

Principles of Public Relations – Journalism 61-211
Fall Semester 2009

Department of Journalism
University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh

Class: 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday / Clow 26
Instructor: Jim Streed, APR
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Office hours: Tuesday 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) (3rd 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
- Group presentations based on case studies relevant to that week's reading

Students are expected 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 200-point schedule:

- 5 exams 150 points
- Class Participation 30 points
- Topic Presentation 20 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 me before the test. The Department of Journalism's voicemail operates 24 hours a day: (920) 424-1042. You may also use my personal cell phone: (920) 277-5629.

Class Presentations

Throughout the session, groups of students will give presentations relevant to that week's reading. These will be based on chapter readings and end-of-chapter questions. Presenters may augment their case information by using *Public Relations Tactics*, *PR Week*, *Public Relations Strategist* or other appropriate trade publications. Copies of these are available in the Journalism Reading Room.

Presenters may also use an appropriate Silver Anvil case study. A list of the [2009 Silver Anvil Award](#) winners is available at www.prsa.org/awards/silveranvil. 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.

Presentation groups, dates and topics will be assigned on the first night of class. Presentations will begin the second week, so teams should expect to meet outside of class to prepare and rehearse their presentations.

Bonus Activities: PRSSA

An additional 30 extra-credit points 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

- Session I September 9
- Introduction to the Course and to each other: Why are we here?
 - Overview of the text: three broad slices
 - Principles & Theoretical Foundations
 - The Public Relations Process
 - Careers & Professional Issues
 - Discussion of Participation guidelines
 - PR in the News
 - Group Presentations
 - Assignment of Groups and Presentation Topics
 - Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 10 – Writing & Presentation Skills
- Session II September 16
- Public Relations in the News
 - Topics: *Perception or Reality?* and *Definitions*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 1
 - Group 1 Presentation: Chapter 1 Questions
 - Topic: *What Do Public Relations People Do?*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 2
 - Group 2 Presentation: Chapter 2 Questions
 - Case Discussion
- Session III September 23
- Public Relations in the News
 - Topic: *Historical Development*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 3
 - Group 3 Presentation: Chapter 3 Questions
 - Quiz #1 (Chapters 1-3)
- Session IV September 30
- Public Relations in the News
 - Topic: *Publics in Public Relations*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 4
 - Group 4 Presentation: Chapter 4 Questions
 - Topic: *Communication Theory & Public Opinion*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 5
 - Group 5 Presentation: Chapter 5 Questions
 - Guest Speaker

- Session V October 7
- Public Relations in the News
 - Topic: *Ethics & Social Responsibility in Public Relations*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 6
 - Group 6 Presentation: Chapter 6 Questions

 - Quiz #2 (Chapters 4-6)

The Public Relations Process

- Session VI October 14
- Public Relations in the News
 - Topic: *Steps 1 & 4 – Research & Evaluation*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 7
 - Group 7 Presentation: Chapter 7 Questions

 - Case Discussion

- Session VII October 21
- Public Relations in the News
 - Topic: *Step 2 – Planning for Action*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 8
 - Group 8 Presentation: Chapter 8 Questions

 - Case Discussion

- Session VIII October 28
- Public Relations in the News
 - Topic: *Step 3 – Communication*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 9
 - Group 9 Presentation: Chapter 9 Questions

 - Quiz #3 (Chapters 7-9)

 - Case Discussion

- Session IX November 4
- Public Relations in the News
 - Topic: *Public Relations in a Digital World*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 11
 - Group 11 Presentation: Chapter 11 Questions

 - Topic: *Crisis Communications*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 12
 - Group 12 Presentation: Chapter 12 Questions

 - Guest Speaker

- Session X November 11
- No Class – PRSA & PRSSA International Conference

- Session XI November 18
- Public Relations in the News
 - Topic: *PR & Marketing (Integrated Communications)*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 13
 - Group 13 Presentation: Chapter 13 Questions
 - Quiz #4 (Chapters 11-13)
 - Case Discussion

Careers and Professional Issues

- Session XII November 25
- No class – Thanksgiving break

- Session XIII December 2
- Public Relations in the News
 - Topic: *Cross-Cultural Communication*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 14
 - Group 14 Presentation: Chapter 14 Questions
 - Case Discussion Topic: *Public Relations & The Law*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 15
 - Group 15 Presentation: Chapter 15 Questions
 - Case Discussion

- Session XIV December 9
- Public Relations in the News
 - Topic: *Your Future in Public Relations*
 - Reading Assignment/Lecture/Discussion: Chapter 16
 - Quiz #5 (Chapters 14-16)