

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

COMS 383 (L01): Introduction to Public Relations

SPRING 2020: May 6 to June 17 (excluding May 18th)

ONLINE Course

This course will not be holding regularly scheduled meetings. The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found on the course Desire2Learn (D2L).

Instructor:	Dr. Mohammed Al-Emad
Email:	mohammed.alemad@ucalgary.ca
Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours	By appointment (email or Zoom)

Course Description

This course introduces students to the principles and practices of public relations (PR). The course covers theory, history and developments in PR, and the role of PR in corporate, government, and not-for-profit organizations. Topics include strategic communications planning, research, analysis, and evaluation, writing in public relations, media relations, internet and social media, crisis and issues management, and PR specializations.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found on the course Desire2Learn (D2L). Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline. Students are encouraged to check D2L and their '@ucalgary.ca' email regularly.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this courses, students should be able to:

- understand the foundational principles and practices of public relations.
- think critically about relationships between organizations, stakeholders, and publics.
- discuss the value and significance of PR cases in group, and individual work.
- apply best practices and ethical approaches in preparation of foundational public relations and communications materials.

Textbooks and Readings

Kelleher, T. and Males, A. M. (2020) Public Relations: Canadian Edition (2nd ed.), Oxford University Press Canada, Toronto, ON.

Students may use either the print or online version of the textbook.

Additional readings may be posted on D2L throughout the term.

Electronic Required Resources

Students are recommended to ensure that they have access to the following software and tools before the start of the course:

- PDF Reader: Students will need to be open pdfs as well as create pdf files of their assignments throughout the course.
- Current Web Browser: To avoid technical issues with D2L and Adobe Connect, students are strongly suggested to ensure that their devices are compatible with D2L. To check system compatibility within D2L, navigate to the 'my tools' tab and then system check.
- Word Processor: Use of Microsoft Office is recommended. Assignments will require professional formatting, such as tables and headers. MS Office is available to U of C students through Office 365.
- Email Management: Students should ensure that they have access and regularly check their '@ucalgary.ca' email address. Students should ensure that course messages are not filtered in spam, clutter or junk folders.

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. 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 professor during office hours.

Email will be answered weekdays during regular working hours, and usually on a first-come, first-served basis. You can generally expect an answer within 24 hours, but email will not normally be answered in the evening or on weekends. Emails sent in the evening or on weekends will not be replied to until the next business day.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Assignment and test details will be posted on D2L	Due
10%	At the end of each online lecture (narrated PPT), you will be asked to answer a discussion question. Participation will be evaluated based on how informed and thoughtful your answers to those questions. Your answer should not be more than a paragraph, and it should demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the readings. To be submitted on D2L before the next lecture.	Throughout term
10%	Online Open-book Test 1	May 21
10%	Online Open-book Test 2	June 4
10%	Online Open-book Test 3 Students will be tested on their knowledge of course concepts from the weekly readings, case studies, and online discussions. Tests will be posted on D2L in the Quizzes section. Tests will be available on those dates for 24 hours. Duration of the test: 60-minutes. Once closed, the quizzes will not reopen. Test format is multiple choice, true-false, and matching questions. Test material is not cumulative.	June 16
25%	Media Kit Students prepare 5 one-page documents that together comprise a Media Kit. Details for each document will be posted on D2L. The completed Media Kit is due on D2L on	June 3

	June 3.	
30%	Communications Plan Student groups prepare a Communications Plan (2800-3000 words) for a case study organization.	June 17
5%	Groups prepare a PowerPoint presentation (10-12 slides) explaining key points of their Communications Plan. Submit slides and notes. Details will be posted on D2L.	

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: 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

Please include your ID number on all assignments. All assignments should be submitted following the assignment instructions, either through D2L posting or through the D2L dropbox. PDF format is strongly recommended. **Note:** It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that you submit the proper version (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission).

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act**. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

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) or for another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, please see the following:

- Section N.1 of the University Calendar: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/n-1.html>
- FAQs for Students at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Note that 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 that of another assignment or test.

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Assignments, exams, and other work in the course are graded using a combination of letter grades and weighted raw scores. Letter grades will be used for written assignments. Raw scores will be used to calculate scores on exams, and this is converted into a percentage and letter grade per the department chart below. 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 performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: 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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

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.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

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, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found on the course D2L.