

**MEJO 531.002: Case Studies in Public Relations**  
**Fall - 2021 - Room 143**  
**Class Time: 12:30pm to 1:45pm, Mondays & Wednesdays**

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

Office Hours: 11:00am-12:15pm on Mondays and Wednesdays, or by appointment - Room 223

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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 Saka: <http://sakai.unc.edu>.

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.

### **Attendance**

#### **University Policy**

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except

for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).

### **Class Policy**

For situations when an absence is not University approved (e.g., a job interview or club activity), instructors determine their own approach to missed classes and make-up assessments and assignments: <http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/>

### **Honor Code**

Each student will conduct themselves within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.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. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

### **ARS**

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 barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

### **Title IX**

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator

(Elizabeth Hall, interim – [titleixcoordinator@unc.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvscc@unc.edu](mailto:gvscc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu).

### **Policy on Non-Discrimination**

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied. If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu)) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

### **Diversity Statement**

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on prohibiting harassment and discrimination. 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.

### **Mask Use**

All enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the Office of Student Conduct. At that point, you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see <https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/>.

### **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**

### ***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>
	<b>1000</b>

## 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 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:** 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 class in person, 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 48 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 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 48 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: October 6th 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. We will discuss in class at length.**

### **Final Case Study**

**450**

**Due December 4th 3:00pm**

- 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

Aug 18: Introduction

*Readings or Assignments Due:* None

August 23: PR Review

*Readings or Assignments Due:* Chapter 1

August 25: Media Relations I

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

August 30: Media Relations II

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

September 1: Media Relations III

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

September 8: Ethics & Law

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

September 13: Ethics & Law II

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

September 15: Community Relations I

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

**Forum Post**

September 20: Community Relations II

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

September 22: Consumer Relations I

*Readings or Assignments Due:* Starbucks Case 22

**Forum Post**

September 27: Consumer Relations II

*Readings or Assignments Due:* Keep Calm Case 23

**Forum Post**

September 29: Consumer Relations III



*Readings or Assignments Due:* Potato Case 24

**Forum Post**

October 4: Cultural and Other Considerations I

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

**Forum Post**

October 6: Cultural and Other Considerations II

*Readings or Assignments Due:* Shark Fin Case 34

**Midterm Due**

October 11: Career Day

*Readings or Assignments Due:* None

October 13: CSR I

*Readings or Assignments Due:* Food For Thought Case 5

**Forum Post**

October 18: CSR II

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

October 20: Activism I

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

October 25: Activism II

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

October 27: Conflict Management I

*Readings or Assignments Due:* Flying Unfriendly Skies Case 13

**Forum Post**

November 1: Conflict Management II

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

November 3: Conflict Management III

*Readings or Assignments Due:* Deepwater Case 16

**Forum Post**

November 8: Entertainment & Leisure I

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

November 10: Entertainment & Leisure II

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

November 15: Financial Communication I

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

November 17: Financial Communication II

*Readings or Assignments Due:* Wells Fargo Cases 36 & 37

**Forum Post**

November 22: Internal Communications

*Readings or Assignments Due:* None

November 29: Finals Prep

*Readings or Assignments Due:* None

December 1: Finals Prep

*Readings or Assignments Due:* None

**Final Due Date:** December 4. Exam Time: 12:00-3:00pm. Final is due by 3:00pm.