

PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGEMENT

COMM 4414

Humanities 312

Hybrid Course (35-50% Online)

Mondays/Wednesdays 12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Instructor: Taylor Bryant (LeQuinta)

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Office phone: 678.839.4153

Office location: Humanities 217

Office hours:

Wednesdays 9 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. & 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Also by appointment and virtual hours

COURSE OVERVIEW:

COMM 4414 provides students insight regarding key concepts, theoretical perspectives, essential skills and abilities, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for effective communication with stakeholders, especially during a crisis situation. Topics will include issues management, risk management, relationship management, crisis planning and preparation, case studies, and developing crisis communication plans.

Required Text:

Effective Crisis Communication: Moving from Crisis to Opportunity by Robert Ulmer, Timothy Sellnow and Matthew Seeger (Sage Publications, 4th Edition, 2019.)

Highly Recommended Text:

Crisis Communications: A Casebook Approach by Kathleen Fearn-Banks (Routledge, 5th Edition, 2017.)

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

You will learn how to view public relations on an analytical and methodical level.

Throughout the semester, you will build on your foundational knowledge of the profession and include strategic understanding of how organizations utilize public relations practitioners to manage their brands' reputation. The course will emphasize the following elements of public relations management:

- Appreciation for and understanding of the key concepts and approaches for effectively communicating during crises in organizations.

- Clear definition and expectations of the role of issues management, risk management, and reputation management in crisis prevention.
- Skills to creatively explore public relations cases.
- Ability to construct a crisis communication plan.
- The application of theories and strategies in a crisis situation.

ATTENDANCE:

Classroom attendance is a necessary part of this course. You are expected to be on time. You should be in your seat and ready to begin class promptly at 12:30 p.m. Please do not use your phone or laptop in class for anything other than work for the class you are attending. Packing your things or leaving early is a distraction to me and others.

Since every student is entitled to full participation in class without interruption, all students are expected to come to class prepared, on time and remain for the full class period. All electronic devices that generate sound and/or pictures must be turned off during class.

CLASS MEETINGS ON HYBRID SCHEDULE:

Class will meet Wednesdays and some Mondays. It is your responsibility to check CourseDen in the announcement section twice a week for potential changes. On days we do not meet face-to-face, you will still be expected to complete assignments and/or quizzes via CourseDen.

Below is a projected calendar of dates we will meet and how.

IMPORTANT: These dates may change. Be sure to check CourseDen.

Week	Dates	Face-to-Face vs. CourseDen
1	W: Jan. 9	Face-to-Face
2	M: Jan. 14 W: Jan. 16	CourseDen Face-to-Face
3	M: Jan. 21 W: Jan. 23	CourseDen Face-to-Face
4	M: Jan. 28 W: Jan. 30	Face-to-Face Face-to-Face
5 A	M: Feb. 4 W: Feb. 6	CourseDen Face-to-Face
6	M: Feb. 11 W: Feb. 13	CourseDen Face-to-Face
7	M: Feb. 18 W: Feb. 20	Face-to-Face Face-to-Face
8	M: Feb. 25 W: Feb. 27	Face-to-Face Face-to-Face
9	M: March 4 W: March 6	Face-to-Face NO CLASS (Media Day)

10	M: March 11 W: March 13	CourseDen Face-to-Face* (could change)
11	M: March 18 W: March 20	NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK) NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)
12	M: March 25 W: March 27	CourseDen Face-to-Face
13	M: April 1 W: April 3	Face-to-Face CourseDen
14	M: April 8 W: April 10	CourseDen Face-to-Face
15	M: April 15 W: April 17	CourseDen Face-to-Face
16	M: April 22 W: April 24	Crisis Comm Plan Presentation (attendance required) Crisis Comm Plan Presentation (attendance required)
17	M: April 29 (FINAL CLASS)	Crisis Comm Plan Presentation (attendance required)

DISCUSSION/PARTICIPATION:

Your discussions and feedback will be critical in class. You will be asked to bring examples of the assigned readings to support the weekly readings of this course. Crisis management often involves sensitive topics, diverse views and a myriad of opinions and beliefs.

Meaningful and constructive dialogue is encouraged in this class and requires a degree of mutual respect, willingness to listen, and tolerance of opposing points of view. Respect for individual differences and alternative viewpoints will be maintained at all times in this class. One's words and use of language should be temperate and within acceptable bounds of civility and decency. Crisis communication often involves sensitive issues of varying beliefs. As a result, respect of others is mandatory.

Note: Class discussions may continue in CourseDen for grading.

QUIZZES:

Quizzes administered throughout the semester will test your knowledge of the assigned readings and top news stories as they relate to public relations management. Quizzes can be found on the Quizzes tab of CourseDen. Quizzes may be given on individual or combined chapters. Students will be notified of quizzes in class and should check CourseDen regularly. **Check CourseDen for deadlines.**

GRADING:

Activity	Weight
Mock Sessions and Participation	20%
Assignments and Quizzes	20%
Social Media Crisis Plan	30%
Crisis Communication Plan	30%
TOTAL	100%

NOTE: All specific due dates and instructions for each of the assignments listed above will be provided in class as the semester progresses.

GRADING SCALE:

A = 100 – 90

B = 89 – 80

C = 79 – 70

D = 69 – 60

F = 59 – 0

NOTE: The professor reserves the right to modify the course assignment schedule and grading criteria to accommodate scheduling, the needs of the students, and/or unforeseen timing conflict.

LATE WORK:

The practice of public relations hinges on meeting deadlines. Missing deadlines not only can damage a public relations professional’s credibility, but also can lead to termination of a relationship with a client or to dismissal. **Thus, no late work will be accepted.** If you need assistance in understanding course content, please make arrangements during office hours immediately. Do not wait until the end of the semester.

MAIL:

I ask that you **do not send emails to my West Georgia email address.** It is important that email threads related to the course are archived in CourseDen. Please allow at least 48 hours for me to respond to your email.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Academic dishonesty is **not** tolerated. It will result in failure on assignment(s) as well as possible disciplinary sanction(s) in accordance with the academic misconduct policy as stated in the latest [Connection and Student Handbook](#). University of West Georgia [Honor Code](#) defines academic dishonesty as cheating, fabrication, plagiarism and facilitating or allowing academic dishonesty in any academic exercise.

- **Cheating:** Attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids.
- **Fabrication :** Falsification or unauthorized invention of any information or citation.
- **Plagiarism:** Representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. Direct quotations must be indicated and ideas of another must be appropriately acknowledged.

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT SERVICES & POLICIES:

For information regarding university academic support services, online courses, Honor Code, email policy and credit hour policy, click [here](#). You are responsible for reading and understanding the policies set forth in the link.

OVERVIEW OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:

Below is an at-a-glance view of some of the assignments we will complete this semester.

- MOCK PRESS CONFERENCES
- APOLOGY STATEMENTS
- CRISIS STATEMENTS
- MEDIA ADVISORIES
- PRESS RELEASES
- CRISIS ANALYSIS
- FIRST 24 HOURS OF A CRISIS TIMELINE
- SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN
- CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN (companies must be approved by professor)

Throughout the semester, we will have multiple presentations, team projects/assignments and peer evaluations based on current events. Please plan to attend all face-to-face sessions. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get with a classmate on what was missed.