School of Journalism and Mass Communication

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

JOMC 431.003 **CASE STUDIES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS** SPRING 2014

**Instructor:** Marshéle Carter Waddell

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**Class Location:** Halls of Fame, Carroll Hall

**Class Time:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m-12:15 p.m.

**Office Hours**: Mondays 2:00-3:30 p.m., Wednesdays 9:00-10:30 a.m. Carroll 387

**General Requirements, Testing and Grading**

**Prerequisite:**

To take this course as an undergraduate you must have successfully completed JOMC 137 “Principles of Advertising and Public Relations.”

**Course overview:**

It’s been said that there are those who learn from other people’s mistakes. That means that the rest of us are the other people. The corporate world, like life, is messy, layered, nuanced and complicated at times. With proper planning, diligent management and a big dose of endurance, most obstacles can be avoided or overcome. However, tough times are inevitable and sometimes, decisions have to be made quickly and under enormous pressure.

“Case Studies in Public Relations” is designed to be a bridge between the safer, academic environment you’ve grown accustomed to and the messier, professional world you are entering. As you transition from the university to the “real world,” this class can provide a broad background and understanding of how PR practitioners have applied public relations theory and tactics, successfully or not, in today’s dynamic corporate and nonprofit environments.

By examining the art and science of public relations from a management perspective, we will discuss various factors that affect the way public relations is practiced in organizations, for example, identifying stakeholder groups, understanding message strategy and development, accommodating diversity and recognizing ethical issues.

**Course objectives:**

By the end of the semester, you will be better equipped to:

1. Critique public relations research, strategies and execution,
2. Address today’s public relations challenges and opportunities,
3. Research and examine a recent real-world public relations case and make recommendations,
4. Critically analyze a wide spectrum of public relations cases, and
5. Practice effective team-building and presentation skills.

**Required Textbook and Additional Reading:**

* *Public Relations Cases,* Hayes, Hendrix, Kumar
* Additional readings to be assigned and posted to Sakai, made available in class or in the Park Library
* White, lined, 3 x 5 index cards

**Be prepared!**

The case study is the major teaching tool for this course. I will present lecture material relevant to class cases and, along with guest speakers, provide real-world examples of a variety of public relations situations. Group discussion of cases is the heart of the class. Each student is expected to have read assigned cases twice **before the class** in which it is to be discussed.

Manage your time. Plan to invest 7-10 hours each week reading the assignments, taking notes as you read, coordinating team projects, and in doing your own research for “Last I Heard.” Be prepared to participate actively in case discussions.

NOTE: Class attendance is essential. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to get an "A" in this course without active and thoughtful participation in the discussion of the cases along with additional research. Students will also be called on to present case facts as well as analyze public relations strategies for assigned readings.

**Shine!**

I expect all of your work to be correctly edited and professionally presented. Written assignments must be typed using AP Stylebook guidelines, double-spaced and in a 12-point font, preferably Arial, Cambria or Times New Roman. Print your assignment and turn in a hard copy to me. **I will not accept written assignments by email.**  If I am not available, you may turn in your assignment at the front desk of the JOMC Dean Suite, First Floor, Carroll Hall. Please maintain a copy of each assignment until final grades have been reported at the end of the semester.

**Late assignments will not be accepted without prior notification of the instructor before your absence AND documentation of your absence, such as a doctor’s note, submitted to the instructor upon your return to class.** Be proactive. Talk with me about any problems you are having with an assignment or with team dynamics so we can find a workable solution in a timely fashion. I will not offer any extra credit assignments.

**Course Grading**

Class Participation 15%

Last I Heard… (Weekly Current Topics) 10%

Team Responses to Challenge Questions 15%

Team Case Study and Presentation 30%

Individual Written Case Study 30%

**100 %**

**Requirements for the Course**

Individual work will comprise 55% of your final grade; teamwork will comprise 45%.

* As an individual,
  + Prepare for, attend and participate in all class sessions;
  + Turn in completed “Last I Heard” cards every Monday at the start of class;
  + Write a Case Brief and Analysis;
  + Complete a peer evaluation.
* As a part of a team,
  + Participate in “Challenge Questions,” the team analysis of assigned readings and cases,
  + Prepare and submit a written Case Study and oral Presentation.

**Class Participation 15%**

It’s your job to create interesting class discussion. To do so you must first be present and also be prepared. I am not here to entertain you (although that may happen on occasion). My role is to facilitate your learning and progress. Arrive on time for class. Be prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

**Last I Heard… (Individual Assignment) 10%**

“Last I Heard…” items are real-world, current news events that present a public relations issue either for an individual, a corporation or a nonprofit organization that you find on your own. These can come from newspapers, the Web, books (other than our class textbook) or magazines.

**Each individual** is expected to turn in a brief overview of the real-world example at the beginning of class **every Monday**. It must be handwritten on one side of a white, 3 x 5 index card. Although you will turn in a card each Monday, each student will present twice during the semester based on the schedule:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Group | Dates |  |
| Group 1 | Mon., Jan. 27 | Mon., Mar. 3 |
| Group 2 | Wed., Feb. 3 | Mon., Mar. 17 |
| Group 3 | Mon., Feb. 10 | Mon., Mar. 24 |
| Group 4 | Mon., Feb. 17 | Mon., Mar. 31 |
| Group 5 | Mon., Feb. 24 | Wed., Apr. 7 |

The cards should include the following:

* Your name, your cited source, and the due date
* Organization’s mission statement or general purpose
* Organization’s key publics
* Your reaction and thoughts about the issue/event-- Incomplete sentences are fine. These notes are to help you share coherently with the class.

**Case Brief and Analysis (Individual Assignment) 30%**

* A written case brief will serve as your midterm exam. Case briefs should be 4-5 pages in length (not including citations), typed in 12-point font, preferably Arial, Cambria or Times New Roman, and double-spaced. These must be turned in as a hard copy to me at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Your brief will be graded in three parts: (1) the synopsis of the case situation/facts (25 points), (2) the analysis of the case, including course terminology (60 points), and (3) the professionalism of your paper, which includes spelling, grammar and editing (15 points).
* The synopsis (Part I) should include the pertinent facts of the case including the organization involved, a brief description of the situation, stakeholders and the outcome. Save your critique/analysis for the second part. Use your own words; do not regurgitate what you’ve read. In the analysis (Part II), examine what the organization did and then discuss whether its tactics and strategies would be considered effective public relations. Address whether the research used was appropriate given the situation, whether the organization had measurable goals and objectives, and whether it accurately identified its publics. What messages were communicated? Did the organization formally evaluate its efforts? You may refer to other cases that we have discussed or will discuss to make a comparison or contrast. Your opinions should be based on what you have learned about effective public relations. Write this section from the first person point of view.

**Team Work**

**Forming Teams:**

I will randomly assign you to five teams of four students the week of January 13. I will give you time at the end of class on Wednesday, January 15, to share schedules and contact information. Your team should be considered a working PR agency for the purposes of the assignments. Your team must identify an issue relevant to the organization by **Wed., Feb. 12,** and submit the following in writing at the beginning of the class:

* Team Name/Team Number/Members
* the selected organization's name,
* a brief synopsis (two to three paragraphs) of the situation, and
* the name and phone number (or email address) of a contact person who is willing to talk with you and share information about the issue and the organization's response to it.

**Team Responses to Challenge Questions 15%**

After an introduction to each day’s topic and occasional visits from our guest experts, you will meet with your “agency” (your assigned team) to brainstorm responses to challenge questions. Your designated spokespersons will briefly present your team’s solutions to the challenge questions weekly.

**Written Case Study and Presentation (Team Assignment) 30%**

The purpose of this assignment is to give you experience in analyzing the public relations work of others, including assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their approach and responses. This assignment should also give you more experience in gathering data/information from a variety of sources using various research techniques and in synthesizing and presenting this information in a persuasive and professional manner. It also will give you more experience with working in small group environments, and in the delegation, coordination and management of tasks.

I will give you three class periods later in the semester to work with your teammates (4/16, 4/21 and 4/23). You may opt to work at a location other than the classroom on those days (it can get distracting with five teams talking at once).

Your team will need to:

* Identify a problem, opportunity or ethical issue that an organization (for-profit or non-profit) faced that required significant public relations involvement.
* Collect detailed, thorough background information about the organization, including its goals, mission, values, financial standing, products/services, and history.
* Collect detailed information on the issue/challenge that the organization faced.
* Describe the public relations strategies and tactics that the organization developed and implemented to deal with the situation.
* Identify key messages.
* Research and analyze the media coverage that the organization received as it relates to your issue.

Your team may collect information using a variety of search strategies, including the library, Internet and interviews with those responsible for developing the public relations campaign. Be sure to include communication materials and copies of significant media coverage, including newspaper or magazine articles where possible.

The written case study will be due at **3pm on April 28, 2014**. Hard copies should be delivered to the JOMC Dean’s Suite front desk. **No late case studies will be accepted. No case studies will be accepted by email.**  The written case study should be at least 20 pages in length (not including citations), typed in 12-point font, preferably Arial, Cambria or Times New Roman, and double-spaced. Your team paper must include:

* A thorough description of the public relations challenge
* A well researched background about the organization
* A thorough description of the organization’s response to the challenge
* A thorough description of the media and other significant publics’ responses
* A critical analysis of the organization’s strategy and tactics
* Suggestions that you would offer the organization’s management based on what you and your team members know of the case and what you have learned about effective public relations practices
* A list of all sources cited in proper citation format.

**Your case study presentations will comprise your final exam for this course.** Presentations will be made by each team on the scheduled exam day for this course, **Tuesday,** **May 6, 2014, at 12:00 p.m.** Your team will make a 25-minute presentation that includes:

* A thorough description of the public relations challenge
* A well researched background about the organization
* A thorough description of the organization’s response to the challenge
* A thorough description of the media and significant publics’ responses
* A critical analysis of the organization’s strategy and tactics
* Suggestions based on what you and your team members know of the case and what you have learned about effective public relations practices.

**Peer Evaluation**

In addition to completing the case study presentation and paper as a team, you will be required to turn in **a completed peer evaluation** that measures your perception of individual member participation. The instructor will provide the evaluation form one week before your scheduled presentation. You will turn in your completed peer evaluation to the instructor at the beginning of the exam period on **Tuesday, May 6, 2014, at 12:00 p.m.** Peer evaluations will be used to determine whether or not the team case study grade must be adjusted downward for any members of the team.

Your team case study grade will be determined as follows:

* A thorough description of the public relations challenge, a well researched background about the organization, a thorough description of the organization’s response to the challenge, a thorough description of the media and other significant publics’ responses (40 points)
* A critical analysis of the organization’s strategy and tactics (20 points)
* Suggestions that you would offer the organization’s management based on what you and your team members know of the case and what you have learned about effective public relations practices (20 points)
* Proper format and writing quality (20 points)

**Grading Scale**

A = 93-100% C+ = 77-79% F = <66%

A- = 90-92% C = 74-76%

B+ = 87-89% C- = 70-73%

B = 84-86% D+ = 67-69%

B- = 80-83% D = 60-66%

**Honor Code**

It is expected that each student in this class will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system. All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class, which includes written case briefs. Use of former students' case briefs constitutes a breach of the honor code and will be dealt with accordingly.

**Diversity**

The university’s policy statements on Equal Educational Opportunity and Nondiscrimination as outlined in the 2012-2013 Undergraduate Bulletin. http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/. The university does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression or disabilities. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. If you need assistance or services from the Academic Success Program for Students with LD/ADHD please contact them at 919-962-7227 or http://www.unc.edu/asp/.

**JOMC 431.003 Spring 2014 Weekly Schedule**

[As of January 8, 2014 and subject to change]

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|  | Date | Topic, Assignments, Due Dates |
|  |  |  |
| Week 1 | Wed., Jan. 8 | Introduction and Course Overview |
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| Week 2 | Mon., Jan. 13  Wed., Jan. 15 | Public Relations Process  Read Chapters 1 and 2  The Case Method  Team Assignments |
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| Week 3 | Mon., Jan. 20  Wed., Jan. 22 | No Class  Ethics and the Public Interest |
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| Week 4 | Mon., Jan. 27  Wed., Jan. 29 | Media Relations  Read Chapter 3  Last I Heard Team 1  Media Relations, continued  **Case Brief Topics Due for Approval** |
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| Week 5 | Mon., Feb. 3  Wed., Feb. 5 | Social Media  Read Chapter 4  Last I Heard Team 4  Social Media, continued  **Team Presentation/Paper Topics Due for Approval** |
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| Week 6 | Mon., Feb. 10  Wed., Feb. 12 | Internal Relations  Read Chapter 5  Last I Heard Team 3  Guest Lecturer  Internal Relations, continued |
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| Week 7 | Mon., Feb. 17  Wed., Feb. 19 | Crisis Communication  Read Chapter 12  Last I Heard Team 2  Crisis Communication, continued  Guest Lecturer |
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| Week 8 | Mon., Feb. 24  Wed., Feb. 26 | Community Relations  Read Chapter 6  Last I Heard Team 5  Guest Lecturer  Community Relations, continued  Mid-semester Course Evaluations (in class)  **Case Brief Analysis Due** |
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| Week 9 | Mon., Mar. 3  Wed., Mar. 5 | Public Affairs/Government Relations  Read Chapter 7  Last I Heard Team 1  Guest Lecturer  Public Affairs, continued |
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| Week 10 | Mon., Mar. 10  Wed., Mar. 12 | Spring Break  Spring Break |
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| Week 11 | Mon., Mar. 17  Wed., Mar. 19 | Financial Relations  Read Chapter 8  Last I Heard Team 2  Guest Lecturer  Financial Relations, continued |
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| Week 12 | Mon., Mar. 24  Wed., Mar. 26 | Consumer Relations  Read Chapter 9 and 13  Last I Heard Team 3  Consumer Relations, continued |
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| Week 13 | Mon., Mar. 31  Wed., Apr. 2 | International Public Relations  Read Chapter 10  Last I Heard Team 4  International Public Relations  Guest Lecturer |
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| Week 14 | Mon., Apr. 7  Wed., Apr. 9 | Internships and Early Career  Last I Heard Team 5  Internships and Early Career  Guest Lecturer |
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| Week 15 | Mon., Apr. 14  Wed., Apr. 16 | Review  Team Work Day |
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| Week 16 | Mon., Apr. 21  Wed., Apr. 23 | Team Work Day  Team Work Day  **All Written Team Case Studies Due by 3:00 p.m. in Dean’s Suite** |
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| Final Exam | Tuesday, May 6  12:00 p.m. | **Final Exam: Team Case Study Presentations** |