

COMM 4413-01: PUBLIC RELATIONS CASE STUDIES

University of West Georgia, College of Social Sciences

Spring 2016

MW 9:30 a.m. - 10:50 a.m., HUM 312

Dr. Hazel J. Cole (<http://www.westga.edu/~masscom/faculty.html>)

Office Hours: MW 8:30-9:30 and 12:30-1:30 p.m.

TR 10:00-12:30

Humanities 152 and/or by appointment

Contact: 678-839-4937 or email me via CourseDen

PREREQUISITES

COMM 1154: Introduction to Mass Communications

COMM 3313: Public Relations Principles

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Text: Swann, Patricia. Cases in Public Relations Management (2010). Routledge. [it's the green book].

Supplemental readings may give added.

See resources links at the end of syllabi.

Handouts and/or online readings (announced in class)

COURSE OVERVIEW

COMM 4413: Public Relations Cases is a strategic thinking and critical analysis course developed through oral and written analysis of current and classic case studies in public relations. Through the analysis of the performance of public relations professionals and their organizations, we will learn from others' successes and failures. We will work to understand how to approach and analyze organizations' opportunities and threats using the process of public relations.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. The student will understand that public relations as an important communication and management function of corporate, government, agency, and nongovernmental organizations.
2. The student will understand the purposes of public relations and the process through which public relations is practiced strategically, including the ability to explain the relationships among research, objectives, programs, and evaluation.
3. The student will be aware of the major areas of public relations practice (media relations, consumer relations, employee relations, community relations, international relations).
4. The student will practice problem-solving skills by critically analyzing current case studies in public relations, including the ability to define, articulate and develop missions, goals, objectives, strategies and tactics.
5. The student will develop a sense of professionalism in the practice of public relations thorough ethical preparation and meeting deadlines.
6. The student will strengthen their writing, interpersonal communication, oral communication and presentation skills critical to public relations practitioners.

MASS COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will be able to understand critically the origin, development and paramount economic, legal/policy, social and effects issues of mass media.
2. Students will be able to understand critically structure and process of mass media industries within economic, legal, and ethical considerations.
3. Students will develop the ability to write mass media messages with accuracy, clarity, and brevity on deadline and within varying style, ethical, and legal considerations.
4. Students will develop proficient use of technology to produce visual and audio messages for mass media within varying aesthetic, style, technical, ethical, and legal considerations.
5. Students will be able to gain practical experiences to apply and test knowledge and skills, and to network with professionals.
6. Students will be encouraged to engage in interdisciplinary scholarship.
7. Students will be provided a foundation for graduate study in communication.

The Seminar Environment

The course will be offered in the seminar environment as are many upper division courses. It, therefore, becomes incumbent upon the student to share a greater responsibility for his or her own learning; to PREPARE for class and be able to participate in a meaningful way to the class. Throughout the course, the student will be asked to discuss reading assignments, offer synopses of case studies, and give presentations or other such independent activity in class. If you are a slacker, please drop this course because you will fail.

CourseDen (D2L): This course will use the University's course management software D2L extensively. Please make sure you are familiar and comfortable with all the applications and tools in D2L, specifically the assignment tool, grade book, and email tool. If you experience technical problems with D2L, especially during an online assignment or assessment, including quizzes and exams, contact Distance Learning at UWG **immediately** (<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/help/>; 678-839-6248; distance@westga.edu). Please ensure that you are using a reliable machine and have reliable internet access to successfully complete this course.

COURSE STRUCTURE: CASE STUDY DISCUSSION

Every student will be put in a small team and assigned a case study from our text. It is your responsibility to get very familiar with that case study using the information presented in the text and doing independent research on the case study outside of the text. You will then lead a discussion of the case study by posing at least three substantive questions about the case for classmates to discuss. Examples can be found in the text, but I encourage you to go beyond these.

Random Current Events Quizzes (5%)

Randomly, current events quizzes will be given in class. Quizzes will be pulled from current news topics found in national media. It is your job to be familiar with happenings in the national news that involve some PR angle (i.e., business news, recalls, mergers, brand issues, deaths related to products, lawsuits brought against businesses, educational campaigns, etc.). There will be 5 quizzes worth 10 points each given throughout the semester.

Contemporary CRISIS Case Study/Group Presentation (Worth 50% of your overall grade)

You will be given specifics in class. **Students will apply the RACE model to the case analysis**

and the William Benoit Image Restoration Strategies to the crisis component of the case.

Original Case Study (Research based):

- A. This will represent your final project, one in which you assimilate the knowledge you have acquired throughout the semester. Your unique case analysis papers are minimum six (6) pages and no more than eight (8) typed, double-spaced pages plus a list of references done in APA style. Essential elements are (1) a quality of research, (2) in-depth critical analysis, (3) comparison with other cases and (3) effective writing and organization.

An effective analysis IS NOT a SUMMARY but rather, a CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF:

- the research strategies and methods applied
- the measurability of goals and objectives
- the identification of publics
- the adequacy of public relations strategies
- the application of tactics
- the approach to evaluation.

- B. *Comparison and Contrast:* You must compare and contrast the selected case with at least **two (2)** other cases NOT located in your text. Note that efforts to relate and integrate concepts you have learned in this and other public relations classes will be viewed favorably.

Textbook Chapter Case analysis assignments/team – (Worth 20% of your overall grade). This is taken from the textbook (assigned chapters given in class) and will be provided in class.

The case study approach involves analysis of on-the-job public relations problems. There are numerous brief case studies and area introductions in our text. We will read and discuss as many of these as possible. All of the studies are open-ended and do not impose final conclusions but instead require the student to develop appropriate strategies and programs that can be shared in class discussion. The cases included represent many of the most important public relations cases in the nation and they make up some of the best examples of successful public relations practices to date. Each case sets out a PR problem and then shows how various principles in the field were actually applied in an attempted resolution.

Since this class is an upper division course in public relations, students will participate much more in the activity of their own learning, in the form of presentation and MEANINGFUL discussion. For most class meetings 4-5 students will prepare a typed outline for presentation and discussion based upon the assigned chapters. A student's presentation should be organized and succinct, usually lasting at least 15-20 minutes. This will be followed by the remarks of respondents whose aim it is to examine critically the ideas presented by the student and the text. The respondent is to ask questions and take issue with facts of ideas that differ from his or her own position. He or she may also point out areas of agreement. Other class members can then join the discussion, directing questions to the presenter, respondent or other members of the class. Discussion depends upon students having read each chapter PRIOR to its examination in class. Every student is expected to read every chapter and case study in the textbook.

Source citation:

It is critical that you properly cite all of your sources using APA manual.

PRESENTATIONS (How you're graded)

All team/group members will be given the same grade and your instructor expects contributions from all. Unless excused by documented medical or family emergency, "no-shows" on presentation day are considered an insult to your group, the entire class and will result in an "F" or ZERO grade that cannot be made up. Students should complete a near equal amount of assignments when in groups.

Group Problems: If there is a problem among team/group members, please bring it to my attention early. Any unresolved problems will result in the problem student either doing a 10-15 page case study research paper on a contemporary topic assigned by the professor OR receiving zero for the assignment.

NOTE: You are encouraged can use PowerPoint, embedded video, and other technology to present your project (no Prezi's allowed). You can also use posters and other visuals necessary to present your case. Your case study, along with supporting research materials must be handed in a 3-ring binder (or bound in some other format) for easy accessibility. Each section in your binder must be labeled (e.g. Research, background info, supporting materials...you get the idea). Be sure to properly cite (APA style) any research, material, etc., that is not your original idea. I take off points for sloppy work (aesthetics are essential to professionalism).

EXAM (20%)

You will be given an exam that covers lectures and materials from selected chapters in the text. Worth 20% of your overall grade.

PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE (5%) This is a Pass/Fail policy. Once you've had more than two absences, you automatically receive a Fail on this portion, unless your absence was a documented and approved absence by the Professor. University-sponsored events are not penalized. See attendance policy below.

GRADE ALLOCATION

A 90 – higher B 80 – 89 C 70 – 79 D 60 – 69 F 59 – lower

The course grade will be determined as follows:

Major Case Analysis/Organized Research Project and presentation (Group Project) -- 50%

Assigned chapter cases and thorough analysis/presentation -- 20%

One Exam – 20%

Weekly Current Event Critique (5%)

Participation & Attendance (5%)

You earn your grade. Grades are evaluations of your performance on the assignments in this course. There is no extra credit. Please DO NOT email me at the end of the semester asking or begging for points. It is quite irritating. If you do well throughout the semester, you will be pleased with the grade you earn, as I don't "give" grades.

COURSE POLICIES

Late work

I do not accept late or emailed work. If you anticipate missing a deadline, submit the assignment before it is due (/posted to Dropbox) and turn in your hard copy. Meeting deadlines is essential to the profession; any assignment turned in after its deadline will receive a zero unless approved documentation of unavoidable circumstances (approved at the instructor's discretion) is provided. **Deadlines are not negotiable in this course. If your team is presenting and you are absent, you will be deducted 50% off the grade the team receives. Hint: You want to be present for your team.**

Attendance

If you are a slacker, you need to drop this course because you are on a path to failure. Attendance is mandatory for this class. Excessive tardiness (if you arrive after I have called roll) results in an absence. You receive two absences without penalty, use them judiciously. **If you have three or more absences you will receive ZERO points for participation/attendance. (Absences to attend school-related events (university sponsored in writing from university) are the only excused absences I will accept or the death of an immediate family member.) Excessive absences (more than four) may result in failure of the course.** Please discuss any concerns you have about this course with the instructor ASAP (by the second week of class).

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated. Your first attempt will result in failure of the assignment. Second attempt will result in failure of the course and whatever penalties the university stipulates. It is your responsibility to read the following information contained in this link: http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf.

Classroom Etiquette

Exercising personal freedom is an appealing part of college life. In order to create an atmosphere where individual expression and social interchange are both respected, please observe the following: (1) address each other with respect; (2) contribute to discussions, don't dominate them; (3) stay focused on the topic being discussed.

Cell Phone Use

Please turn all cell phone and technology devices to silent and put them away. This causes distractions and is disrespectful when you're texting or surfing the web during lecture.

Americans With Disabilities Act Statement

If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the Center for Disability Services. A CDS Counselor will coordinate those services. See http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index_8884.php

Equal Opportunity Statement

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by UWG.

Affirmative Action Statement

University of West Georgia adheres to affirmative action policies to promote diversity and equal

opportunity for all faculty and students.

Contacting Me

I look forward to learning more about you and what you would like to get out of this course.

Anytime you need to get in touch with me, please call me at the office 678-839-4937 or send me an email via CourseDen (preferred). **Please do NOT use my westga account unless I specifically ask you to do so.** I look forward to working with you this semester.

Recommended Supplemental Resources

- Institute for Public Relations: <http://instituteforpr.org/>
- Arthur W. Page Society resource links page: <http://www.awpagesociety.com/resources/links.asp>
- Public Relations Society of America (PRSA): <http://www.prsa.org/>
- PRSA Silver Anvil Awards home page: <http://www.silveranvil.org>
- PRSA Volunteer Chapter: <http://www.volunteerprsa.org/>
- Council of Public Relations Firms: <http://www.prfirms.org/>
- Public Affairs Council: <http://www.pac.org/> • Issues Management Council: <http://www.issuemanagement.org/>
- National Investor Relations Institute: <http://www.niri.org/>
- Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management: <http://www.globalpr.org/knowledge/landscapes.asp>
- International Association of Business Communicators: <http://www.iabc.com/>
- International Public Relations Association: <http://www.ipra.org/>
- Women Executives in Public Relations: <http://www.wepr.org/>
- National Black Public Relations Association: <http://www.nbprs.org/>
- Hispanic Public Relations Association: <http://www.hpra-usa.org/>
- Journal of Public Relations Research: <http://www.lib.utk.edu/cgi-bin/auth/connect.cgi?sfxejournal=1062-726X>
- Public Relations Review: <http://www.lib.utk.edu/cgi-bin/auth/connect.cgi?sfxejournal=0363-8111>
- Public Relations Quarterly: <http://www.lib.utk.edu/cgi-bin/auth/connect.cgi?sfxejournal=0033-3700>
- Public Relations Tactics: <http://www.lib.utk.edu/cgi-bin/auth/connect.cgi?sfxejournal=1080-6792>
- The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations: <http://www.plankcenter.ua.edu/>

CLASS SCHEDULE

(The class schedule and assignments are **subject to change** in order to accommodate guest speakers, reinforce course material, and maintain some flexibility. Additional reading and viewing/listening assignments will be made throughout the semester.)

Jan.11, 13	MW	Introduction to syllabus; Ch 1
Jan.18	M	Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday – No Classes; Do something amazing for someone who’s less fortunate than yourself
Jan.20	W	What’s PR, anyway? RACE Process and general approaches to public relations and problem solving
Jan.25	M	Ch 2 and 3 and Research/Audience Analysis
Jan.27	W	Ch 3 The Case Method Lecture – Ch 4 Ethics lecture and in class exercise
Feb 1	M	Lecture: General Motors vs NBC: A corporate crisis of explosive proportions (Dr. Cole to provide the case)
Feb 3	W	Ch 5 Media Relations Group 1 Armstrong Williams Group 2 – Cash Cow/Overbilling
Feb. 8	M	Ch 6 lecture on Crisis Communication Johnson & Johnson Tylenol Case Study
Feb.10	W	Crisis lecture, continued
Feb.15	M	Crisis Cases: 1) Oprah and Texas Cattle Lawsuit Case (will be provided) and 2) BP Oil Spill
Feb.17	W	Group 3 Hidden Cameras Group 4 Living in a post 9/11 world
Feb. 22	M	Group 5 Guns – For Whom? For What? (will be provided)
Feb. 24	W	Ch 12 International PR Group 6 Don’t Do Evil p. 298
Feb.29	M	Ch 9 Community Relations lecture Ch 8 Sports, Entertainment & Travel

<i>Mar 2</i>	W	Group 7 Is it Live or Is it Recorded, Ashlee? p 201 (compare/contrast to Milli Vanilli scandal Group 8
<i>Mar 7</i>	M	Catch up; Exam Review

Mar.9	W	Exam
Mar 14 - 19	M-F	SPRING BREAK
Mar.21	M	Guest Speaker: TBD You should be in final stages of your Crisis Case Study/Big Project. Prepare to meet with Dr. Cole with your questions for Mar 23 and 28. <i>Lecture on contemporary cases and how to present your Big Project</i>
Mar.23	W	<i>Work with Dr. Cole on final project (one-on-one group meetings)Group 1-5</i>
Mar.28	M	<i>Work with Dr. Cole on final project (one-on-one group meetings)Group 6-10</i>
Mar. 30	W	All teams work outside of class on Big Project
Apr 4	M	<i>Big Project – Due in dropbox by 9:00 am for ALL and bring hard copy to class. Presentations 20 min each</i> Group Final presentations begin Group 1
Apr 6	W	Group 2-3
Apr.11	M	Group 4-5
Apr.13	W	Group 6-7
Apr.18	M	Group 8
Apr 20	W	Catch up day
April 25		Exam Week