

COM 446 Section 0001: PROBLEMS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Course Syllabus – Fall 2009

Wednesdays, 1:30 – 4:15 p.m., 1900 Building, Room 110

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Office Hours: Virtual Office Hours via e-mail, AIM and Skype 24/7. In-person office hours held by appointment.

Appointments. Please set up an appointment with the instructor in class or by e-mail to discuss assignments, class-related materials or any other academic concern. It is your responsibility to be proactive in seeking consultation and asking questions about your work.

Purpose & Course Description. This course will give you an opportunity to develop an understanding of the strategic management of public relations by analyzing the public relations process as it relates to public relations theory and practice. You will become acquainted with the strategy and tactics used by public relations professionals in areas of public relations specialization such as crisis public relations and international public relations, and in the primary public relations functions of media relations, employee relations, member relations, community relations, government relations, and consumer relations.

Course Objectives.

- § To provide an overview of the purpose of public relations and the process through which public relations is practiced strategically.
- § To develop your problem-solving skills by critically analyzing current case studies in public relations, including the collection and discussion of outside material relevant to course topics.
- § To analyze situations for their public relations challenges and opportunities. To practice developing and applying strategy and tactics based on a sound understanding of public relations concepts and theory.
- § To enhance your skills at communicating persuasively, clearly and successfully.

Required Text. Smith, R. D. (2005). *Strategic Planning for Public Relations (2nd Ed.)*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Additional readings will be provided throughout the course with links or articles made available via the library's e-reserves.

Attendance. You are permitted one absence during the semester. There will be a **2% penalty** off your final grade for **each** class you miss after your absence (maximum of 10% penalty). This absence **includes** any **excused** absences you have. You are responsible for notifying the instructor in advance of any absences and obtaining the notes for material covered in class during any absence. If you are absent when an assignment is due, you are responsible for getting it to me on time despite the absence.

Diversity Statement. Effective public relations relies on the ability to recognize and embrace diversity in all its forms, including viewpoints. Throughout the class, you will have opportunities to see how different cultural perspectives influence public relations. You are encouraged take advantage of these opportunities in your own work, and also to learn from the information and ideas shared by other students.

Students with Special Needs. Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. Student must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss/

Course Professionalism. To prepare students for working in the public relations industry, this course also serves to improve students' behavior in the workplace. Professional decorum is expected at all times. This means the instructor and students adhere to workplace norms for collegial and respectful interaction.

- Students are expected to arrive on time and not leave early unless prior permission is given.
- Talking while the instructor, guest speaker or another student is talking is prohibited and can result in being asked to leave the classroom immediately and a lowering of your grade.
- Laptop computers should be turned off during class, unless prior permission is received from the instructor.
- When making professional presentations in class, students are expected to wear professional attire.
- *****If a cellphone rings or is used for text messaging during class, there will be a pop quiz.*****

Academic Honesty. Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism occurs when a student uses or purchases ghost-written papers. It also occurs when a student utilizes the ideas of or information obtained from another person without giving credit to that person. If plagiarism or another act of academic dishonesty occurs, it will be dealt with in accordance with the academic misconduct policy as stated in NCSU's Code of Student Conduct.

Furthermore, the Honor Pledge, "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment," will be assumed by a student's typed or written signature on any test or assignment.

Course Requirements and Grading. Your knowledge and ability to apply the course material will be assessed in the following ways. The grading scales will be as follows:

A+ = 97-100	A = 93-96	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 = 63-66	D- = 60-62	F = < 60.

If you want to discuss your work, be sure to contact me so that we can set up a time to meet.

(1) Tests (50%). Your ability to competently develop strategic plans is built on a conceptual foundation. The three tests in this class are a way to assess your grasp of this foundational knowledge. The tests will be a combination of multiple-choice, short answer and situation analysis.

(2) Team Campaign Presentation (30%). The class will be divided into 4-5 teams of 3-4 students. In late October, the teams will be announced and will all be given the save RFP (Request for Proposal) from an organization looking for public relations representation. Using material discussed in the course other public relations sources, the teams will then prepare a proposed public relations campaign for the client. This proposal will be presented to the client on the final day of the class, December 2. The proposal must include research, goals and objectives, the messages that will be used, the tactics for the campaign, an evaluation plan, and a stewardship plan. The team will be responsible for a written submission of 25-30 pages and a 30-minute oral presentation.. This project is a **group effort** and each student will be evaluated by his or her peers. Peer evaluations will be completed and your individual grade for this project will be determined by the peer evaluation and participation in question/answer sessions after each presentation..

(3) Individual Case Study Presentation (10%). During the course of the semester, we will review different stages of the public relations process, including research, strategy, message design, evaluation, etc. Students will choose one of these topics and analyze different PRSA award-winning campaigns based on the topic of their choice. Then, at the start of each class, students will make presentations to summarize their case study and offer insights based on how to best approach the individual topic, e.g. choosing tactics or evaluating campaigns.

(4) Online Activities and In-class Participation (10%). Throughout the term, we will have mini-assignments in class that require active participation to fully understand the lecture concepts. Additionally, there will be five online activities. Full participation is expected based on the instructions for each of the assignments.

COM 446 COURSE SCHEDULE
(Subject to Change at Instructor's Discretion*)

Date	Weekly Topic	Readings for that day (<u>NOT</u> for the next lesson)
Aug. 19	Introductory activities	
Aug. 26	Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situation (Step 1) • Organization (Step 2) • Research: Publics (Step 3) 	Smith, pp. 1-61
Sept. 2	Goals & Objectives; Online Activity #1 **Class will not meet in the classroom	Smith, pp. 69-79
Sept. 9	Public Relations Programming; Online Activity #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Strategies **Class will not meet in the classroom	Smith, pp. 82-100
Sept. 16	Public Relations Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactive Strategies 	Smith, pp. 100-113
Sept. 23	Test #1	
Sept. 30	Effective Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Messages & Activity Test #1 Returned	Smith, pp. 117-152
Oct. 7	Tactics and Implementation	Smith, pp. 157-231
Oct. 14	Evaluation	Smith, pp. 235-256 Fraser Likely article (PDF)
Oct. 21	Online Activity #3 **Class will not meet in the classroom	No Readings
Oct. 28	Test #2	No Readings
Nov. 4	Work in Groups on Final Project	No Readings
Nov. 11	Stewardship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship Building • Organization-Public Relationships 	Kathleen Kelly (PDF)
Nov. 18	Social Media and Public Relations; Online Activity #4 **Class will not meet in the classroom	
Nov. 25	Online activity #5 **Class will not meet in the classroom	No Readings
Dec. 2	Presentations of Team Campaigns Test #3 (Take home)	No Readings