

Public and Community Relations

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Course Description

This course will discuss the purpose and role of public relations as a tool for promoting an activity, an event, a company, product, or person. If you have taken "Integrated Marketing Communication" you will know that public and community relations can be a sub-set of an overall marketing strategy. Public/Community Relations focuses on this specific subset of tools and techniques.

Students will learn about the various contexts and cases where public and community relations activities can be used to increase the public's awareness of the values and worth of a particular product, person, or activity that one is trying to promote. This course will use case studies from the for-profit and nonprofit worlds to illustrate how targeted public and community relations can enhance one's image and visibility, especially in the fundraising and marketing worlds.

You will learn: 1) the overall purpose of public and community relations, 2) its use as a strategic marketing/promotional tool, and 3) you will gain the perspective and skills they need to develop a public relations plan that can be implemented. You will also learn the importance of knowing your audience and selecting media that help you to effectively communicate messages to different groups and cultures. Additionally, special emphasis will be placed on merging this knowledge with an understanding of how the media is both a social institution and a technological tool that can be used to communicate a wide range of messages and information. You will then be able to make appropriate media choices to meet your goals.

Course Learning Goals

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Apply the principles of effective intercultural communication as demonstrated in the development of a public relations plan that appropriately addresses intercultural communications issues.
- Understand the impact of media or information technology on the public's perceptions of societal norms and issues as reflected in the shaping of opinions and perceptions through public/community awareness activities.
- Apply the principles of collaborative learning and will be able to apply them and work effectively on a team or group project.
- Develop a public/community relations plan containing the appropriate elements for an issue, person, product, organization, or event.
- Develop and evaluate an implementation-ready public relations plan.

Course Resources

Required Text

Yaverbaum, E., Bly, B., and I. Benun (2006). *Public Relations for Dummies, 2nd Ed.* Wiley Publishing, New York, N.Y. ISBN: 471-77272-0.

Yudkin, M. (2003) *Six Steps to Free Publicity.* Career Press publishing, Franklin Lakes, N.J. ISBN: 1-56414-675-8

Course Competences

In this course, you will develop the following competences:

Competence	Competence Statement
H-1-A	<p>Understands and can apply the principles of effective Intercultural communication.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands and can explain at least two ways in which culture and communication are closely connected. 2. Understands and can identify at least two reasons for ntercultural miscommunication. 3. Develops effective intercultural communication strategies.
H-2-G	<p>Can evaluate the role and impact of mass media or information technology on society.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specifies a medium of mass communication or an information technology and articulates its scope. 2. Describes the role that this medium or information technology plays in society. 3. Evaluates the impact of this medium or information technology on society or on one's perceptions of societal norms and issues.
L-7	<p>Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge, and values that contribute to such learning.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participates in a learning project with others. 2. Applies collaborative learning skills such as communication skills, skills of group dynamics, etc. 3. Reflects on one's ability to contribute to the collaborative learning process as characterized in at least one model or theory.
F-X	<p>Can research and develop a PR/Community Relations plan that relates to student's focus area. Can reflect on the plan's elements and/or use from the lens provided by their focus area.</p> <p>You may us this F-X statement.</p> <p>If you wish to write your own, you must submit it to the Assignments area of the course website by the end of the 2nd week of this course.</p>

How the Competences will be Demonstrated in this Course

H-1-A	<p>Understands and can apply the principles of effective intercultural communication.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can explain at least two ways in which culture and communication are closely connected. This is demonstrated by the development of a public/community relations plan that connects cultural understanding with public/community relations messages, media selection, and public/community relations plans. 2. Can identify and explain at least two reasons that intercultural miscommunication can occur while developing public/ communications materials. 3. Can use effective intercultural communication strategies in public/community relations activities.
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H-2-G	<p>Can evaluate the role and impact of mass media or information technology on society.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can use mass communication or an information technology in public/community relations. 2. Can use media as a public/community relations tool to shape public opinion, awareness, and perceptions (images). 3. Understands the impact of media or information technology on the public's perceptions of societal norms and issues and that understanding is reflected in the shaping of opinions and perceptions through public/community awareness activities.
L-7	<p>Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge, and values that contribute to such learning.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can cooperatively and effectively participate in a group project. 2. Can apply collaborative learning skills such as communication, group dynamics, etc. 3. Can reflect on and describe the group's collaborative process and learning in relationship to at least one model or theory.
F-X	<p>Can research and develop a public relations/community relations plan that relates to student's focus area. Can write a reflection paper discussing the plan's elements and/or use from the lens provided by their focus area.</p>

Assessment Criteria for your Final Paper or Project by Competence

The following is a listing of general course requirements by competence. You will note that some assignments are required for all competences, while others are "competence specific" or limited to certain competences. You will need to ensure that you complete the tasks and elements of participation for the competences for which you have registered.

H-1-A	<p>Can apply the principles of effective intercultural communication.</p> <p>General:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Online Discussions (weekly) 2. Writing assignment related to development of PR plan 3. Public Relations Plan -- 15-20 pp. which also includes a justification of the cultural considerations and strategies used in the plan <p>For H-1-A competence only:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Final Reflection Paper - A 5 -7 page paper which discusses cultural differences and how cultural understanding influences communications strategies as one develops a message that is culturally appropriate in a public relations plan
H-2-G	<p>Can evaluate the role and impact of mass media or information technology on society.</p> <p>General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Discussions (weekly) • Writing assignments related to development of PR plan • Public Relations Plan -15-20 pp., which includes justification of media choices used in the plan <p>For H2G competence only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Reflection paper - A 5-7 page paper that discusses the power and impact of a particular medium or information technology as demonstrated by its use as a Public and Community Relations tool.

Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge, and values that contribute to such learning.

General:

- Online Discussions (weekly)
- Writing assignment related to development of PR plan
- Public Relations Plan (15-20 pp.)

For competence L-7 only

- Ongoing journaling on your group process
- Final Reflection paper - A 5 - 7 page paper reflecting on the group's learning process and comparing it with at least one theory or model of collaborative learning as reflected by their working together on the development of a public relations plan.

L-7

General:

- Online Discussions (weekly)
- Writing assignment related to development of PR plan
- Public Relations Plan (15-20 pp.)

- A 5-7 reflection paper or other alternative assignment to be determined based on competence statement, written by student and approved by professor, that is related to student's focus area.

F-X

Course Structure

This course consists of 10 modules. The estimated time to complete each module is one week. The total course lasts 10 weeks with a final week to turn in your final assignments.

To view the course schedule, click on the Schedule link on the left-hand navigation bar. This page contains the most recently updated listing of the topics and assignments due for each week of the course.

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Assessment

Assessment of Learning

You will be graded on

- development of an implementation-ready public relations plan
- your competence specific final reflection paper and
- weekly/biweekly assignments that address sections of your public relations plan and are designed to move you toward the completion of the final plan
- your online discussion participation

If you are taking an L-7 competence, you will also journal on your group process throughout the course. Your completion of these elements will be used to determine your final letter grade.

Overall, you will be assessed on your reading assignments, through your contributions to the discussion forum and any assigned writings (journaling, etc.), and your ability to integrate the course readings in your Reflection paper or Public Relations plan.

Assessment Criteria for All Writing Assignments

In general, grading of all writing assignments will be based on the following:

Content refers to the treatment of your topic, logically and analytically. This is the substance, the “what” of the paper; what you had to say about the topic, what you presented in defense of your position, and what your analysis revealed about your thought processes and grasp of the material you grappled with.

Organization is the way your paper is laid out and presented, including both the overall organization and the arrangement of individual sections. These include: a relevant title and subheadings; introductory material, where needed; summaries, where appropriate; connections and transitions; and what used to be called “rhetoric”: the skillful arrangement of the pieces for maximum persuasive impact on the reader.

Mechanics refers to the use of your Spelling and Grammar checker, the use of Standard English, proper sentence structure and punctuation, and effective and sensitive word choice. Mastery of basic communication and writing skills is a must for undergraduate (and graduate) students. The paper you prepare should also use proper APA citation form for in-text references as well as for bibliography.

It is important that your essays and papers:

- Specifically addresses the appropriate competence(s) that you are fulfilling in this course
- Organizes your supportive evidence into relevant paragraphs that address your subject
- Takes into account a variety of points of view
- Demonstrates your appreciation of other points of view (demonstrates empathy and the ability to account for the vantage points of others)
- Demonstrates that you are able to integrate the evidence derived from your chosen sources into your argument according in standard English using proper grammar, mechanics, and sentence structure
- Uses proper quotation form, including introduction of your quotation as well as your commentary following the quotation
- Has an introduction and concluding paragraph

Uses proper APA style for in-text citations and the end of paper references.

Final Reflection papers (competence specific for H-1-A, H-2-C, L-7, and F-X)

The Final Reflection papers are competence specific (H-1-A, H-2-C, L-7, and F-X) and will require you to address the component demonstrated in the public relations plan or the planning process that relates to your competence. This paper should be 5-7 pages (1250-1350 words) and also include title pages and references (which are not included in the page count) and be double-spaced and written and formatted according to APA style.

20% - Quality of Assignment for final paper addressing specific competence.

- Addresses the assignment according to directions
- Submits assignments on time
- Demonstrates effort to formulate elements of the overall plan
- Demonstrates understanding of learning objectives
- Describes content with appropriate level of reflection and detail

Public Relations Plan

The course is designed to have you develop a public relations plan as a result of your completing the weekly discussions and assignments.

The final public relations plan will be 15-20 pages and will include all of the elements discussed in key sections of the course that outline what the parts of a plan should be. Overall these elements include:

1. a purpose or intended outcome,
2. issue, product, organization, or activity to be promoted,
3. targeted audience(s),
4. medium or media,
5. timelines
6. budget/costs, and
7. evaluation of your plan and results.

Some students will work on the plan individually, others will work on a group public relations plan.

Most students can choose the option they prefer, but if you are taking the L-7 competence statement, you must work on a group public relations plan. The groups will consist of 3 to 4 persons, depending on class size and the number of persons taking the L-7 competence.

The plan will be graded on its clarity of purpose, incorporation of public relations planning principles and elements, planning rationale, detail, presentation quality, and ability to be implemented. Persons working in groups will submit one jointly-developed plan.

15% - Quality of Assignments that are working pieces for PR plan

(These are works in progress so the emphasis is on your making progress. Corrections are expected, so perfection is not expected (but is encouraged) at the individual assignment level.)

- Addresses the assignment according to the directions
- Submits assignments on time
- Demonstrates effort to formulate elements of the overall plan
- Demonstrates understanding of learning objectives
- Describes content with appropriate level of reflection and detail

40% - Quality of Final Public Relation Plan

- Addresses the assignment according to directions
- Originality of incorporating own ideas and theories to assignment
- Appropriate use of theories and research
- Accuracy of information used as evidence and proper referencing
- Presented with attention to aesthetics, clarity and grammatical correctness
- Demonstrates ability to incorporate class learning regarding the components or elements of a public relations plan

Assessment Criteria for Online Discussion Participation

Online discussions are a very important part of your grade. They replace the traditional in-class discussions and are measured by your original and critical thinking on the readings or the assigned topics. You are also graded on your responses to your classmates. It is important to always be respectful when responding to each other. Because integrating and synthesizing the ideas and theories in the course is an important aspect of the learning process, sharing and offering feedback to your fellow students is a significant element of the process.

This does not mean that you do not question, challenge, or push each other to consider other thoughts. It does mean that you must be respectful both in language and in the tone of your comments and your approach to one another. This element will also be considered in my grading of your online participation. Offensive postings will be removed from the board.

15% - Quality of contributions to weekly discussion forums:

- Relevance to the topic addressed
- Accuracy of information and use of theory
- Conciseness of explanations and focus on main points
- Evidence cited to substantiate ideas
- Timeliness of submitting messages

10% - Quality of responses to other students in discussion forums:

- Respect for other participants' ideas and input
- Appropriate use of comments related to discussion topics
- Focus on staying on track with discussion
- Contributions of helpful and insightful ideas
- Questions that challenge and engage others

At the beginning of the quarter, your instructor will set up three discussions. These three discussions will help you and your classmates get off to an immediate start on the course, by providing conversational spaces for necessary, ongoing social and administrative activities. These discussions are:

- Introductions
- Course Q&A
- A social meeting space for discussion that is not directly related to course content. The can be used freely for your own conversation (like setting up groups or teams, if these are used in the course) (This discussion has different names in different courses.)

The Course Q&A discussion is where the management and administrative tasks of the course are conducted, and where you can ask 'process' questions and receive answers. You will also find the schedule of specific dates for your course in this Discussion, and the emails sent out to the whole class.

In the online discussions your responses will be assessed on whether one or more of the following are present:

1. Offering up ideas or resources and inviting a critique of them
2. Asking challenging questions
3. Articulating, explaining and supporting positions on ideas
4. Exploring and supporting issues by adding explanations and examples
5. Reflecting on and re-evaluating personal opinions
6. Offering a critique, challenging, discussing and expanding ideas of others
7. Negotiating interpretations, definitions and meanings
8. Summarizing previous contributions and asking the next question
9. Proposing actions based on ideas that have been developed

The above list was adapted from Gilly Salmon's book *E-Moderating: The key to teaching and learning online*. London: Kogan Page: p.143 (2000).

The Rubric used for awarding points for discussion is:

Number of Points	Skills
9-10	Demonstrates excellence in grasping key concepts; critiques work of others; stimulates discussion; provides ample citations for support of opinions; readily offers new interpretations of discussion material. Ideas are expressed clearly, concisely; uses appropriate vocabulary.
7-8	Shows evidence of understanding most major concepts; will offer an occasional divergent viewpoint or challenge; shows some skill in support for opinions. Some signs of disorganizations with expression; transition working may be faulty.
5-6	Has mostly shallow grasp of the material; rarely takes a stand on issues; offers inadequate levels of support. Poor language use garbles much of message; only an occasional idea surfaces clearly; expression seems disjointed; overuse of the simple sentence and a redundancy with works and commentary; paragraphs often appear unrelated to each other. This student requires constant prompting for contributions.
1-4	A minimal posting of material. Shows no significant understanding of material. Language is mostly incoherent. Does not respond readily to prompting.

Adapted from: Bauer, J.F., and Anderson, R.S. "Evaluating Students' Written Performance in the On-Line Class." In R.E. Weiss, D.S. Knowlton, and B. W. Speck (eds), *Principles of Effective Learning in the On-Line Class*. New Directions in Teaching and Learning, no. 84. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Course Grading Scale

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

For SNL courses taken for Pass/Fail, a "Pass" represents a grade of "A" for purposes of financial aid and employer reimbursement.

If you wish to declare a Pass/Fail option for this course, you must do so before the end of the 2nd week of the quarter. Once made, this decision becomes non-negotiable.

Online Participation Guidelines for this course

A significant part of your online learning experience involves learning with and from your classmates and the instructor in the online discussions and group assignments.

Active participation means sharing information and resources and posting your ideas and critiquing and expanding on the ideas of others in a collegial fashion. This discussion is informal in the sense that it is meant to encourage interested discussion. As your participation in discussion is a graded portion of the course, you are expected to follow accepted standards of English spelling, grammar and usage in your contributions.

You are also required to be respectful of your instructor and other students.

These discussions are for you to exchange your reflections with your classmates and instructor about what you are learning. The discussions will be organized around the particular topic you are studying each week.

You may be asked by the instructor to take leadership in your group for a certain time of the course. You will receive further instructions from your instructor if this occurs.

You should contribute your responses to the particular assignment for that particular discussion heading which will be posted.

For each Discussion, you are required to make one original contribution to each topic and respond to one classmate's contribution.

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Policies

Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) determines appropriate accommodations through consultation with the student. For certain learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders, the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) determines the appropriate accommodations. See the instructor for more information or call OSD at 773-325-7290 (phone) or 773-325-7296 (TTY); or call PLuS at 773-325-1677.

Incomplete Grades

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily completed at least 75 percent of the coursework, and you have such an unexpected, uncontrollable event that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

If you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). Incompletes not finished by the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) will automatically become an F grade on your transcript.

Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee.

NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

Protection of Human Subjects

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>

Demonstrating the acquisition of competences in this course can involve “interactions”—interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s).

As such, these activities qualify as “research” with “human subjects” and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning’s Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

1. The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
2. You assess and ensure that no “harm”—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
3. The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
 - a. If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an “informed consent” document. For information on creating an “informed consent document” see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>

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Course Expectations

Time Management and Attendance

SNL's online courses are not self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least four times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact the instructor immediately.

Your Instructor's Role

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

Your Role as a Student

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

How to Do Well In This Class

This section provides a few hints on how to do well in this class:

1. Participate in class discussions. The class discussions and homework exercises are worth a large percentage of your grade. Most modules ask you to post an opinion and include a follow-up. Don't miss the follow-up posting.
2. Don't fall behind – In general once a discussion is graded its over. Don't think you can post discussion items several weeks after they are graded and expect credit. The class has moved on and it is difficult for course administrators to find your postings after it has been graded.
3. Read the assignments carefully. If the assignment says answer three questions, then answer three. If it says use APA research paper style then find out what that style is and use it.
4. Email questions. When you have any questions, email me. If I post a question to you (via your private discussion board), then answer it (it usually means I cannot find an assignment of yours).
5. Post all assignments by the specified Due Date.

Credits

This course was designed and produced by Cynthia Milsap and the staff at the Center for Distance Education of the School for New

Learning of DePaul University.

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