

**Public Relations Foundations  
(JOMC 730)  
Fall 2014**

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**Office hours:**

**Tuesday, 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday, 9-11 a.m.**

**Thursday, 2:30-4:00 p.m.**

**Other hours by appointment**

**Class times: Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30-1:45**

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Welcome to **JOMC 730, Public Relations Foundations**. Whether you're a graduate student interested in a career in public relations, a working professional and a part-time student, or you just want to know a bit more about the field, it's my hope that this class will be useful and stimulating for all of us.

In today's complex world, organizations—be they corporations, government agencies, not-for-profits, or something in between—must deal with increasingly challenging relationships with their stakeholders. As we explore the changing world of public relations, we will see that one thing hasn't changed: the management of important relationships is the heart of all strategic public relations activity. We'll start by examining the foundations of formal public relations in business, government, nonprofit organizations—and even universities. Then we'll delve further into the field by examining and analyzing classic and contemporary case studies in public relations.

We will also examine recent significant changes in the structure of mass media organizations as well as how people consume mass media products these days. We'll spend time hearing from public relations professionals about how they practice their craft, particularly in light of the development and use by public relations practitioners of social media. We'll also take that extra step and talk

about how individuals and organizations affect, and are affected by, the changing media landscape. We'll discuss media convergence and how that affects—and is affected by—the practice of public relations.

First, we'll start by examining the roots of public relations (you'll have to bear with me; I was a double major as an undergraduate---Journalism as well as History---and one of my research areas is public relations history ☺). Then we'll delve further into the theoretical foundations of public relations as well as the process itself—the practice of public relations.

Don't worry, though. The real world is alive and well in this class. You'll have the opportunity to apply the principles and concepts we will discuss to the workplace today. You all will have the opportunity to develop a public relations plan for a real client. Because we have just the right number of people to form a small public relations “agency” you will all work together on an actual public relations plan/program for a local client. This should be a valuable experience for all of you—and for the client, who is very familiar with our master's program. More about that later.....lots more!

You'll also research, write and present an original public relations case study. You are required as part of this class to enter your case study in the 2014 Case Studies Competition sponsored by the Arthur W. Page Society ([www.awpagesociety.com](http://www.awpagesociety.com)) and the Institute for Public Relations ([www.instituteforpr.com](http://www.instituteforpr.com)). Be warned that we've had two grand prize winners in five years for this competition---the prize comes with a \$5,000 check and an all-expense paid trip to New York City for the awards dinner. Rumor has it that the grand prize might be worth even more this year!☺ There are several other prizes as well. We will discuss this at length in class.

You'll also get to hear from some guest speakers during the semester who are practicing public relations practitioners and/or professors of public relations.

### **Readings/text**

There is no required text. I will provide most of the readings for the class. However, if you are like some folks (and I include myself in this group) who just have to have your own copy, the following is the primary text I'll draw several readings from for this semester. I checked on Amazon and they have copies of this edition for around \$10. The citation follows. **Effective Public Relations, by Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center and Glen M. Broom (any edition from the 8<sup>th</sup> onward)** publisher is Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall. (Although the publisher came out with a later edition, no need to buy it. The chapters we will use are almost exactly the same. We will discuss the use—and impact—of social media on how public relations practice has been affected. Your client for your project would like to incorporate better, more efficient use of social media for her organization's communication/public relations efforts as well as other

channels. I think you all will enjoy the challenge of developing a workable plan for her. It's also a nice line on your CV! ☺

**Other required reading**

Some weeks have fairly light reading; others may have quite a bit of reading. You should look at your syllabus to see what readings are listed for the week and make certain you complete them **before** the class meets that day. Part of your final grade will be based on the quality of your participation in discussions of the weekly topic. This class will be much more valuable to everyone if we all do the readings and are prepared. See also more information about the Arthur Page competition.

The Arthur W. Page Society: links to award-winning student-authored case studies: [www.awpagesociety.com/site/resources/case\\_studies/](http://www.awpagesociety.com/site/resources/case_studies/)

**Overview of the grading process used in this class:**

PR Proposal (mini-plan) for client: 20% of final grade  
(paper 15%, presentation 5%)

Case Study Discussions—Leading, facilitating: 15% of final grade

Original Case Study for Arthur Page competition: 50%  
(includes detailed outline (5%), draft (10%),  
Final paper (25%), Presentation (10%).

Weekly contributions and participation 15%

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**Details, details, details.....**

**The “What’s new in pr” index cards**

After completing the assigned readings each week, find one to two relevant and current examples that relate to the readings using print or electronic news sources; at least one example should be current for the week. We’ll discuss some sources in class that might be useful to follow. Then just use a regular old index card to jot down some thoughts about the topic and on the “latest and greatest” strategies and tactics taking hold of the PR world (such as social media—big surprise, huh?).

**Case study discussions: Your “opportunity to be a discussion leader—don’t worry; it will be fun!**

Each student will develop and lead at least one—and possibly two-- case discussions this semester. You should find that these discussions are useful in helping you identify and analyze organizational activities and programs from a public relations perspective. You will be assigned a topic area such as employee communication, and a case that I will provide the class. You will then select current, relevant public relations cases located in trade journals such as *PR News*, PRSA’s website, and other sources to explore the topic. In leading the class discussion it will be important for you to provide your analysis of the selected cases, relate key concepts and theories to the cases, and provoke discussion. The schedule for these discussions will be determined toward the beginning of October and we’ll talk about it in class. If you’re leading a discussion, it will be up to you to provide some readings for the discussion at the class PRIOR to your leading of a case discussion. (It will all work out, I promise). I, or a guest speaker, will lead a couple of case discussions before you have to, just to get an idea of the process.

**PR Plan for a “Real” client**

You will all work together for one client this semester to put together a public relations plan for a client. Your plan will address the client’s problem or opportunity and will articulate a compelling goal, specify measurable objectives, suggest strategic solutions and propose tactics. Encompassed within this plan are themes and key messages, together with an outline for the campaign budget and implementation schedule. Note that you will be required to conduct primary research, talk with members of the organization, develop a campaign (campaign direction with some communication materials) and present it to the client. Since this will be an actual client who hopes to be able to use the work you do, I hope this will provide you with good experience—and a great line or two on your resumes (☺).

**Original case study (paper and class presentation)**

This is the Page case mentioned above. You will have the opportunity to make a presentation of your case to the class before you have to send it off to New York. This will give you a chance to get suggestions from your classmates and me before you send off the final one. Not only does the Page competition ask for a written case, but for Power Points to go with it as well as teaching notes. This will be a great opportunity to try these out before you send them. I also need them before the deadline so that I can make suggestions and serve as an editor for you. Are you getting tired just reading this? Don’t worry; you’ll be just fine! We’ll discuss this assignment in excruciating detail in class. We will discuss the process of choosing a topic, too.

See the next page with the day-by-day class schedule for more information. We may have to make some modifications as we go along, but you’ll have some warning, I promise.

## **Daily schedule:**

- Aug. 19:** First day of class. We'll spend some time getting to know each other and talking about what we'll do in this class. We'll talk about the goals of the class and spend a bit of time talking about why you're taking this class and what your plans are after you graduate.
- Aug. 21:** Just what IS public relations? Why do we do it? Why does the world need it? We'll talk with each other about this. Then, we'll take a deeper look at how and why public relations developed as a concept.
- Aug. 26:** Let's take a look at where the practice of public relations as an organized profession started—and why. Time to watch a tape!
- Aug. 28:** Discussion of the film---just what is public relations, as it was described in the film? How does the “client” relationship work? How do you know if your public relations efforts have worked?
- Sept. 2:** Public relations for not-for-profit organizations: a look back at where it started..... we'll examine the issue of child labor and what role public relations played in getting the issue on the public agenda.
- Sept. 4:** So what can we take away from an examination of public relations in the public and private sectors? How are they alike? How do they differ?
- Sept. 9** Public relations and ethics: How do the two fit together? Key issues That can arise when working in public relations. Prof. Lois Boynton, the J-School's resident ethics expert, will fill you in on ethical issues that could arise—and how you might address those issues.
- Sept. 11:** We'll remember this day and how public relations tactics were used to help the nation deal with the crisis.....
- Sept. 16:** The V Foundation and its use of social media as primary communication channels. Stephanie Silverman, Social Media media specialist for the V-Foundation, will fill you in.

- Sept. 18:** We'll talk about the use of social media to communicate with an organization's publics and when it's appropriate to use these channels. This will be a follow-up discussion from Stephanie's visit.
- Sept. 23:** Work on projects for Heidi. I will be here to assist in any way you need. You may elect to work out of the classroom, if you like.
- Sept. 25:** Practice presentations/ do any tweaking needed. We will have talked about expectations, structure of presentations in class before you actually have to do them. ☺
- Sept. 30;** Presentations to Heidi, rest of class.
- Oct. 2:** Turn in written work, copies of anything you developed for Heidi. Let's talk about the work you did. Also turn in the written plan. You will have had an outline to follow. It's very straightforward. We also will have talked about it in class.
- Oct.9:** Communication, evaluation. This may be brand new to you, or you all may have talked about this in a class that you took earlier in your undergraduate education. Regardless, it never hurts to review some things—and this information has stood the test of time, I promise. We also will cover this in more detail. Read chaps. 8 and 9, which cover the third and fourth step of the public relations process. They will be provided to you.
- Oct. 14:** We'll have two guest speakers who will talk about creating city magazines—their purpose, whether they are essentially the same from one country to the next—in this case, the United States and China, and whether they meet their objectives.

**FALL BREAK: Thursday, Friday, Oct. 16-17. Enjoy!**

- Oct. 21:** This is the point in the semester where we switch gears and talk about the case study method, which also is used in most, if not all, MBA programs. I will also provide you with information---and talk about the Page competition. You'll have the opportunity to write a case and submit it to the Page competition, mentioned above. More information on that as we go along. Today, we'll just get ready. ☺
- Oct. 23:** So what is a case? How are cases analyzed? Why? Readings will be provided. We'll also talk a bit more today about the planning "step" in the public relations process. While all four steps of the

communication process are important, planning carefully is essential.

- Oct. 28:** We will talk today about the essential aspects of a case. I will give you a task to do in class that will relate to our guest speaker for Thursday.
- Oct. 30:** Patty Courtright, who heads Internal Communications at UNC and produces the University Gazette, will talk about dealing with major news events, crises, etc., for UNC.
- Nov. 4:** You will be provided with a case in class; you will write a case brief based on that case. This will help give you a bit of practice in case analysis and writing case briefs. You will turn in your brief to me by the 5<sup>th</sup>. I'll get them back to you on the 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Nov. 6:** We will discuss the case you were given on the 4<sup>th</sup>. We'll talk about what you think were the essential aspects of the case.
- Nov. 11:** Today is also known as Armistice Day. Why? Let's examine this in class (if someone can bring their computer/computers to class, we can take a look at the White House website and see if they have anything posted about the day. Why is this a PR opportunity?
- Nov. 13**     **Case presentations**
- Nov. 18**     **Case presentations**
- Nov. 20**     **Case presentations**
- Nov. 25**     **No class today—prepare to eat turkey and work on your cases.**
- Dec. 2:**     **Last day of class.**

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies. Undergraduate and graduate students should:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Units requesting evaluation of a graduate program must also demonstrate how their master's graduates attain this additional core competency:

- Contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.