**Communications Consulting: The Art and Craft of the PR Professional**

9:00-11:30 am Fridays in Carroll 58.

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**Instructor Information:**

* **Name:** Kelly Williamson, president North America, APCO Worldwide
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* **Office Hours:** By request

**Teacher Assistants**

* Scott Conklin [sconklin@apcoworldwide.com](mailto:sconklin@apcoworldwide.com)
* Caitlin Cyphert [ccyphert@apcoworldwide.com](mailto:ccyphert@apcoworldwide.com)
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**Course Description**:The PR industry is undergoing a process of great transformation. The rise of social and digital platforms, the fragmentation of media, the rise of the citizen journalist, the globalization of “issues” and an increasingly diverse talent pool – are forces that continue to shape the industry. To succeed in today’s evolving PR agency environment, consultants must understand industry dynamics – how agencies work and how to deliver value; they must understand client dynamics – how to win them, how to keep them and how to cultivate them; they must become experts in the “art of the pitch” – how to present and how to tell a story in ways that connect and inspire your audience and your clients.

This seminar – Communications Consulting: The Art and Craft of the PR Professional is a designed to prepare you for a successful entry into the world of communications and public relations. Taught by seasoned practitioners with APCO Worldwide – a leading corporate and public affairs global communications consultancy -- this course has three areas of focus and exploration: 1) the agency as a professional services firm; 2) the client; and 3) the art of the win. Upon completion of the seminar, you will be better positioned to succeed in an agency environment. The case study approach, the one-on-one coaching, and the simulations will help you get “real world” insights into the field and what it takes to be successful.

**Course Objectives**:By the end of this course, you will:

* Intimately understand how agencies work – how success is defined and measured; how they are structured; and the politics in play
* Put yourself in the shoes of APCO consultants to advise clients on a broad range of challenges – from corporate reputation issues to crises to brand building
* Work in teams to prepare for and pitch a client on a real-life assignment

**Attendance Policy:** Treat this class as if you already graduated and are in the real-world. You are expected to be on-time, prepared and ready for active engagement. We will expect you to ask smart questions, demonstrate active listening and engage in a thoughtful dialogue. Your participation in class will be a portion of your final grade. If you have a medical or personal reason for missing class, please email me ahead of time or provide a doctor’s note. If you have two or more unexcused absences, **each absence will take** **five points off your final grade**. **If you are more than ten minutes late for class** it will be considered an unexcused absence.

**Use of laptops and smartphones:** You are expected to take notes in class — using a laptop or pen and paper is fine. If you are multi-tasking, texting or checking any social media platforms while in class and appear to not be paying attention, you will be called upon and points will be deducted from your grade.

**Course Grading**

* Class participation, including pop quizzes: 20%
* Attendance: 15%
* Mock Interviews: 10%
* Writing test: 10%
* Pitch competition (prep and presentation): 25% (including peer review)
* Final exam: 20%

**Grading Scale**

93-100 = A

90-92.99 = A-

87-89.99 = B+

83-86.99 = B

80-82.99 = B-

77-79.99 = C+

73-76.99 = C

70- 72.99 = C-

67- 69.99 = D+

63- 66.66 = D

60- 62.99 = D-

0- 59.00 = F

**Honor Code:** You areexpected to conduct yourself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://studentconduct.unc.edu/>). 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. You may retrieve the full document, *The instrument of student judicial governance*, at <https://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/documents/Instrument.pdf>.

**Seeking Help:** If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem - whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** The School of Media and Journalism adopted diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements in spring 2016 with accompanying goals: <http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>. Additionally, the University’s policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined here: <http://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/>. In summary, UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and 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.

* **Harassment:** UNC does not tolerate harassment based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, disability, or for any other reason. It is also a violation of the Honor Code and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Title IX of the Educational Amendments. If you need assistance with a harassment issue or problem, bring it to my attention or The Office of the Dean of Students, [dos@unc.edu](mailto:dos@unc.edu) or 919/966-4042.
* **Special Accommodations**: If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Resources & Service Office website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>, call 919/962-8300, or use NC Relay 711.

**Professional values and competencies**: The School of Media and Journalism’s accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program.  Learn more about them here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>. No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas.  The values and competencies in bold are most relevant for this course:

* 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.**

**Semester Schedule**

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| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Notes** |
| 1 | January 10 | **Class Kick-Off: The PR Agency as a Professional Services Firm**  **How do agencies work?** All agencies rely on talent to succeed. And talent must be organized and channeled in the most efficient, productive and creative ways. What are some of your perceptions about how agencies work? What would you look for in an agency to determine cultural fit?  **Get to know your classmates** | **Class speakers:**  Kelly Williamson, Caitlin Cyphert, Kaleb Pittman |
| 2 | January 17 | **Business Development & Client Leadership**  **Business Development:** who at an agency is responsible for new business? What is the new business process like? From brief to proposal to presentation – lessons learned. We will also talk also about the art of networking and client management – principles, tips, lessons learned.  **Client Leadership:** this is backbone of the agency. We’ll learn what is looks like when it’s done right and when it goes crazy wrong. We’ll also talk through skills must you have to excel? | **Class speakers**:  Kelly Williamson & Leanne High  **TA:** Scott Conklin  **Homework:** Hand out pitch competition RFP & homework assignment  RFP analysisshould address questions for greater clarification; preliminary assessment of the company; assessment of core skill set required to win and other key factors. |
| 3 | January 24 | **Understanding the Client Ask: an RFP analysis.**  What makes for a good brief? What questions should you be asking yourself to best understand the brief? How should you conduct your research? We will also discuss best practices for strategy development—how to garner key insights and develop a sound strategy. Class exercise.  **In class discussion on RFP—key findings, questions, etc.**  10-minute group presentations; questions from the class | **Class speakers:**  Kelly Williamson& Lindsey Hoover  **TA:** Kaleb Pittman |
| 4 | January 31 | **Bringing the RFP to action:** Developing a Strategy, Insight, Idea, and Campaign. Step by Step.  **Understanding Audience Behavior:** how should you define them? | **Class speakers:**  Travis Bullard & Julianne Hyer  **TA:** Caitlin Cyphert  *Kelly on PTO* |
| 5 | February 7 | **A Closer Look: what makes a great campaign?**  **Ideas in Action.** | **Class speakers:**  Howard Pulchin, global creative director, Casey Douglas, client leader,John Vollmer  **TA:** Caitlin Cyphert |
| 6 | February 14 | **Writing Workshop:** To work at an agency, you must be able to write. Let’s learn what we expect in this writing 101 workshop. | **Class speakers:**  Amanda Loughran & Dan Smith  **TA:** Scott Conklin  **Homework assignment:** Writing test |
| 7 | February 21 | **The Changing State of Online and the Impacts it has on a Company’s Operating Environment.**  **Presentation practice:**  What it Takes to Win? Constructing a Winning Pitch Presentation | **Class speakers:**  Marc Johnson  **TA:** Kaleb Pittman |
| 8 | February 28 | **Corporate Communications/ Social Risk: Authentic Engagement in Today’s Current Environment**  How must companies operate in today’s ever-changing world? How are consumers impacting the way they operate? Does a company’s purpose truly matter? | **Class speakers:**  Denielle Sachs  **TA:** Caitlin Cyphert |
| 9 | March 6 | **No Class: Spring Break!** |  |
| 10 | March 13 | **Informational Interviews: 5 groups.** | **Class speakers:**  Kelly Williamson, Caitlin Cyphert, Kaleb Pittman, Scott Conklin |
| 11 | March 20 | **Crisis Communication and Issue Mitigation** | **Class speakers:**  Kelly Stepno, head of North America crisis practice  **TA:** Scott Conklin |
| 12 | March 27 | **Public Affairs & Stakeholder Engagement:** Everything you ever wanted to know about the public affairs sector | **Class speakers:**  Hannah Morecraft, head of public affairs, Raleigh, Renee Johnston, Flavia Colangelo  **TA:** Kaleb Pittman |
| 13 | April 3 | **The business of the business:** Understanding how an agency operates is paramount to success. We’ll talk about everything from how we make money to staffing models and why they matter | **Class speakers:**  Edwin Feliciano, Chief Financial Officer, North America  **TA:** Scott Conklin |
| 14 | April 10 | **No class—holiday** |  |
| 15 | April 17 | **Pitch Competition** | Pitch Competition Presentations & Winner Announced  **Class speakers:**  Kelly Williamson, Caitlin Cyphert, Kaleb Pittman, Scott Conklin |
| 16 | April 24 | **Pitch Competition Debrief** | **Class speakers:**  Kelly Williamson, Caitlin Cyphert, Kaleb Pittman, Scott Conklin |
| 17 | May 1 | **3- hour Exam** | Final Exam |

*Note: guest speakers are subject to change*