

COMX 351: Principles of Public Relations

Fall 2018

Contact Information

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Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to help student develop the knowledge base and analytical skills necessary to evaluate public relations programs and campaigns. The course will provide students with public relations' role in organizations and society through its historical foundation as a discipline and contemporary role today. Students will develop an understanding of the theories, principles, issues, and trends in public relations, including global and ethical issues. Students will examine real world public relations successes, failures, and mishaps to help them develop a framework for designing campaigns and advising on public relations matters.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate an understanding of concepts and problem-solving techniques in public relations.
2. Analyze how public relations affects different aspects of modern society.
3. Engage in critical thinking to solve public relations issues.
4. Demonstrate effective problem-solving skills.
5. Develop skills from professionals to apply to challenges that affect public relations locally and globally.
6. Apply key processes in public relations such as research, planning, strategy, and evaluation.
7. Differentiate between ethical and unethical practices.
8. Create a framework to resolve ethical issues in practice.
9. Create messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context.
10. Influence public discourse.

Required Course Materials

You are REQUIRED to purchase the REVEL electronic version of the text, *Public Relations, a Values-Driven Approach*, by Guth and Marsh (2016). This digital product contains important assignments and resources used throughout the semester. Here's how to register:

1. Purchase a REVEL access code from the campus bookstore or online. You will see this as an option after clicking on the course invite link (below).
2. Go to <https://console.pearson.com/enrollment/d6bvue>.
3. Sign in with your existing Pearson username and password OR create a new Pearson account if this is your first Pearson digital product. **PLEASE REGISTER WITH YOUR OFFICIAL UM EMAIL ADDRESS!**
4. Choose your course under "My Courses," and choose an access option. This is where you will redeem your REVEL access code if you purchased it from the bookstore, or where you can purchase access online. There is also a free trial if you are waiting for financial aid.

Hints

- Bookmark <https://console.pearson.com> to easily access your materials.
- Pearson recommends using the latest version of Chrome, Firefox, or Safari with this digital product.
- Highlighting important sections in the chapter will allow you to easily refer to them later in the semester.
- You may want to try listening to the audio while you read.

Format

The course objectives are met entirely online. Taking an online course may be new for you; it may take a while to get used to the format beyond the time you might usually spend on a class.

I am committed to the endeavor of teaching, whether online or in a classroom. I believe I can meet my goals for teaching this course and you can meet your goals in taking this course, even though this will not occur in a traditional classroom setting. The more contact students make (both with their peers and with their instructor), the more successful they are in the course. Thus, my goal is to encourage you to interact and engage as fully as possible.

I should note that I live in Boise, Idaho, not Missoula, so we are unable to meet in person. I also work full-time as a copywriter so I'm unavailable between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. While we won't meet face-to-face, your questions, comments and feedback are never viewed as a distraction. I check my email at 8:30 p.m. (MT) Monday-Friday, so if you have a pressing question, email me by 8:30 p.m. for same-day service. Please don't feel uncomfortable calling me, either. I wouldn't include my personal number if I didn't want students to call when they had questions. You can also make an appointment to Skype with me if you prefer to see a face at the other end of the line.

Policies

Deadlines

Though many of the constraints of time and location have been removed, deadlines are still inevitable and are designed to help you stay caught up. All assignments must be submitted by 11:55 p.m. (MT) on the deadline. Late work is not accepted. Communicate with me immediately if you foresee any difficulties in meeting a deadline. You'll find I can be flexible and understanding if you inform me of difficulties meeting deadlines before assignments are due; difficulties meeting deadlines after assignments are due are excuses, and I don't accept those.

Academic Integrity

All students taking this course must adhere to the University of Montana's academic dishonesty policy as presented in the [Student Conduct Code \(SCC\)](#). You are responsible for reading and understanding this code. If you have any questions, please contact me or the department chair.

Original Work

I expect all the work you do in this class to be completely original. No work that has been done by classmates (current or previous) may be used by you, in whole or in part, for your work in this class. Nothing you have written previously (for any other course, in this course if you have taken it previously or anything you have written for other jobs or organizations) may be submitted to fulfill the assignments in this class. Finally, absolutely no plagiarism will be tolerated. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive a zero on the first offence. If you are caught again, you will fail the class and steps will be taken to initiate university sanctions as provided for in the SCC.

Types of Plagiarism

The advent of the internet has made plagiarizing simpler. However, keep in mind that if you can find something online, I can, too. Generally, plagiarism occurs in three forms:

- Incremental: Failing to properly attribute source material (e.g., using incorrect style to cite your source, omitting information such as the date of publication or page number or failing to include a source both in the body of the work and on your References page)
- Patchwork: Copying and pasting material from one or more sources with very little modification (e.g., visiting three web sites and cutting and pasting snippets from each)
- Global: Taking the full text of another source and passing it off as your own work

Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states, "If you have a disability which may impact your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs so accommodations can be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please contact me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations."

Consideration

Help foster an atmosphere where a priority for education and a respect for all students is valued by engaging in comments that relate to course content and show tolerance for opinions different from your own. Please understand that whether it is a face-to-face or online, harassment of any kind is inappropriate and intolerable, and disciplinary action will be taken should it occur.

Assignments

All assignments must follow APA formatting (typed, double-spaced on standard-sized paper [8.5" x 11"] with 1" margins on all sides, and use 12 pt. Times New Roman font). Failure to follow this guideline will result in a 10 percent grade reduction.

Chapter Quizzes (16 @ 15 points each)

To encourage you to complete the assigned readings, you will have a 15-question quiz on each chapter in REVEL.

Properly Citing Sources (50 points)

It is expected that you will consult outside sources to complete your written assignments. Regardless of whether you cite them directly or paraphrase them, you need to cite your sources using APA format, both in the body of your assignment and on your references page. This assignment is designed to polish your APA citation skills and help you avoid plagiarism.

Article Reviews (3 @ 100 points each)

It's important to become familiar with trends and industry publications. You will find an article using a scholarly database, summarize the article, identify its implications for the practice of PR and critique the article.

Case Studies (2 @ 100 points each)

You will select a public relations occurrence from the last three years and conduct a critical analysis of it using our readings and discussions as a guide. Further research must be conducted, as specific dates and events will be necessary to construct a thorough case analysis.

Shared Writing (32 @ 10 points each)

Shared writing prompts are embedded in your REVEL text, and are designed to help you demonstrate your critical thinking skills, retain material you just read, and interact with your classmates. You'll have two shared writing prompts per chapter.

Get Out of Jail Free

I give each student an opportunity to miss one deadline with no penalty each semester. If you miss a deadline, I'll still accept your work but you'll forfeit the extra credit points; if you never use your Get Out of Jail Free card, it's worth 10 extra credit points at the semester's end. The caveat is you must submit your assignment within one week of the deadline.

Redo Assignment

I offer you the opportunity to redo any assignment of your choosing the second to last week of class. It can be an assignment you did poorly on, did not turn in or even one you want to improve for personal edification. There is one exception: if you are caught plagiarizing and subsequently earn an F on an assignment, you may not redo it.

Grading

There are 1,110 points possible for this course, and you will be graded with traditional letter grades. I do not curve grades, round up or add in extra points you have not earned.

100%-97%=A+	82.9%-80%=B-	66.9%-63%=D
96.9%-93%=A	79.9%-77%=C+	62.9%-60%=D-
92.9%-90%=A-	76.9%-73%=C	<60%=F
89.9%-87%=B+	72.9%-70%=C-	
86.9%-83%=B	69.9%-67%=D+	

All your grades will be posted within two weeks of the deadline. I am always willing to review your written assignments before they are due. If you would like me to look over your written assignment, please email it to me at least 48 hours before the deadline.

Contesting Grades

I am willing to review any assignment with you to discuss your concerns. This is more difficult online than in person, so we'll have to work with what we've got. Please wait 24 hours after receiving an assignment before you contact me. When you do, please write down your specific concerns and your backing for these concerns and I will research your situation. We'll take it from there should further discussion need to occur.

Submitting Work

All written assignments should be saved as Word documents to avoid problems with opening files. If I can't open your files, I can't grade them, and if I can't grade them, you'll earn a zero. If you don't have access to Microsoft Word, use a computer on campus to complete your assignments or visit the bookstore to take advantage of deeply discounted student pricing on software. Don't email me your written assignments; if you email me an assignment, you will receive a zero. Moodle is the ONLY place I will accept written assignments.

Class Schedule

Week	Reading	Assignment	Deadline
1	Chapter 1 – What is Public Relations? Chapter 2 – Jobs in Public Relations	Chapter 1 Shared Writings* (3) Chapter 1 Quiz* Chapter 2 Shared Writings* (3) Chapter 2 Quiz*	08/31
2	NONE	Properly Citing Sources†	09/07
3	Chapter 3 – A Brief History of Public Relations Chapter 4 – The Publics in Public Relations	Chapter 3 Shared Writings* (4) Chapter 3 Quiz* Chapter 4 Shared Writings* (2) Chapter 4 Quiz*	09/14
4	NONE	Article Review #1†	09/21
5	Chapter 5 – Communication Theory and Public Opinion Chapter 6 – Ethics and Social Responsibility in Public Relations	Chapter 5 Shared Writings* (3) Chapter 5 Quiz* Chapter 6 Shared Writings* (3) Chapter 6 Quiz*	09/28
6	NONE	Case Study #1†	10/05
7	Chapter 7 – Research and Evaluation Chapter 8 – Planning: The Strategies of Public Relations	Chapter 7 Shared Writings* (4) Chapter 7 Quiz* Chapter 8 Shared Writings* (3) Chapter 8 Quiz*	10/12
8	NONE	Article Review #2†	10/19
9	Chapter 9 – Communication: The Tactics of Public Relations Chapter 10 – Multimedia Message Development	Chapter 9 Shared Writings* (2) Chapter 9 Quiz* Chapter 10 Shared Writings* (4) Chapter 10 Quiz*	10/26
10	NONE	Case Study #2†	11/02
11	Chapter 11 – Cyber-Relations in the Digital Age Chapter 12 – Crisis Communications	Chapter 11 Shared Writings* (4) Chapter 11 Quiz* Chapter 12 Shared Writings* (3) Chapter 12 Quiz*	11/09
12	NONE	Article Review #3†	11/16
THANSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS			
13	Chapter 13 – Public Relations and Marketing Chapter 14 – Cross-Cultural Communication	Chapter 13 Shared Writings* (3) Chapter 13 Quiz* Chapter 14 Shared Writings* (3) Chapter 14 Quiz*	11/23
14	NONE	Redo Assignment (OPTIONAL)†	11/30
15	Chapter 15 – Public Relations and the Law Chapter 16 – Your Future in Public Relations	Chapter 15 Shared Writings* (4) Chapter 15 Quiz* Chapter 16 Shared Writings* (1) Chapter 16 Quiz*	12/07

* = REVEL assignments

† = Moodle assignments