**MEJO 531.1: Case Studies in Public Relations**

**Fall 2020**

**TR 1:15-2:30 p.m.**

**Zoom meeting**

**Instructor**

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Associate Professor

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Office Hours: By appointment

**Course Description**

This course will help you think and act as a public relations professional who deals with the demanding dynamic environment of corporate, government, and nonprofit public relations. You will examine real-world situations and strategies and discuss factors that affect how we practice public relations, including identifying publics, developing strategies, embracing diversity and recognizing ethical issues.

**Learning Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Critique public relations research, strategies, and execution;
2. Address today’s public relations challenges and opportunities;
3. Research and examine a real-world public relations case and make recommendations;
4. Apply the foundations of public relations to solve public relations problems;
5. Understand the transformation that has taken place in the public relations industry driven by digital technology and engagement.

**ACEJMC Accreditation Core Values and Competencies by this course**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity
2. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information
3. Think critically, creatively and independently
4. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communication professions in which they work
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society

**Required Text**

Swann, P. (2020). *Cases in public relations management: The rise of social media and activism, 3rd ed.* New York, NY: Routledge.

**Prerequisites**

MEJO 137 Principles of Advertising and Public Relations

**Evaluation**

The evaluation of coursework will be based on the following points and percentages:

Discussion Leader **80 pts**

Pop Quiz **70 pts**

Midterm **200 pts**

Final Case Study & Presentation **300 pts**

Class Participation **50 pts**

**Total 700 pts (100%)**

**Grading scale**

A 95.00-100%

A- 92.00-94.99%

B+ 88.00-91.99%

B 84.00-87.99%

B- 80.00-83.99%

C+ 77.00-79.99%

C 73.00-76.99%

C- 70.00-72.99%

D+ 67.00-69.99%

D 60.00-66.99%

F Below 60.00%

There will be **no round-up**.

**Discussion Leader** **(80 points)**

A textbook chapter will be assigned to each student. You are responsible for presenting the chapter to the class and select the three discussion questions from the end of chapter or your own questions for small group break out sessions. You will lead a class discussion after the main session resumes. You also submit one-page paper (Times New Roman 12 font size and single-spaced) at Sakai-Assignment. The paper includes:

● Case description

● Organization’s actions and messages

● Publics’ actions and responses

● Your reaction and thoughts about the case (pros and cons, lessons learned, etc.)

● 3 discussion questions for the class and your answers

**Pop Quizzes** **(70 pts)**

These quizzes randomly test your constant reading of the chapters scheduled. The questions consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and/or short answer questions.

**Midterm Exam** **(200 pts)**

This exam tests your understanding of the fundamentals of public relations concepts and the textbook cases. The questions consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and/or short answer questions.

**Final Case Study and Presentation (300 pts: 3000 words at minimum)**

The purpose of this assignment is to act as a capstone to all that we

have learned in this course. Your team select a new case not covered by the textbook. Your team submit a paper at Sakai-Assignment (Times New Roman 12 font size and double-spaced) and present to the class. This paper:

● Identify a problem, opportunity or ethical issue that an organization

(for-profit or non-profit) faced that required significant public

relations involvement.

● Background information about the organization, including its goals, mission, values, financial standing, products/services, and history.

● Identify and analyze key messages.

● Describe and criticize the public relations strategies and tactics that the

organization developed and implemented to deal with the situation.

● Research and analyze the media coverage, or any other relevant publics’

reaction and feedback, that the organization received as it relates to

your issue.

● Compare and contrast with other cases discussed throughout the semester.

● Suggest a future campaign message that you would offer the organization’s management based on your understanding about effective public relations practices.

● A list of all sources cited in a proper citation format (APA recommended).

**Attendance**

Attendance is expected, and you are responsible for all announcements and schedule changes made in class. There is no substitute for attending class, participating, listening, and taking notes. **Attendance will be monitored, and the instructors reserve the right to lower the course grade for students with a pattern of excessive absences (more than three during the semester). If you miss more than three, your final grade will be reduced a letter grade (or 10%).** If you are absent, it is your responsibility to acquire notes from classmates; the instructors will not provide notes outside of regular class time.

**Class Participation (50 pts)**

This consists of in-class discussion and attendance.

**Honor Code**

The Honor Code, embodying the ideals of academic honesty, integrity and responsible citizenship, has governed the performance of all academic work and student conduct at the University for 125 years. Your acceptance of enrollment in the University presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in this code and a respect for this most significant University tradition. Your participation in this course comes with the expectation that your work will be completed in full observance of the Honor Code. For more information, go here: honor.unc.edu.

**Student Accommodations**

If you need accommodations to participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about accommodations visit the Accessibility Services website at accessibility.unc.edu.

**Diversity**

The University’s policy statements on Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination are outlined at <http://policy>.sites.unc.edu/files/2013/04/nondiscrim.pdf. In summary, UNC 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.

**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 or 919.966.4042.

**Use of Laptops and Other Technology**

You are required bring your laptops or tablets for class participation, lecture quizzes, note-taking, research, and other work as assigned in class. However, to minimize distractions, please do not use your laptop for non-class activities (e.g. Facebook, iMessage, etc.). You should not be on your phone during class for non-lecture related activities. Please consult with the professor if you are recording the lectures.

**Form**

All writing assignments should be (1) submitted on letter size paper; (2) prepared in a Times New Roman 12-point typeface; (3) one inch margin at all side; and (4) double-spaced unless otherwise noted.

**Course Schedule**

The following is a tentative outline of topics over the course of the semester and is subject to change.

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| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Cases in News** | **Readings** |
| 1 | August 11/13 | Course overview; Intro to PR |  | Chapter 1  Appendix A & C |
| 2 | August 18/20 | Ethics and the Law |  | Chapter 2 |
| 3 | August 25/27 | Corporate Social Responsibility |  | Chapter 3 |
| 4 | September  1/3 | Media Relations |  | Chapter 4 |
| 5 | September  8/10 | Media Relations continued |  |  |
| 6 | September  15/17 | Conflict Management |  | Chapter 5 |
| 7 | September  22/24 | Activism |  | Chapter 6 |
| 8 | September  29/October 1 | Activism continued |  |  |
| 9 | October 6/8 | **Midterm October 8** |  |  |
| 10 | October 13/15 | Consumer Relations |  | Chapter 7 |
| 11 | October 20/22 | Entertainment and Leisure |  | Chapter 8 |
| 12 | October 27/29 | Community Relations |  | Chapter 9 |
| 13 | November 3/5 | Cultural and others |  | Chapter 10 |
| 14 | November 10/12 | Investor Relations |  | Chapter 11 |
| 15 | November 17 | Team meeting with instructor |  |  |
| 16 | **November 19** | **Final Exam Schedule 2:00 pm** |  | Final Case Study Due |