

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 383 L02
Introduction to Public Relations

Fall 2017

Monday, September 11 - Wednesday, December 6
(No classes October 9 & November 13)

Lecture: MW 14:00 – 15:15

Instructor: Dr. Monique Solomon
Office: SS254
E-Mail: solomonm@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Mondays 11:30 am — 12:30 pm or by appointment

Course Description

This course introduces students to principles, theories and practices of public relations within a Canadian context. The course covers the development of public relations as a profession field, and its role in corporate, government, and not-for-profit organizations. Students will consider the influence of the internet and social media on public relations practices and future directions in the field. Topics include research and planning in public relations, writing for PR, media relations, special events management, issues management, and PR specializations.

Additional Information

Students will be introduced to public relations through lectures, readings, discussion, and in-class activities. Students will apply PR strategies, tools and tactics in development of a communications plan and a sample media kit creating materials relevant to professionals in the field. The course emphasizes learning through participation. Regular attendance is strongly encouraged.

Objectives of the Course

- To provide an introduction to the foundational principles and practices of public relations within a Canadian context.
- To engage students to think critically about public relations practices and the influence of PR in various industries and social sectors.
- To guide students in developing best practices and ethical approaches to public relations through discussion of case studies in class, group, and individual work.

Textbooks and Readings

Cardin, M. and McMullan, K. (2014) *Canadian PR for the Real World (1st ed.)*, Pearson Canada Inc., Toronto, ON.

The textbook is available at the University Bookstore, Bound and Copied, and online at CourseSmart.com. It is also on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library Reserve Desk. Additional readings may be assigned in class.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops may be used during class for course related work only. Electronic devices such as cell phones and gaming devices must be turned off during class time. Laptops and all electronic devices must be off during student presentations. No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

Email

Include COMS 383 in the subject line of all email sent to your professor. Include your name in the email as it appears in your university registration. Student emails will be answered by the end of the next business day. All communication with your instructor and your fellow students should be written in a courteous, professional manner.

Email is best used for short specific inquiries. If you have detailed questions about the course material or assignments, please speak with your instructor during office hours.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignments for COMS 383 Fall 2017	Weight	Due
Writing Reflection Students write a 400- to 500-word reflection about public relations. Topic will be provided in class.	5%	September 20
In-class Tests 1 & 2 The class tests evaluate student knowledge of course concepts from the weekly readings and lectures. Test format may include multiple-choice, true-false, and short answer questions.	15% 15%	October 11 November 15
Communications Plan In groups, students prepare a communications plan for a case study organization. The plan is comprised of a Proposal and Work Plan due on October 25 and a Communications Plan due on December 6. Details provided in class and posted on D2L.	10% 25%	October 25 Proposal & Work Plan December 6 Communications Plan

<p>Media Kit Students will draft select public relations documents that make up a media kit. Class time will be provided for drafting documents. A final version of the documents will be handed in as a media kit. Details provided in class and posted on D2L.</p>	20%	November 22
<p>Expert Panel Students will present as part of one expert panel during the term, on an assigned topic. Details provided in class and posted on D2L.</p>	5%	Scheduled throughout term.
<p>Class Participation Students are encouraged to take part in class discussions, individual and group activities, and impromptu speaking and writing exercises to gain checkpoints indicating participation in class.</p>	5%	Ongoing throughout term.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments

Assignments are due in class, in hard copy, on the due date unless you are otherwise instructed. Some assignments may be due via uploads to D2L please follow assignment instructions carefully.

As directed please hand in your assignments directly to your instructor. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of

accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments, exams, and other work in the course are graded using a combination of weighted raw scores for each individual assignment. This is converted into a percentage and letter grade for the assignment. All assignments are then weighted based on the percentage value for the course and the scale below is used to calculate the final grade.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations* *
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%

2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Week	Date	Schedule of Weekly Topics, Readings and Assignments
Week 1	September 11 September 13	Public Relations in Canada (Chapter 1) Influencing Public Opinion: The Foundation of PR Then and Now (Chapter 2)
Week 2	September 18 September 20	Corporate Social Responsibility, Cause, Environmental PR (Chapter 3) Due: Writing Reflection
Week 3	September 25 September 27	The PR Plan (Chapter 4)
Week 4	October 2 October 4	Writing for PR (Chapter 5)
Week 5	October 9 October 11	<i>Thanksgiving (no class)</i> In-class Test 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and lecture material)
Week 6	October 16 October 18	Media Relations (Chapter 6)
Week 7	October 23 October 25	Media Training (Chapter 8) Due: GROUP Proposal and Work Plan
Week 8	October 30 November 1	Social Media and PR (Chapter 7)
Week 9	November 6 November 8	Special Events Management (Chapter 10)
Week 10	November 13 November 15	<i>Reading Break (no class)</i> In-class Test 2 (Chapters 6, 7, 8, 10 and lecture material)
Week 11	November 20 November 22	Issues Management and Crisis Communication (Chapter 11) Due: Media Kit
Week 12	November 27 November 29	Working in PR - PR Specialisations (Chapter 12)
Week 13	December 4 December 6	Working in PR - Internal Communications (Chapter 9) Due: GROUP Communications Plan