

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 383 L01
Introduction to Public Relations

Winter, 2017

Wednesday January 11, 2017 – Wednesday April 12, 2017
(Excluding Wednesday, February 22, 2017)

Lectures, Wednesdays, 2:00 – 4:45 PM

Instructor: AnneMarie Dorland
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Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, Room SS 250

Course Description

In this course, we will explore the principles, theories and practices of Public Relations within a Canadian context. What does it mean to be a PR practitioner in today's corporate, not for profit or government environments? This course is intended to introduce students to the current challenges and opportunities present in the field of public relations. Topics will include planning and executing a public relations program, media relations, strategic messaging, ethics, issues management, crisis communications, writing for public relations and new issues in social media practices.

Additional Information

Through readings, lectures, practical assignments, group discussions and activities, COMS 383 will introduce students to the rapidly evolving field of Public Relations. In addition, this course will focus on actively applying PR strategies, tools and tactics to the development of a sample portfolio of work relevant to professionals in the field today.

Objectives of the Course

- To provide an introduction to the foundational principles and practices of public relations in Canada.
- To encourage students to think critically about the challenges and features of public relations practice in various organizational and social sectors.
- To guide students in developing their own best practices of Public Relations through focused analyses of contemporary case studies, active engagement with group work and class participation.

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 and Bound and Copied. It will also be placed on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library Reserve Desk. Additional readings may be assigned in class, and will be posted to D2L.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are permitted during lectures for note taking and course related work only. iPods, cellphones and gaming devices may not be used at all during class. Improper use of electronic devices will impact your participation grade. No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

Please be advised that the I will answer all student email by the end of the next business day. As email is most useful for short and specific inquiries, detailed questions regarding course material and assignments should be addressed during office hours. To ensure clear and prompt communication, please include your name and COMS 383 in your email correspondence.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
10%	In-class test The test will evaluate student knowledge of course concepts covering chapters from the readings, lecture and tutorial materials. The test will be multiple-choice, and will cover material from January 11 – February 8, 2017 (inclusive).	Feb.8, 2017
20%	Media Kit Throughout the term students will practice drafting the various public relations documents that make up a media kit. Time will be provided in class for drafting initial versions of media kit components, and the instructor will provide feedback throughout the term on individual progress. The final revised and polished version of these documents will be handed in as a media kit. Further details will be posted on D2L and discussed in class.	March 1, 2017
35%	Communications Strategy Plan Working in teams, students will prepare a Communications Strategy Plan based on a selected case study. For this assignment, students will develop a situational analysis, an audience analysis and a social media, special event, community engagement or traditional media plan. These elements will form the basis of a proposed Communications Strategy Plan presented in response to the case study selected. Further details will be posted on D2L and discussed in class.	April 5, 2017 (in class presentations) April 12, 2017 (Communications Strategy Plan Document)
10%	In-class test The test will evaluate student knowledge of course concepts covering chapters from the readings, lecture and tutorial materials. The test will be multiple-choice, and will cover material from classes held from February 15 – April 5, 2017 (inclusive).	April 12, 2017
10%	Reflective Writing Assignment Students will select one reading from the assigned schedule	Ongoing

	of topics and will write a 500 word reflective statement analyzing the reading and connecting it to key issues in the field of Public Relations today. This assignment may be completed at any point in the term (before April 12, 2017). Further details will be posted on D2L and discussed in class.	
5%	Expert Panel Students will present as part of one expert panel during the term, on an assigned topic. Further details will be posted on D2L and discussed in class.	Ongoing
10%	Class Participation Students are required to actively participate in class discussions, in-class assignments, and group projects.	Ongoing

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: Media Kit assignments and Communications Strategy Plan assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class or on the due date specified unless you are otherwise instructed. Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. 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/secretariat/privacy>

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.

All other assignments can be handed in via D2L. Instructions will be provided in class.

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 in COMS 383 are reported as letter grades. However, in this course, letter grades will be used for written assignments, while percentage grades will be used for in class tests and class participation.

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	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%

	the same subject			
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	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	<p>403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</p> <p>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/</p>
<p>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	<p>http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</p> <p>403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca</p>
<p>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	<p>http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</p>
<p>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	<p>https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</p>
<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</p> <p>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.</p>

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Part 1: The Role of Public Relations	
January 11, 2017	Public relations in Canada – Influencing public opinion then and now <i>Required reading: Chapter 1, pages 1 - 31</i>
January 18, 2017	The field of Public Relations <i>Required reading: Chapter 2, pages 36 – 65, Chapter 3, pages 73 - 92</i>
January 25, 2017	Ethics in Public Relations <i>Required readings: to be posted to D2L</i>

Part 2: Public Relations Tactics	
February 1, 2017	Planning a public relations program <i>Required reading: Chapter 4, pages 97 – 124</i>
February 8, 2017	Writing for Public Relations. <i>Required reading: Chapter 5, pages 128 – 157</i> In-class test (10%)
February 15, 2017	Media relations and media training <i>Required reading: Chapter 6, pages 161 – 195 and Chapter 8, pages 232 – 263</i>
March 1, 2017	Social Media strategies and techniques. <i>Required reading: Chapter 7, pages 201-228</i> Media Kit Assignment (20%)
Part 3: Public Relations Strategy	
March 1, 2017	Selecting communications strategy and tactics in Public Relations <i>Required reading: to be posted to D2L</i>
March 15, 2017	Audience targets and influence groups: investor relations, consumer relations, corporate social responsibility, cause and environment PR <i>Required readings: Chapter 12, pages 358 - 385</i>
Part 4: Application to the Field	
March 22, 2017	Public Relations, Internal communications and Marketing. <i>Required reading: Chapter 9, pages 267 - 288</i>
March 29, 2017	Special events management <i>Required reading: Chapter 10, pages 294 – 327</i>
April 5, 2017	Issues management and crisis communications <i>Required reading: Chapter 11, pages 332-353</i> In-class test (10%)
April 12, 2017	Communications Strategy Plan Team Presentations.
April 19, 2017	Communications Strategy Plan Assignment (35%).