
| Session II  | September 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Topics: <i>Perception or Reality?</i> and <i>Definitions</i></li><li>▪ Reading Assignment: Chapter 1</li><li>▪ Case Discussion: The Lessons of Katrina</li><li>▪ Hand in Group Presentation Sign-up Sheet</li></ul> |
| Session III | September 25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Topic: <i>What Do Public Relations People Do?</i></li><li>▪ Reading Assignment: Chapter 2</li><li>▪ Case Discussion: Wrestling for Success</li></ul>  |
| Session IV  | October 2    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Topic: <i>Historical Development</i></li><li>▪ Reading Assignment: Chapter 3</li><li>▪ Case Discussion: Ashland's Apology</li><li>▪ Group 1 presentations</li></ul>   |
| Session V   | October 9    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Topic: <i>Publics in Public Relations</i></li><li>▪ Reading Assignment: Chapter 4</li><li>▪ Case discussion: Parrott Talks: Rand McNally Listens</li><li>▪ Group 2 presentations</li></ul>                          |

- Session VI    October 16
- Topic: *Communication Theory & Public Opinion*
  - Reading Assignment: Chapter 5
  - Case Discussion: Sowing Seeds of Discontent
  - Group 3 presentations
- Session VII    October 23
- Topic: *Ethics & Social Responsibility in Public Relations*
  - Reading Assignment: Chapter 6
  - Case Discussion: Citizens for a Free Kuwait
  - Group 4 presentations
  - Examination #1

### The Public Relations Process

- Session VIII    October 30
- Topic: *Steps 1 & 4 – Research & Evaluation*
  - Reading Assignment: Chapter 7
  - Case Discussion: Fighting Back with Facts
  - Group 5 presentations
- Session IX    November 6
- Topic: *Step 2 – Planning for Action*
  - Reading Assignment: Chapter 8
  - Case Discussion: Boeing, Boeing, Gone
  - Group 6 presentations
- Session X    November 13
- Topic: *Step 3 – Communication*
  - Reading Assignment: Chapter 9
  - Case Discussion: The Great Canadian Cover-Up
  - Group 7 presentations
- Session XI    November 20
- Topic: *Writing & Presentation Skills*
    - Reading Assignment: Chapters 10
  - Topic: *Public Relations in a Digital World*
    - Reading Assignment: Chapter 11
  - Case Discussion: Corporate Podcasting
  - Exam #2

Careers and Professional Issues

Session XII November 27

- Topic: *Crisis Communications*
  - Reading Assignment: Chapter 12
- Topic: *PR & Marketing (Integrated Communications)*
  - Reading Assignment: Chapter 13
- Case discussion: False Hope
- Group 8 presentations

Session XIII December 4

- Topic: *Cross-Cultural Communication*
  - Reading Assignment: Chapter 14
- Topic: *Public Relations & The Law*
  - Reading Assignment: Chapter 15
- Case Discussion: Zakazukha!
- Group 9 presentations

Session XIV December 11

- Topic: *Your Future in Public Relations*
  - Reading Assignment: Chapter 16
- Final Exam