

COM 563: PUBLIC RELATIONS THEORY

Course Syllabus – Fall 2009

Monday, 6:00 – 8:45 p.m., Winston Hall 133

Instructor: Dr. Richard D. Waters
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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 4:00-5:30 and 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. The purpose of this course is to develop an understanding of the theoretical body of knowledge in public relations and its application to practice. Through readings and discussion of landmark research (journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers), students will examine how public relations theory has evolved over time and has become more welcoming of diverse ideas and research methodologies.

Learning Outcomes.

- Ø To provide the conceptual framework that underlies the theoretical body of knowledge in public relations;
- Ø To examine how public relations theory informs practice;
- Ø To provide a synthesized perspective on theory in public relations that allows master's students to complete a project or thesis successfully; to provide the same perspective to doctoral students as a foundation for further development of theoretical knowledge;
- Ø To foster an appreciation for diversity of people and viewpoints as well as a respect for debate and the right to dissent;
- Ø To examine and discuss professional standards, ethics, and values in public relations.

Required Readings. The weekly course schedule lists the readings for each week. The required Textbook is *Public Relations Theory II* by Carl Botan and Vince Hazleton, Erlbaum, 2006. The course text costs \$52.95 at RoutledgeMedia.com. Additional readings are available via the NCSU library homepage under course reserves.

Attendance. Attendance is expected for all students. Excused university absences, located at http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses_undergrad/REG02.20.3.php, will be honored by the instructor. Students are responsible for all class work missed. If you are absent when an assignment is due, you are responsible for submitting it to the instructor before the due date.

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. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see 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.

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.

Late Assignment Policy: For all assignments, there is a one-letter grade penalty for each 24-hour period after the due date.

(1) Active class participation (20%). This seminar on public relations theory relies heavily on discussion of the underlying theories of professional practice. As such, students are expected to engage in active class participation throughout the semester. Active participation not only involves participation in class discussions through the contribution of original ideas and reflections on readings, but also will require students to listen to others' comments and questions attentively.

(2) Reading Critiques (30%). Each week, students are expected to write a 2-page paper that examines your reactions to the weekly readings. The thought papers may take the form of a brief critical essay; a list of questions, concerns, or criticisms, a research idea, etc. The purpose of the exercise is to provide an opportunity to demonstrate that you've read, thought about and synthesized the readings. These weekly papers will be particularly helpful to those who find it difficult to speak up in class and they will also help guide our discussions. Quality does count; the weekly thought papers will account for 30% of your grade in this course and will substitute for a mid-term exam. Here are examples of topics you might address:

- Ø Present the most critical issue(s) from the readings. What contrasting positions might be taken? Are these positions incompatible or can they be reconciled?
- Ø Raise a question relevant to the topic but not answered in the readings.
- Ø Point out methodological problems. Suggest alternative explanations for the findings.
- Ø Comment on an article or area of research. Tell why this is important or unimportant, how it fits with research in other areas, etc.
- Ø Propose a new study to test a hypothesis. The hypothesis can be your own or one you've read or heard about.
- Ø Criticize a theoretical position – what has it clarified, ignored, confused, etc.
- Ø Consider how the material could be applied to real-world problems, including a PR case study.

Your reaction papers should be e-mailed to the instructor *AND* the week's discussion coordinator by 5:00 p.m. on Sunday before class. That will allow that week's discussion leaders an opportunity to gauge the class reaction to the readings and plan their discussion coordination session and questions accordingly.

(3) Discussion Coordination (20%). Each student will serve one week during the term as a discussion coordinator. You are required to meet with me at least one week (preferably earlier) prior to the class during which you will be discussion coordinator. The discussion coordinator has three responsibilities:

- Ø Identify and research one public relations case study that ties the theoretical topic of the week to public relations practice. For each case study, you should provide class members and the instructor at least one supporting handout or electronic example that illustrates or provides background on the case study.
- Ø Prepare a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the case study and distribute a handout of the presentation in class.
- Ø Lead the discussion that includes presentation of the case study and how it relates to public relations theory.

The coordinators are not lecturers, and other class members should not feel they have a light week when they are not coordinating. Everyone is expected and encouraged to contribute. I also will offer my own comments and questions too, so coordinators should not feel bad or deficient when I help steer discussion.

(4) Research Proposal (30%). A final paper will be due by 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 11, and will serve as the final exam for this course. The paper MUST be written in academic format and style and can be on any relevant, pre-approved topic of your choice in either of two forms:

(1) research proposal, suggesting a research endeavor that would test or develop theory in public relations and consisting of a literature review and description of proposed methodology, with bibliography significantly expanded from our class readings;

(2) case study analysis, applying theory to explain the case and test the theory, with bibliography significantly expanded from our class readings.

In an important sense, this paper is for YOU: it is your opportunity to explore an area of public relations that is of interest to you. Either choice should be approximately 15-25 pages, double-spaced, APA style (page count excluding notes/references). The proposal option will be more useful to those planning to undertake a thesis / dissertation and, in fact, its form is akin to a brief thesis/dissertation proposal. Once you have selected a topic, check with me for final approval. On Oct. 11, I'll expect a brief memo from you to me outlining what you're planning for your final paper/course project.

Class Format. The class format is lecture and discussion. Each week, my responsibility is to provide you my expertise in synthesizing and evaluating the readings and facilitating discussion. I will distribute in class my lecture notes in PowerPoint handout format. Your responsibility is to read the material before class and be prepared to participate in class discussion.

COM 563 COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to Change at Instructor's Discretion*)

Week 1—August 19--Introductory Activities

Week 2—August 26--Understanding Theory

Sallot, L.M., Lyon, L.J., Acosta-Alzuru, C., & Jones, K.O. (2003). From aardvark to zebra: A new millennium analysis of theory development in public relations academic journals. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 15(1), 27-90.

Broom, G.M. (2006). An open-system approach to building theory in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research* 18(2), 141-150.

Grunig, J.E. (2006). Furnishing the edifice: Ongoing research on public relations as a strategic management function. *Journal of Public Relations Research* 18(2), 151-176.

Week 3—September 2--Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Public Relations

Botan and Hazleton, Chapter 1, Public Relations in a New Age, Carl Botan and Vincent Hazleton.

Gower, K. (2006). Public relations research at the crossroads. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 18(2), 177-190.

Flynn, T. (2006). A delicate equilibrium: Balancing theory, practice, and outcomes. *Journal of Public Relations Research* 18(2), 191-201.

Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., Vercic, D., Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining strategic communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 1(1), 3-36.

Week 4—September 9--History of Public Relations

Miller, K.S. (2000). Public relations history: Knowledge and limitations. *Communication Yearbook*, 23, 381-420.

Lamme, M. (2004). Tapping into War: Leveraging World War I in the Drive for a Dry Nation. *American Journalism*, 21(4), 63-91.

Hon, L.C. (1997). To redeem the soul of America: Public relations and the Civil Rights Movement, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 9(3), 163-212.

Week 5—September 16—Excellence; Role, Contingency; Game Theories

Botan and Hazleton, Chapter 2, The Excellence Theory, James E. Grunig, Larissa A. Grunig, and David M. Dozier.

Botan and Hazleton, Chapter 5, The Centrality of Practitioner Roles to Public Relations Theory, David M. Dozier and Glen M. Broom.

Cancel, A.E., Cameron, G.T., Sallot, L.M., & Mitrook, M.A. (1997). It depends: A contingency theory of accommodation in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 9(1), 31-63.

Murphy, P. (1989). Game theory as a paradigm for the public relations process. In C. Botan & V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public Relations Theory*, (pp. 173-192), Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Week 6—September 23—Rhetorical and Critical Theories

Botan and Hazleton, Chapter 3, A Rhetorical Theory Approach to Issues Management, Robert L. Heath.

Berger, B.K. (2005). Power over, power with, and power to relations: Critical reflections on public relations, the dominant coalition, and activism. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(1), 5-28.

Roper, J. (2005). Symmetrical communication: Excellent public relations or a strategy for hegemony? *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(1), 69-86.

Pal, M, & Dutta, M. J. (2008). Public relations in a global context: The relevance of critical modernism as a theoretical lens. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 20(2), 159-179.

Week 7—September 30—Feminist, Gender, and Diversity Theories

Grunig, L. (2005). Feminist phase analysis in public relations: Where have we been? Where do we need to be? *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 18(2), 115-140.

Aldoory, L., & Toth, E.L. (2002). Gender discrepancies in a gendered profession: A developing theory for public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 14(2), 103-126.

Frohlich, R., & Peters, S.B., (2007). PR bunnies caught in the agency ghetto? Gender stereotypes, organizational factors, and women's careers in PR agencies. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(3), 229-254.

Pompper, D. (2005). "Difference" in public relations research: A case for introducing critical race theory. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(2), 139-170.

Week 8—October 7—Media Theories--Framing, Agenda-Building, Agenda-Setting, Innovative Media

Hallahan, K. (1999). Seven models of framing: Implications for public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 11(3), 205-242.

Botan and Hazleton, Chapter 10, Building a Theoretical Model of Media Relations Using Framing, Information Subsidies, and Agenda-Building, Lynn M. Zoch and Juan-Carlos Molleda.

Kiousis, S., Popescu, C., & Mitrook M. (2007). Understanding influence on corporate reputation: An examination of public relations efforts, media coverage, public opinion, and financial performance from an agenda-building and agenda-setting perspective. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(2), 147-165.

Kent, M.L. (2008). Critical analysis of blogging in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 34, 32-40.

Lim, J.S., & Ki, E. (2007). Resistance to ethically suspicious parody video on YouTube: A test of inoculation theory. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 84(4), 713-728.

Week 9—October 14—Global and International Theories

Wakefield, R. (2007). A retrospective on World Class: The excellence theory goes international. In E.L. Toth (Ed.), *The future of excellence in public relations and communication management* (pp. 545-568). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Botan and Hazleton, Chapter 12, Public Relations Theory and Practice in Nation Building, Maureen Taylor and Michael L. Kent.

Molleda, J.C. (2001). International paradigms: The Latin American School of Public Relations. *Journalism Studies*, 2(4), 513-530.

Chen, Y.R. (2007). The strategic management of government affairs in China: How multinational corporations in China interact with the Chinese government. *Journal of Public Relations Research* 19(3), 283-306.

Week 10—October 21—Effectiveness and Measurement; Relationship Theory

Hon, L.C. (1997). What have you done for me lately? Exploring effectiveness in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 9(1), 1-30.

Pieczka, M. (2000). Objectives and evaluation in public relations work: What do they tell us about expertise and professionalism? *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 12(3), 211-233.

Grunig, L., Grunig, J., & Dozier, D. (2002). The value of public relations. In J.E. Grunig (Ed.), *Excellent public relations and effective organizations* (pp. 90-139). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Botan and Hazleton, Chapter 18, Relationship Management: A General Theory of Public Relations, John A. Ledingham.

Week 11—October 28—Persuasion Theories and Integrated Marketing Communication

Miller, G.R. (1989). Persuasion and public relations: Two p's in a pod. In C. H. Botan & V. Hazelton, Jr. (Eds), *Public relations theory* (pp. 45-66). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Botan and Hazelton, Chapter 4, Persuasion: An Intrinsic Function of Public Relations, Michael Pfau and Hua-Hsin Wan.

Hallahan, K. (2007). Integrated communication: Implications for public relations beyond excellence. In E.L. Toth (Ed.), *The future of excellence in public relations and communication management* (pp. 299-336). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Malcolm S.B. (2008). Philosophical bridges for IMC: Grounding the practice. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 2(1), 19-30.

Week 12—November 4—Public Relations Crisis and Complexity Theories

Botan and Hazelton, Chapter 6, Crisis Management: A Communicative Approach, W. Timothy Coombs.

Englehardt, K.J., Sallot, L.M., & Springston, J.K. (2004). Compassion without blame: Testing the accident decision flow chart with the crash of ValuJet flight 592. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 16(2), 127-156.

Botan and Hazelton, Chapter 14, Reframing Crisis Management Through Complexity, Dawn Gilpin and Priscilla Murphy.

Murphy, P. (2007). Coping with an uncertain world: The relationship between excellence and complexity theories. In E.L. Toth (Ed.), *The future of excellence in public relations and communication management* (pp. 119-134). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Week 13—November 11—Activism and Conflict Resolution

Grunig, L., Grunig, J., & Dozier, D. (2002). Activism. In J.E. Grunig (Ed.), *Excellent public relations and effective organizations* (pp. 442-479). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Susskind, L. & Field, P. (1996). The mutual gains approach. *Dealing with an angry public* (pp. 37-59). New York, NY: Free Press.

Murphy, P., & Dee, J. (1996). Reconciling the preferences of environmental activists and corporate policymakers. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 8(1), 1-33.

Derville, T. (2005). Radical activist tactics: Overturning public relations conceptualizations. *Public Relations Review*, 31(4), 527-533.

Week 14—November 18—Professionalism and Ethics

Wright, D. K. & Turk, J.V. (2007). Public relations knowledge and professionalism: Challenges to educators and practitioners. In E.L. Toth (Ed.), *The future of excellence in public relations and communication management* (pp. 571-588). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Gower, K. (2008). *Legal and ethical considerations for public relations, 2nd edition* (Chapter 1: Doing the right thing, pp. 1-24). Long Grove, IL: Waveland.

Edgett, R. (2002). Toward an ethical framework for advocacy in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 14(1)*, 1-26.

Bowen, S. (2007). The extent of ethics. In E.L. Toth (Ed.), *The future of excellence in public relations and communication management* (pp. 275-298). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Week 15—December 2—Presentation of Research Proposals; Course Wrap up