

## **COMM 4444: Public Relations Campaigns**

Fall 2018

University of West Georgia, College of Social Sciences, Department of Mass Communications

12:30 p.m. Humanities 130

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

Office Hours: Tuesday/ 10:00 am -12:30 pm and virtual hours Monday Thursday 9:00-10:00 am

Humanities 152 and/or by appointment

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

### **COURSE PREREQUISITES**

COMM 1154: Introduction to Mass Communication and COMM 3313: Public Relations Principles

COMM 4413, 4414 and 4451

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

Developing the Public Relations Campaign: A Team-Based Approach (3rd Edition)

Randy Bobbitt (Author), Ruth Sullivan (Author)

Recommended:

The PR Styleguide: Formats for Public Relations Practice

Barbara Diggs-Brown (Author) ISBN-13: 978-1111348113

The Associated Press Stylebook 2016 or later (Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law)

Associated Press (Author)

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This is an advanced course in public relations for seniors. As the “capstone” class of the public relations sequence, this course works to tie together knowledge and skills learned in previous public relations courses to create a project for a community nonprofit partner. The lecture/discussion part of the course examines the public relations campaign process with an emphasis on moving through the process in a complete and professional manner. The practicum part of the course requires students to work in teams to design and implement a public relations campaign. This class provides you the opportunity to gain a positive client evaluation and a quality product to use in your portfolio.

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Students will build on the principles learned in previous public relations courses and apply that knowledge to real-world situations.
2. Students will be able to gain experience working in a team setting.
3. Students will learn to communicate with clients, executives, and publics in a professional, ethical, and legal manner.
4. Students will gain experience in primary and secondary research, creating strategies and message points, writing communication vehicles, developing timelines, requesting estimates among other skills practiced in developing a public relations campaign.
5. Students will learn first-hand the realities of planning, implementing, and evaluating a public relations campaign.

## **Course Structure**

This course will be taught seminar style, some lecture, guest speakers, some in-class work and some work outside the classroom (client relations, research, etc.). Attendance is critical, as you will spend some class time preparing for your campaign in teams. While this course offers some flexibility, it is an intensely experiential learning experience that requires rigorous writing and re-writing, planning, strategy building, and guided research elements. Participation and focus are essential to your success in this course. Due to the rigor of this capstone course is not offered as an independent study, Honors course, nor is it one that offers an incomplete as a grade.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

**Quizzes/Exams: = 3 @ 50 each = 150 points**

**Letter of Application and Resume for Team position (40 points ea = 80 points)**

You will be asked to apply for a team position and you will submit to dropbox for grading.

**Report/Self Evaluation on Personal Contribution to Team Effort = 2 @ 5 = 10 points**

Each team member will submit a personal report during the semester that outlines your contribution to the Campaign, based on your position. You will document meetings, your contribution to the planning, and any other tangible contribution that demonstrates your individual work to the project.

**Mid-Semester Peer Evaluation points (2) = 10 points**

An evaluation of peers (team members) will be done mid-semester to determine team dynamic synergy, engagement, and overall contribution to the project mid-point. An average of the scores will determine your grade.

**Peer Evaluation-individual/group (25 total)**

Your group members will have an opportunity to evaluate your performance as a team member on this project. The client will also submit their qualitative comments about the project in addition to a numerical score. The combined peer scores and the client score will be equally weighted.

These evaluations will be kept strictly confidential, and will contribute to your individual grade for the Final Project. Finally, when the project is submitted for grading, you must include two items: 1) the critique forms, and, 2) a list of who was responsible for what portion(s) of the project. Without these, I cannot assign individual grades. **If you fail to turn in a peer evaluation, you will receive a zero for the peer evaluation.**

**PROJECT MEMOS (once client has been established) 5 @ 5 pts each = 25 points:**

**Team memos (Mandatory):** Your team will need to meet at least once a week, sometimes more depending on tasks, deadlines, etc. At each meeting, the team should designate a secretary who will note attendance, keep track of decisions made, tasks assigned, deadlines set, and major problems or questions facing the group. In addition to keeping me updated on the progress of your group, you will also need to update your client. Your group will work with the client to establish their preferred communication frequency and channels. One required form of communication with the client is a progress memo. The memo will address your group's specific progress on the campaign, with emphasis on the assigned subject (Research, Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, Completion). These memos allow the client to

know your progress and provide important feedback during the campaign. More information about the specifics of this assignment will be provided in class. The team must work collaboratively to write each memo, but it should only be delivered to the client by the selected liaison via WESTGA email.

I should receive at least one memo from a designated team member from each group on THURSDAY of each week in Dropbox, and you must email it to all group members.

I'll save these – and you should too – for calculating your individual performance and your team's grades. Over the length of the semester, each team should meet with me periodically for regular status reports/updates/discussions. When possible, I will give you class time to meet in your teams. I will serve as advisor and coach for all teams.

### **Final CAMPAIGN Plan = 100 points:**

The final team project will be due and presented in class toward the end of the semester. This is a hard deadline, meaning no extensions or exceptions. You will work as a PR agency in teams. Early in the semester, each team is required to identify a client (for-profit business, non-profit organization or government agency). You will analyze on-going trends in that industry and prepare a detailed communications plan to address a problem or opportunity your client is facing. Each plan will have 12 required elements:

- 1.) **Executive Summary:** A one-page summary of the entire plan designed for members of management who are not directly involved in the public relations decision-making process.
- 2.) **Background:** To include information about the client (obtained via research, including online research, or directly from a representative of the organization). This will include a discussion of how the existing PR operation (if there is one) fits into the organization, size and structure of the department, its duties, etc.
- 3.) **Situation/Competitive Analysis (SWOT):** An overview of the business/cultural/social environment in which your client's problem or opportunity exists; to include internal and external details that form a basis and focus for the plan.
- 4.) **Research (Primary and/or Secondary):** To include a detailed discussion of what you need to know to develop the plan (what you learned that serves as the rationale for everything that follows) and how you obtained the information (primary & secondary research). This section should show at what point or points in the plan the research was carried out, or if additional research will be needed throughout the campaign.
- 5.) **Audiences:** List all the relevant target audiences in the plan.
- 6.) **Business Goal:** The target you hope to reach either as a result of a specific issue or situation, or on an on-going basis, depending on the client's situation.
- 7.) **Communications Objectives:** Specific and measurable targets for each audience that support the goal; must detail how they will be measured. Objectives should follow the SMART model: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely.
- 8.) **Strategy:** To discuss the overall planning/strategic thinking for the development of an effective plan for each audience. They should support the objectives and overall goal(s) of the organization.

In addition, you will include a **Best Social Media Practice & Strategy:**

Reflecting on the active adoption of social media by organizations, each agency team will search best social media practices conducted by organizations in the same or similar industries that their client belongs to. By exploring the implementation of social media and analyzing the strategy embedded in the social media usage, the teams may have opportunities to better understand the nature of social media and

provide better suggestions to their client. Each team will present a brief description of the organization, the social media usage, and provide an extensive analysis during the presentation.

9.) **Tactics:** To include a complete discussion of tactics for each audience, not a generic list of ideas. Representative samples of tactics (ex – news releases, PSAs, flyers, website page, social media initiatives, etc.) are required in an appendix.

10.) **Evaluation:** This section must specifically show how each tactic will be evaluated for every target audience, to measure the success of the plan.

11.) **Budget:** To include both a line item and overall/total budget for the campaign.

12.) **Timeline:** To include a detailed calendar illustrating what happens when during the campaign, including planning steps. It can be either a chronological calendar or a Gantt chart.

### **Client Evaluation – 100 points**

The client will evaluate the campaign and offer their assessment of your grade based on the above criteria for the Campaign and their assessment of your professionalism demonstrated during the semester.

### **Professional Presentation-individual/group**

At the end of the semester, teams will present clients with the campaign plan and conduct a professional presentation that overviews the campaign (research, plan, implementation and evaluation). More information about the specifics of this assignment will be provided in class.

### **GRADE ALLOCATION**

#### *Grading Scale*

A = 400-358 (90-100%)

B = 357-318 (80-89%)

C = 278-317 (70-79%)

D = 277-238 (60-69)

F = below 238 (below 60%)

FINAL GRADES will be entered in CourseDen by the university's deadline.

You earn your grade. Your grade is not a reflection of how much I like you or how good of a person you are. Grades are evaluations of your performance on the assignments in this course.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

Students who need accommodations for learning or who have particular needs are asked to share these concerns or requests with me early in the semester (within the first 2 weeks)

#### Late work

I do not accept late work. If you will miss class, turn in the assignment to me before it is due (uploaded and hard copy). Meeting deadlines is essential to the profession, so any assignment turned in after its deadline will receive a letter grade off for each day it is late (including the day it is late).

Deadlines are not negotiable in this course.

#### Attendance/Participation

Attendance is absolutely necessary to succeed in this course. If you are absent, you are NOT participating. There will be times when you may work outside class on your project. Therefore, I hope you will be able to be in class every meeting time. However, I understand there will be times when it

is necessary for you to miss class. You will be given two excused absences, so use them judiciously. **Three or more absences will result in 10 percent deduction from your final grade.**

#### 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: (1) address each other with respect; (2) contribute to discussions, don't dominate them; (3) stay focused on the topic being discussed, do not engage in side-chatter.

#### Contacting Me

Anytime you need to get in touch with me, please call me at the office 678-839-4937 or send me an email through CourseDen (preferred method). I will try to respond within 24 hours.

#### Common Course Syllabi Language

##### *University Policies and Academic Dishonesty*

The following link contains the common language for ADA, the email policy, the credit hour policy, and the Honor Code. You are responsible for reading and understanding the policies set forth in the link: [https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/assets/docs/faculty-resources/common language for course syllabi v2.pdf](https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/assets/docs/faculty-resources/common%20language%20for%20course%20syllabi%20v2.pdf)

Academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated. It will result in failure on assignment(s) as well as possible disciplinary sanction(s) as stipulated by university policy (see link above).