# Public Relations Campaigns (SPRING 2020)

Meeting time & location: T/Th, 2 – 3:15pm, Carroll Hall 142

Instructor: Dr. Maria Leonora (Nori) Comello

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Teaching assistant: Alex Kresovich

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**Course Prerequisites**

This is the PR capstone course. The prerequisites are Ad/PR Principles, Public Relations Writing, Case Studies in Public Relations, and Ad/PR Research.

**Course Overview and Goals**

Public Relations Campaigns is designed to help you integrate what you’ve learned in prior classes and apply those skills in the development of a public relations campaign for a real-world client. This is an exciting and challenging process, and I look forward to working with you this semester!

By the end of this course, you will be prepared to think strategically when managing a public relations campaign. “Strategically” means thinking of an organization’s goals in terms of the big picture and the long-term. It also means using a systematic approach (i.e., guided by theory/principles, research, and evaluation) to help you achieve those goals. By the end of the semester, you will:

* Understand the complexities of public relations campaign planning through individual and group work.
* Think critically about campaigns produced in a variety of domains.
* Experience the challenges and rewards of working with a real-world client and creating a PR campaign plan that meets the client’s needs.
* Strengthen your management and teamwork skills by functioning as a “mini agency.”
* Design and carry out appropriate research to inform your campaign.
* Develop a realistic campaign budget, timeline, and evaluation plan.
* Produce polished PR materials for your client that are consistent with strategy and that will enhance your professional portfolio.

**ACEJMC Core Competencies**

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. This course is particularly relevant to the following competencies:

* Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
* Think critically, creatively and independently;
* Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
* Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts

The full list of competencies is available here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

**Communication Policy**

You are encouraged to e-mail me with any questions or comments you have throughout the semester. I will do my best to answer within 24 hours. If your e-mail relates to your group project, please copy your group members on the e-mail. It is your responsibility to check your e-mail and Sakai regularly for messages and updates.

**The Honor Code**

It is my duty to report any and all suspected Honor Code violations to the Student Attorney General. If you are not familiar with the Honor Code, please review it at <http://instrument.unc.edu> . As stated in the Honor Code, “It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic process or University student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.”

A special note about plagiarism: The Instrument of Student Governance at UNC defines plagiarism as “deliberate or reckless representation of another’s words, thoughts, or ideas as one’s own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.” Copying-and-pasting from online sources without citing the source from which you obtained the content is clearly an instance of plagiarism. However, it may also be plagiarism if you rely too heavily on the structure and reasoning of another piece (for example, if you rely too much on swapping out synonyms or making only very superficial changes to content that is not yours). This type of extensive paraphrasing is not acceptable in this course, which requires you to demonstrate original thinking and analysis. If you have any questions about whether your use of reference material is appropriate, please see me. If any part of your work is judged by me and an independent faculty member to reflect inappropriate use of reference material, I reserve the right to adjust assignment and course grades downwards, in addition to reporting suspected violations as described in the preceding paragraph.

**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](https://accessibility.unc.edu/), call 919/962-8300, or use NC Relay 711.

**Diversity and Inclusion**

The school adopted [diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements](http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion) in Spring 2016 with accompanying goals. It complements the University policy on [Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination](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. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University’s nondiscrimination policies.

**Attendance**

I take roll at the start of each class. In the professional world, there’s no such thing as not attending a meeting or workday “just because.” Therefore, treat attendance as a requirement. That said, I understand that life happens. Family issues, health issues, interview opportunities, etc., may arise. To help accommodate these situations, everyone will get THREE absences with no penalty. They can be for any reason. Use them wisely because anything beyond these absences – whether there is a good reason or not, and whether you tell me in advance or not – will result in point deductions. So, don’t use up your three excused absences “just because.” Something may come up later in the semester when you really do need to miss class. For every class beyond three absences, you will lose 2 points or 2% of your overall grade! If you are late to class, there is no guarantee that you will be marked as present. If you are absent, it is important to coordinate with your group members so you can contribute to any group work.

**Participation and Professionalism**

I expect you to come to each class having completed assigned readings and being ready to discuss them. In the interest of hearing everyone’s perspectives, I may call on individuals who do not regularly participate on their own. Please act professionally in the classroom. This means being fully engaged in class discussions, team meetings, presentations, and client interactions. If you show a consistent pattern of disengagement or disrespect, this will be addressed with verbal and/or written warnings. Failure to improve behavior will negatively influence your final grade.

**Use of Laptops and Other Technology**

You are permitted to use laptops for note-taking, research, and other work as assigned in class. However, to minimize distractions to your classmates and to me, please minimize use of your laptop for non-class purposes. It’s particularly important to limit use of technology when we have visiting clients and guest speakers, because they have made a special effort to visit with us and deserve our undivided attention. During these visits, limit laptop use to obvious note-taking, and do not text.

**Required Readings**

There is no required textbook that you must purchase. I will rely primarily on selected chapters from a text (Strategic Public Relations Management by Austin & Pinkleton) and will place PDF copies of these on Sakai under Resources/Readings. Alternately, you may access the entire book as an e-book through the UNC library system (see link under Resources/Readings, *but be aware that the system limits the number of simultaneous users of the online book*). Other readings will come from several different sources and will be available on Sakai. You should complete the readings listed on the course schedule before class and be prepared to discuss during class.

**Points Distribution and Grading Scale**

Your success in this class will depend on strong performance individually and as a group. Points for some group work assignments are further broken down into points assigned by instructor and the client. For the peer score, your teammates will be evaluating your contributions to the group, and the average of these scores across your teammates will be applied toward your grade.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Breakdown** | | |
| **Assessments** | **Points** | **Instructor** | **Client** | **Peers** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Individual work (30 points)*** |  |  |  |  |
| Reaction papers (RP; 2 @ 4 points each) | 8 | 8 |  |  |
| Personal brand presentation | 5 | 5 |  |  |
| Research participation (1 hour) | 2 | 2 |  |  |
| Test | 15 | 15 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Group work (60 points)*** |  |  |  |  |
| Research proposal outline and materials | 10 | 10 |  |  |
| Research report – presentation | 10 | 10 |  |  |
| Research report – written | 10 | 10 |  |  |
| Campaign plan – presentation | 15 | 10 | 5 |  |
| Campaign plan – written | 15 | 10 | 5 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Peer evaluations (10 points)*** |  |  |  |  |
| Mid-semester | 5 |  |  | 5 |
| End of semester | 5 |  |  | 5 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL** | **100** | **80** | **10** | **10** |

The points correspond to letter grades as indicated below. Scores falling in between point ranges will be rounded to the nearest whole number.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter grade** | **Range of points** | **Interpretation** |
| A  A- | 95-100  90-94 | Highest level of attainment |
| B+  B  B- | 87-89  83-86  80-82 | High level of attainment |
| C+  C  C- | 77-79  73-76  70-72 | Adequate level of attainment |
| D+  D | 67-69  60-66 | Minimal passing level of attainment |
| F | Below 60 | Failed, unacceptable performance |

**Assignments**

Written assignments must be single-spaced with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Use “Assignments” on Sakai to turn in reaction papers and other individual work.

Assignments should be completed *by the start of the class* session on which they are due unless otherwise noted. Late submission policy: Assignments submitted within 24 hours after the submission site closes will incur a 10% penalty, based on the overall point value of that assignment (e.g., one point off for an assignment worth 10 points). An additional 10% will be deducted for each additional 24-hour period of lateness.

Reaction papers (RPs; 2 @4 points each; 8% of total grade)

Throughout the semester, I will pose questions that are intended to integrate text/lecture material with client-based work or your own personal experiences. You will be graded on the thoughtfulness and completeness of your responses, per the directions in each question. Use “Assignments” on Sakai to turn in your papers.

Personal brand presentation (5%of total grade)

Preparing to compete on the job market is analogous to planning a campaign for a client – except that enhancing and promoting your personal brand are the campaign goals. To put campaign planning principles to work in this capacity, you will give a two-minute personal brand story that you could use as a response to the standard interview question “So tell us about yourself.” These presentations will take place in the 2nd half of the semester.

Research participation (2% of total grade)

You will be asked to participate in ONE HOUR of academic research conducted within the School of Media and Journalism. Participating in research is a valuable way for you to gain first-hand experience with mass communication research. You will be able to sign up online to participate in these studies. Studies will vary in length but must total one hour. Your participation may be completed at any time this semester that is convenient. If you don’t want to participate in research, you may complete an alternate assignment.

Test (15%)

We will have a test in class that will cover key points discussed in class. The best way to prepare is to review the slides posted for lectures and associated readings. Format will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer.

Research proposal outline/materials (10% of total grade)

Your first team assessment involves proposing research to help you develop a plan to meet the needs of your client and key audiences. Research proposals should include background research (what is known about the company, the issue, target audiences, and previous efforts); your recommendations for primary research; survey and interview questions you plan to use; and your work plan for obtaining research participants and conducting research. Specific guidelines will be provided in class. You will NOT be allowed to begin your research until you have obtained approval from me and (as needed) from the client.

Research report (20% of total grade)

You will present (10%) and submit a written report (10%) of the findings of the research you conducted. At this point, you should be prepared to discuss preliminary campaign ideas that are suggested by research findings. Specific guidelines will be provided in class.

Campaign plan (30% of total grade)

You will present (15%) and submit a written campaign plan (15%) that represents the best possible solutions your team has developed to meet your client’s needs. Your plan must include 1) a review of the client’s needs, relevant literature, and the major findings of your research, 2) a communication matrix to summarize target audiences and their needs, 3) goals/objectives/strategies, timeline, budget, and evaluation plan, and 4) ready-to-use pieces (e.g., press releases, pitch letters, social media content, etc.) and other communication tools that support campaign objectives. Specific guidelines will be provided in class. Client evaluations will be part of the grades for presentation and written report.

Peer evaluations (10% of total grade)

You will evaluate the performance of each group member after you have completed your research report mid-semester and again at the end of the semester after you have turned in your final campaign plan. Peer evaluation forms will be available on Sakai under Assignments.

**Course Schedule – PR Campaigns Spring 2020**

* **This schedule represents a good faith effort to outline our work over the course of the semester. However, because our needs and the clients’ needs may change, the timeline and assignments are subject to change. I will alert you of any changes in readings, assignments, due dates, etc., over the course of the semester. Thank you for your flexibility.**
* **A&P = Austin & Pinkleton; B&S = Bobbitt & Sullivan, RP = Reaction Paper, TBD = to be determined**
* **All due items are to be submitted by *start of class* on Sakai unless otherwise noted.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topic** | **Readings due** | **Work due / group work** |
| Thu., Jan. 9 | Course overview | Read syllabus | Online skills assessment in class |
| Tue., Jan. 14 | Key themes  Team assignments | A&P Ch 1 |  |
| Thu., Jan. 16 | Goals, objectives, strategies, tactics  Researching your client/SWOT | A&P Ch 2-3 | Sign up for personal brand presentation (link on Sakai). |
| Tue., Jan. 21 | CLIENT VISIT |  |  |
| Thu., Jan. 23 | Debriefing from client visit  Case studies in campaigns | Links posted on Sakai | Reaction paper 1 due |
| Tue., Jan. 28 | Developing the research proposal  Group work – draft research proposal outline | A&P Ch 4, Appendix C |  |
| Thu., Jan. 30 | Target audiences, sampling, interviews, focus groups | Posted on Sakai | Work on research materials |
| Tue., Feb. 4 | Surveys, questionnaire design  Finalizing research materials | Posted on Sakai | Work on research materials. |
| Thu., Feb. 6 | In-class consultations to prepare for data collection |  | Submit research proposal outline - must get approval before use! |
| Tue., Feb. 11 | Data collection in the field |  |  |
| Thu., Feb. 13 | Data collection in the field |  |  |
| Tue., Feb. 18 | GUEST SPEAKER – TBD |  |  |
| Thu., Feb. 20 | Analysis and write-up  Progress reports in class | Stacks Ch. 15 |  |
| Tue., Feb. 25 | Prep for research presentations  Develop handout & slides |  |  |
| Thu., Feb. 27 | Research presentations  CLIENT VISIT |  | Submit slides and one-page handout |
| Tue., Mar. 3 | Debriefing from client visit  Theories of persuasion | A&P Ch 14 |  |
| Thu., Mar. 5 | Developing your “big idea”  Campaign examples  Personal brand guidelines | “Big idea” article Campaign examples | Submit final research report by 5pm |
| Tue., Mar. 10 | SPRING BREAK |  |  |
| Thu., Mar. 12 | SPRING BREAK |  |  |
| Tue., Mar. 17 | Writing goals, objectives, strategies, & tactics | A&P Ch 3 (review), A&P Ch 15 | 3-4 personal brand pres.  Develop draft of plan in class |
| Thu., Mar. 19 | Social media strategies  Revisit plan | Posted on Sakai | 3-4 personal brand pres.  Draft social media content |
| Tue., Mar. 24 | Messaging/organizational identity  Developing ready-to-use pieces | Posted on Sakai | 3-4 personal brand pres.  Draft other ready-to-use pieces |
| Thu., Mar. 26 | Client check-in day |  |  |
| Tue., Mar. 31 | Timeline, evaluation, budget | B&S Ch 9-10 | 3-4 personal brand pres.  Draft of timeline, eval plan, and budget |
| Thu., Apr. 2 | Putting together the final plan  Rubrics for final presentation/paper | A&P Ch 16  Campaign examples | Reaction paper 2 due  3-4 personal brand pres. |
| Tue., Apr. 7 | Defending your plan |  |  |
| Thu., Apr. 9 | In-class consultations/group work |  |  |
| Tue., Apr. 14 | Test |  |  |
| Thu., Apr. 16 | Practice presentations |  |  |
| Tue., Apr. 21 | CLIENT PRESENTATIONS (2 GROUPS) |  | Submit slide deck (if presenting) |
| Thu., Apr. 23 | CLIENT PRESENTATIONS (2 GROUPS) |  | Submit slide deck (if presenting).  If you are writing article summaries in lieu of research participation, the summaries are due by start of class. |
| FINAL PLANS DUE MAY 4  Scheduled final exam date is Monday, May 4, 12 noon. Although we are not having a traditional final exam during this period, we are required to meet in class per university policy. Please meet in class and use the time with your group to self-assess your work: read through your final campaign plan as a group; edit for flow, clarity, and adherence to rubric; and then submit by end of allotted final exam period (3pm) on Sakai.  THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK!  HAVE A GREAT BREAK! | | | |

**HAPPY GRADUATION AND GOOD LUCK TO EVERYONE!**