

COM 498 Section 601: Social Media and Public Relations

Online Course Syllabus – Fall 2009

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Purpose & Course Description. This course will give you an opportunity to develop an understanding of the strategic management of social media in the public relations industry. By analyzing the tactics and current trends of the profession, you will see how the public relations process and our goal of relationship building with various stakeholders is impacted by various social media applications. You will also become acquainted with the tactics in various professional settings.

Course Objectives.

- § To provide an overview of the purpose of public relations and the process practitioners use to communicate with an organization's strategic audiences using social media applications.
- § To develop the skills and abilities to use social media applications from an organizational perspective.
- § To develop your problem-solving skills by critically analyzing social media applications and develop social media communication plans for an organization, including strategy development and evaluation.
- § To understand how social media applications can be used in a variety of professional settings.

Required Text. Li, C., & Bernoff, J. (2008). *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies*. Harvard Business School Press (ISBN: 978-1422125007). Additional readings will be provided throughout the course with links or articles made available via the Vista system and online from www.delicious.com/NCStatePR where you will find groups of Internet bookmarks categorized by the lecture topic.

Lectures. Each week there will be two lectures made available to you via the Vista system. You may download the lecture videos at any point during the week to watch. Each lecture will have corresponding blog entries that you will need to actively follow and participate in. Each week, you are required to have watched the lectures and participated in the blog by 5:00 pm on Sunday at the end of that week (eg, Week 1 blog posts are due by 5pm on Sunday, Aug 30; Week 2 posts are due by 5pm on Sunday, Sept 6, etc.)

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/.

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.

Makeups, Late Assignments, and Extra Credit. Course policy dictates that there will be no make-up exams or extensions of deadlines. Dates have been announced in advance in the "Weekly Course Plan" so that students can schedule other activities around these deadlines. Exceptions will be rare and made only in cases of extraordinary, documented circumstances, as determined by the instructor. Any make-up exams administered or late assignments accepted will be graded lower than work turned in on time. Extra credit will not be given for additional work.

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.

All grades will be posted to the Vista gradebook within one week of being turned into the professor.

(1) Participation in the Course Blog (20%). Each week, students will download and view recorded lectures based on the week's readings. After viewing the lectures, students will be asked to view the blog entries that are related to those lectures by visiting <http://NCSUpublicrelations.wordpress.com>. Each week, you are expected to contribute to the blog by adding your own thoughts and opinions. You should use relevant facts and citations when appropriate, but I'm also interested in hearing your thoughts. Use relevant examples from cases that you know or from the mainstream media. Ultimately, I'd also like to see you learn how to include links and pictures in the blog postings also. Blog postings and replies for the entire week's lectures should be emailed to the professor by the end of the weekend following the lectures (eg, Week 1 entries are due by 5pm on Sunday, Aug 30; Week 2 entries are due by 5pm on Sunday, Sept 6; Week 3 entries are due by 5pm on Sunday, Sept 13, etc.).

(2) Social Media Assignments (50%). Eight times during the semester, students will complete assignments based on the topical content covered in the lectures. These assignments are designed to help students gain a better understanding of social media tactics that organizations use while managing their communication efforts and the public relations industry. These assignments will challenge students to further their knowledge on public relations strategy. Instructions for the assignments can be found in the "Assignments" folder in the Vista system as we move through the course schedule. The assignments should be submitted to the professor as described in the instruction sheets in Vista. There will also be a recorded mini-lecture for each assignment.

(3) Social Media Plan (30%). The final project in this course is to create a full social media plan for an organization of your choice. It can be a for-profit, nonprofit, or government agency. The project can be done for any type of public relations (e.g., media relations, fundraising, volunteer management, community relations, internal relations, etc.) and for any of the organization's publics. Ultimately, you will be asked to prepare a full social media plan that consists of three components:

- (1) Organization overview: An introductory section that tells me who the organization is, who is in charge of their public relations efforts, and information about their current public relations efforts
- (2) Social media audit: A section that details what the organization is currently doing with social media, interviews with employees as to their thoughts of using social media, an overview of what their competitors are doing with social media
- (3) Social media strategy and tactics: Based on your social media audit, you devise an appropriate strategy for the organization and provide examples of the tactics you are recommending. Additionally, you will provide information on how the strategies can be evaluated.

*****More information on the social media plan will be provided at the beginning of October*****

COM 498 Section 601: Social Media and Public Relations
 Online Course Schedule – Fall 2009

Week	Topics	Readings for the Week in addition to those on delicious.com/NCStatePR
<i>Introduction Module</i>		
Intro	1) Syllabus Review & Introduction	1) No Readings
Week 1	1) What is Public Relations?	1) Groundswell, Chs. 1-2
	2) Public Relations Online (Social Media and PR)	2) Kelleher, Ch. 9
Week 2	1) Online Ethics	1) Groundswell, Chs. 3-4
<i>Social Media Applications</i>		
	2) Social Bookmarking	2) Wetzker, et. al. (2008)
Week 3	1) Blogging	1) Groundswell, Chs. 5-6; Xifra & Huertas (2008); Wyld (2008)
	2) Vlogging	2) No Readings
Week 4	2) Micro-blogging	1) Groundswell, Chs. 7-8; Waters & Williams (2009); Jantsch (2009)
	2) Photo-sharing sites	2) Kanter (2008)
Week 5	1) Video-sharing sites	1) Groundswell, Ch. 9
	2) Podcasting	2) Barnes (2007); Chang & Cevher (2007); Lee (2006)
Week 6	1) Wikis	1) Majchrzak, et.al. (2006); Szybalski (2005); Henriksson, etal (2008)
	2) Customer Service Networks	2) Solis & Breakenridge (Ch. 15)
Week 7	1) Social Media Monitoring	1) TBA
	2) Text Messaging	2) Barwise & Strong (2002)
Week 8	1) Social Networking Sites	1) Waters, et. al. (2009); Comm (2007)
	2) Social Media Metrics	2) Solis & Breakenridge (Ch. 18)
<i>Social Media Measurement</i>		
Week 9	1) Web analytics	1) TBA
	2) Case Study on Measurement	2) No Readings
<i>Social Media in Practice</i>		
Week 10	1) Relationship Building & Netiquette	1) Groundswell, Ch. 10-11
	2) Social Media in Crisis Communication	2) Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith (2008)

Week 11	1) Online Media Relations 2) Social & Mainstream Media	1) Alfonso & Miguel (2006); Waters & Biestrich (2009) 2) Solis & Breakenridge (Ch. 17)
Week 12	1) Social media news release 2) Blogger Relations	1) Solis & Breakenridge (Ch. 8) 2) Solis & Breakenridge (Ch. 7)
Week 13	1) Government Public Relations 2) Nonprofit Public Relations	1) Library of Congress (2008) 2) No Readings
Week 14	1) Putting Together a Social Media Strategy	1) TBA
<i>Social Media and the Job Search</i>		
	2) Online Presentation	2) No Readings
Week 15	1) Online Job-seeking Tools	1) No Readings
<i>Course Wrap-Up and Conclusion</i>		
	2) Merging Public Relations 1.0 and Public Relations 2.0	2) Groundswell, Ch. 12; Solis & Breakenridge (Ch. 19)
Week 16	1) Final Project Due	1) Project is due on Monday, December 14 at 12:00pm