

MEJO 531.001: Case Studies in Public Relations
Spring - 2021
Class Time: 3:30pm to 4:45pm, Tuesdays & Thursdays

Instructor: Joseph Czabovsky, J.D., Ph.D.

Office Hours: 4:45pm to 6:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays; or by appointment

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Prerequisite: MEJO 137 – “Principles of Advertising and Public Relations”

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, 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;
- (5) Practice effective written and presentation skills;
- (6) Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- (7) Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to public relations;
- (8) Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.

Required Text and Readings

- *Cases in Public Relations Management – The Rise of Social Media and Activism* – Third Edition – Patricia Swann
- Additional Readings may be assigned and posted to Sakai, made available in class or in the Park Library

Sakai

Other than this syllabus, important information can be found on Sakai. Updates will be frequent, so check back often for important course information. You are responsible for any course changes that may be made on Sakai, including changes to the syllabus or assignments.

Diversity

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. Please see more about our MJ Diversity and Inclusion plan here: <http://mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>.

Honor Code

All students must follow University Honor Code policies. Information, including your responsibilities as a student, is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance (<http://instrument.unc.edu>).

Student Accommodations

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office (919-962-8300 or accessibility@unc.edu). Detailed information about the registration process is available at <https://ars.unc.edu/accommodations>.

Accreditation

Hussman'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. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on:

- 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.
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve

Grading and Assignments

Online Course Structure and Preparation

The case study method is the major teaching tool for this course. Group discussion of cases is the heart of the class. Each student is expected to have read assigned cases and be ready to discuss them critically come class time or in the forums if doing asynchronous.

NOTE: Class attendance is essential. It will be impossible to get an "A" in this course without active and thoughtful participation in the discussion of the cases. Students will also be called on to present case facts, as well as analyze public relations strategies for assigned readings. Asynchronous options are also below, if unable to attend live.

Late assignments will lose 10% for every class day that they are late. Assignments are late if they are turned in after the start of class when assignments are due.

Course Grading

Class Participation	150
Cases in the News Forums	100
Midterm Case Study	300
<u>Final Case Study</u>	<u>450</u>
	1000

Requirements for the Course

Class Participation

150

This is a discussion-based course. To promote interesting and insightful discussion, you must be prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

Synchronous: The 150 points will be based on live in-person and/or online class discussion and attendance. Class discussion points will be based on voluntary actions, such as offering your thoughts or asking questions. You will also be graded on me asking you questions in class. I will call on you and ask you questions about the reading and about your thoughts beyond the reading. So, do the reading and be prepared to answer questions.

Negative participation, i.e., non-active participation, distracting others, or not treating the course or others with respect will result in a loss of points.

NOTE: Unlike some courses, do not think participation points are a cushion or a pad to your grade. You will not get an "A" in the participation section just by doing nothing wrong. You have to **earn** an "A" in participation, just as you would by studying for the exams in other courses.

Asynchronous: In an online environment, I know not all of you will always be able to attend class live. To help accommodate any issues you may have, if you do not attend live online class,

you can participate via forums for that day's class.

To earn your participation points in an async fashion, you can post a 200-word post showing critical thought about that day's cases. To count for attendance and participation, you must post your thoughts within 24 hours of that particular class, unless you've received instructor approval. An additional rubric will be posted after the first day of class for this option.

Attendance: I consider this a professional environment. In the professional world, attendance is a requirement. That said, I understand that life happens, and, especially in 2021, family issues, health issues, and other concerns may, and do, occur. So, everyone will get *THREE* absences with no penalty. They can be excused or unexcused.

Sync Attendance: I'll take attendance for in-person/live online classes, so all you need to do is show up.

Async Attendance: If unable to attend a class live, you can also attend via your 200-word forum post for that day's class, as long as it's posted within 24 hours of that class, unless you've received instructor approval.

For every class beyond three that you don't attend and/or post via forum, you will lose 10 points from your Participation grade.

NOTE: Below are brief descriptions of the assignments. Full grading rubrics and assignment instructions will be handed out for each assignment during the course of the semester. You are responsible for following these assignment rubrics and requirements.

Four Cases in the News Forum Posts **100**

To stay current, you'll see many classes have Cases in the News Forum Posts. This is different from the async forum post option above. An additional rubric will be posted to discuss what you should put in these posts. But, the goal on these days is for you to discuss something happening in the news or relatively recently that we could discuss at the start of class on those days. We won't be able to discuss everyone's, but this will allow you to write up some thoughts and bring attention to things that are occurring.

Each of these posts are worth 15 points. 40 Points will be assigned as a "Covid Curve." Posts must be posted before class starts to be accepted, or they will result in a zero. **If you are attending async**, these posts will be in addition to your participation and attendance post for that day.

Midterm Case Study **350**

Due: March 9th at the Start of Class

- A written case brief will serve as your midterm exam.
- Your brief will be graded in two parts: (1) the synopsis of the case situation/facts (30%), and (2) the analysis of the case, including course terminology (70%).
- **A full grading rubric will be placed on Sakai several weeks in advance of the assignment. And we will discuss in class at length.**

Final Case Study
Due May 8th at 7:00pm

450

- The purpose of this assignment is to act as a capstone to all that we have learned in this course. You will select another case example that is different from your midterm assignment. This assignment is longer in length, allowing you space to offer a more critical examination of your case. This occurs as you will have learned more in the semester by this point than at the time of your midterm.

You 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, or any other relevant reaction and feedback, that the organization received as it relates to your issue.
- **The above is just a summary. A full grading rubric will also be placed on Sakai several weeks in advance of the assignment.**

AGAIN: NOTE ON ASSIGNMENTS: Additional Grading Rubrics will be handed out throughout the semester to assist you with your assignments; those rubrics will be the basis of your grade for each assignment, so make sure to follow those rubrics when completing assignments. The information in this syllabus merely acts as a summary of each assignment.

GRADING SCALE

A =	93.0-100%	C+ =	78.0-79.99%	F =	<60.0%
A- =	90-92.99%	C =	73.0-77.99%		
B+ =	88.0-89.99%	C- =	70-72.99%		
B =	83.0-87.99%	D+ =	68.0-69.99%		
B- =	80-82.99%	D =	60.0-67.99%		

Note: I do not round up.

Schedule

January 19th: Introduction

Readings or Assignments Due:

January 21st: PR Review

Readings or Assignments Due: Chapter 1

January 26th: Media Relations I

Readings or Assignments Due: ALS Case 9; Face Value Case 10

January 28th: Media Relations II

Readings or Assignments Due: Chevy Guy Case 8; Domino's Case 11

February 2nd: Media Relations III

Readings or Assignments Due: State Owned Utility Case 12; **See Sakai for Case II**

February 4th: Ethics & Law

Readings or Assignments Due: What Would You Do Case 1; Chocolate Milk Case 2

February 11th: Ethics & Law II

Readings or Assignments Due: Disclosure Case 3; Product Packaging Case 4

February 16th: Wellness Day!

February 18th: Community Relations I

Readings or Assignments Due: I'm Watching You Case 30

Forum Post

February 23rd: Community Relations II

Readings or Assignments Due: NOLA Case 29; Real Thing Case 31

February 25th: Consumer Relations I

Readings or Assignments Due: Starbucks Case 22

Forum Post

March 2nd: Consumer Relations II

Readings or Assignments Due: Keep Calm Case 23

Forum Post

March 4th: Consumer Relations III

Readings or Assignments Due: Potato Case 24

Forum Post

March 9th: Cultural and Other Considerations I

Readings or Assignments Due: Epic Fails Case 32; Marburg Virus Case 33

Midterm Due

March 11th: Wellness Day!

March 16th: Cultural and Other Considerations II

Readings or Assignments Due: Shark Fin Case 34

Forum Post

March 18th: Creative Day

Readings or Assignments Due: None

March 23rd: CSR I

Readings or Assignments Due: Food For Thought Case 5

Forum Post

March 25th: CSR II

Readings or Assignments Due: Apple Case 6; Wine Case 7

March 30th: Activism I

Readings or Assignments Due: Blackfish/Seaworld: Cases 17 & 18

April 1st: Activism II

Readings or Assignments Due: Break the Silence: Case 21; United Guitar Case 20

April 6th: Conflict Management I

Readings or Assignments Due: Flying Unfriendly Skies Case 13

Forum Post

April 8th: Career Day

Readings or Assignments Due: None

April 13th: Conflict Management II

Readings or Assignments Due: Pink Slime Case 14; Politics of Pink Case 15

April 15th: Conflict Management III

Readings or Assignments Due: Deepwater Case 16

Forum Post

April 20th: Entertainment & Leisure I

Readings or Assignments Due: Concussions Case 25; Sony Case 28

April 22nd: Entertainment & Leisure II

Readings or Assignments Due: Penn State Case 26; Salem Case 27

April 27th: Financial Communication I

Readings or Assignments Due: IPO Case 35; Paychex Case 38

April 29th: Financial Communication II

Readings or Assignments Due: Wells Fargo Cases 36 & 37

Forum Post

May 4th: Internal Communications

Readings or Assignments Due: None

Final Due Date: May 8th. Exam Time: 4:00-7:00pm. Final is due by 7:00pm.