

Course Outline
Journalism 4230/8236
Principles of Public Relations
Fall 2007
1:00-2:15p.m. MW
ASH 392

Required text : Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics, Wilcox, Cameron, Ault, & Agee, 8th ed.

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Office Hours: 10:00-11:30, 2:30-3:30 MW
1:00-2:00 T
Additional hours by appointment

Overview

This course will focus primarily on techniques to garner and to sustain public understanding, acceptance and support for an organization. This course will explain the merits of these techniques through theory and application, and will offer constant reminders of the relationship between theory and practice. Understanding theory can result in more efficient and effective use of techniques.

The foundation of any successful public relations, however, is critical thinking and clear and concise writing. Those skills will be another important focus of this class and will be exercised through group projects focusing on campus and community organizations and issues. These projects will demand precise planning, use of techniques/strategies discussed in class, clear and concise writing, and coordination of efforts among students. Planning and writing have been and will remain the backbone of effective communications. While the technology for dissemination and distribution of communications will continue to change (and rapidly), the process of compiling and organizing content, i.e. the need for good writing, will not.

Conducting the course

Readings from the text and supplements will serve as the core for lecture and discussion. Discussion is a keyword, since all students are expected to participate (which means, at the very least, regular attendance). Occasionally, classes will feature guest speakers who will illuminate various issues discussed in class. Therefore, class attendance and participation will be reflected in the student's overall grade. To paraphrase Woody Allen, 80 percent of success is being there.

Assignments, exams and grading

Students will be expected to complete the following assignments and fulfill certain responsibilities. Those assignments and their percentages of the final course grade are:

News release #1 (information will be supplied in class for this two-page release; 10 percent)

News release #2 (information to be supplied; 15 percent)

Two-fold brochure or PSA/Ad Series (select a product or an organization other than the one with which your group is working and develop a brochure or a series of three radio ads or PSAs promoting that product or some aspect of the organization; 15 percent)

Public Relations Group Project/Campaign (students to work in groups of four to six to develop a promotional plan or public awareness campaign for campus or community organization. See description below; 30 percent)

Note: Graduate students' participation in the group project accounts for 15 percent of their overall grades. To account for the other 15 percent graduate students must complete a seven to ten-page research paper, focusing on a public relations issue, trend or concept, and using and citing at least six sources from PR or journalism trade or research journals. The student must follow APA style in citations and bibliography.

Exam #1 (to be given midway through the semester and to cover all readings and lecture material up to that point; 10 percent)

Exam #2 (to cover all readings and lecture material since Exam #1; 10 percent)

Attendance (students are allowed two "unexcused" absences; each additional absence results in a deduction of one letter from the grade for attendance; 10 percent)

Other course policies

All assignments must be turned in at or before class time of the due date. Assignments must be typed and double-spaced. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** Plagiarism or misrepresentation of information will not be tolerated and will result (at the least) in an "F" on that particular assignment.

Special Needs

Accommodations are provided for students with verified disabilities. For more information contact Services for Students with disabilities in EAB 117 or 554-2872, TTY 554-3799.

Tentative Topics and Reading Schedule:

Week 1 and 2 – Communication theory and public relations (Chapts. 1, 7 & 9)

Week 3 – Public relations planning (Chapts. 5, 6 & 8)

Week 4-- Media relations and news releases (Chapts. 14, 15 & 16)

Week 5 – Media relations (cont.)

Week 6 – Publications-internal and external (Chapt. 14)

Week 7 – E-pubs and the Internet (Chapt. 13)

Week 8 – Events and event planning (Chapt. 22)

Week 9 – Crisis management (Chapt. 10)

Week 10 – PR in government (Chapt. 18)

Week 11 – PR in business and industry (Chapts. 17)

Week 12 – PR for nonprofit organizations (Chapt. 20)

Week 14 – Ethical and legal issues in PR (Chapts. 3 & 12)

Week 15 – Student presentations and course wrap-up

Group Project/Campaign Assignment

For this project, students will work in groups of three to five in putting together a complete strategic plan package for a local nonprofit organization. This project will account for 30 percent of the student's overall course grade. The backgrounder and strategic plan will account for 15 percent of the student's overall grade and the complete development of one of the tactics from the plan will account for the other 15 percent.

Part I: Backgrounder for Case Study/Campaign(15 percent; to be authored by all members of the group)

I. History of the Organization—When did the organization form and for what purpose? Is the organization non-profit, for-profit, a franchise or franchising operation, publicly held, etc.? How is the organization governed—a board of directors, a central figurehead (CEO or president), another form of governance? What is the general structure of the organization (a central office and branch offices, one central office, and based where, etc.)? How has the organization changed in its mission, services, products, image and target constituents/consumers/users since the organization's founding? Who are its target and key constituents currently? How does the organization communicate currently with those constituents (newsletters, direct mail, e-mail and/or other online communication, specific press or media, meetings, conventions, etc.)? Who are the organization's chief competitors or threats (if any)? What is the organization's "self-image (i.e., how does the organization think it is perceived by its key constituents)? How do the constituents perceive the organization (i.e., it will be necessary to talk to representatives of the constituents; holding a focus group, doing a survey or some other form of research should be included in the group activities)? What are the future goals or aspirations of the organization?

II. The Communication Need/Problem—What’s the history of the problem? How did it arise or evolve? Who is(are) the constituent(s) involved, and in what way? Has there been any attempts to resolve the problem or fulfill the need (and what attempts made)? What will resolution of the problem or fulfillment of the need accomplish?

Remember, the purpose of the narrative on the organization’s history is to put the communication problem in perspective. The history should provide information that provides a framework and a reference for the problem.

Strategic Plan

Possible Goals, Objectives and Strategies for Small College PR Office in Reaching More Prospective Students:

Goal: Increase personal contacts with prospective students.

Objective: Increase number of students visiting campus by 30 percent.

Tactic: Mail overview brochure, containing request for application form, to all high school juniors and seniors in five-county area.

Audience: high school juniors and seniors

Resources: writer, designer, Quark Express for layout and design, printer

Timetable: brochure printed by Nov. 14; mailed Nov. 21.

Costs: Development and Printing: \$\$

Staff Time: \$\$

Postage: \$\$

Evaluation: Number of application requests returned.

Tactic: Hold an open house in February to attract 1,000 students to campus.

Audience: High school juniors and seniors and their parents

Resources: Arrange for exhibits, food catering, security, various forms of printed announcements, postage....

Timetable: Begin holding planning session with dept. heads on Nov. 1;

Mail invitations Jan. 1; Hold event Feb. 15.

Costs: \$\$

\$\$

Evaluation: Number attending open house.

Tactic: Increase visits to high school career fairs by 50 percent.

Audience: high school students and parents

Resources: design and production of nine-by-four foot three panel display; overview brochures

Timetable:

Costs: \$\$

\$\$

Evaluation: Number of career fairs visited.

Objective: *Increase contact with 40 percent more high schools in region*

Tactic: *Send information packet to all high school counselors in seven-county area.*

Audience: high school counselors

Resources: writer, designer, printer for 500 packets, containing three-fold brochure, latest copy of quarterly magazine, news release on college alumnus or current student from the high school, and a cover letter from the college president.

Timetable: Brochure to be developed and printed by Sept. 30; Packet put together by Oct. 7; Packet to be mailed Oct. 9.

Costs: Development and printing of brochure: \$\$

Folders: \$\$

Staff Time: \$\$

Postage: \$\$

Estimated Total: \$\$

Evaluation: Number of contacts by high school counselors.

Tactic: *Schedule meetings between each high school principal in seven counties and college president to inform them of (among other things) college prep programs*

Audience: high school principals

Resources: Assistant to develop schedule, phone

Timetable:

Costs:

Evaluation: Number of meetings and feedback from principals

Goal: Increase presence in student-oriented media

Objective: *Increase radio public service and ad time by 30 percent*

Tactic: *Place a saturation ad schedule on the following stations: KJAM, KWAK-FM, GLAM-104, WURM and KARP.*

Audience: Junior high and high school students

Resources: Writer, producer, voice talent, studio production facilities

Timetable:

Costs:

Evaluation:

Tactic: *Produce and place :30 PSAs on financial aid on all radio stations in seven-county region.*

Audience: High school juniors and seniors

Resources:

Timetable:

Costs:
Evaluation:

Objective: Increase ad space in high school newspapers by 70 percent

Tactic: Offer financial advice column (tailored after radio PSAs) to all high school newspapers in seven-county region.

Audience:
Resources:
Timetable:
Costs:
Evaluation:

Tactic: Place half-page ads quarterly in high school newspapers in seven counties.

Audience:
Resources
Timetable:
Costs:
Evaluation:

Part II—Development of one tactic from plan (15 percent; individual student to complete)

After the backgrounder and strategic plan have been drafted by the student group, each member of that group is to develop one strategy from the plan (i.e., if there are five students in the group, five strategies will be developed). Those strategies are to be turned in as a “stand-alone” assignment, but with the backgrounder and plan.

Additional Information....

Students must meet at least twice with the organizational representative. All students should be at those meetings and must work together as a team in developing and writing the backgrounder and strategic plan. Students will be given attendance sheets for meetings. Those sheets, containing the signatures of all students (and the organization’s representative) attending each meeting, should be given to the instructor. If a student does not participate in the group nor attend meetings, that student will not get credit for co-authoring the backgrounder and plan and will thus receive an “F” for that portion of the project.

Each group should turn in a first draft of the organizational history/communication need backgrounder and strategic plan to the instructor by the first week in November. This should allow the instructor to identify grammatical errors, structural problems, areas that need clarifying, etc. This process will in turn allow the group to improve the backgrounder and plan and thus the grade for that part of the project. Keep in mind that demands on the group will differ with each project. Deadlines for some projects, for example, may be earlier or later than deadlines for others.

Students will present their plans through short power-point presentations during the time allotted for the final exam during finals week. Failure to assist with that presentation or absence during the presentation will result in a deduction of two letter grades from that student's individual grade on the group portion of the project.