

Public Relations Campaigns (SPRING 2021)

Days & times	T/Th, 2 – 3:15pm. Our class time will be divided between asynchronous discussion forums and synchronous class meetings on Zoom. For <i>most weeks</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tuesdays: Discussion forum to complete by end of day. Open office hours during class meeting time (optional).• Thursdays: Synchronous Zoom session (lecture and group work). There are a few exceptions; please see the course schedule at end of syllabus for more specific information.
Instructor	Dr. Maria Leonora (Nori) Comello comello@email.unc.edu (Best way to reach me) (919) 928-2440 cell
Office hours	Tuesdays, 2 – 3:15pm and by arrangement at other times. Location: Zoom!
Zoom links	Links to Zoom classroom and office hours provided on Sakai site
Teaching assistant	Jasmine “Jaz” Gray (3 rd year doctoral student) jazgray@live.unc.edu

Course Prerequisites

This is the PR capstone course. I expect you to have taken 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](#), call 919/962-8300, or use NC Relay 711.

Diversity and Inclusion

The school adopted [diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements](#) in Spring 2016 with accompanying goals. It complements the University policy on [Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination](#). 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

Attendance will be taken twice each week to cover the asynchronous and synchronous components. For the asynchronous component (forum posts due most Tuesdays), your completion of the forum prompts will “count” as your attendance for that component. For the synchronous component (Zoom sessions most Thursdays), I will take attendance by reviewing attendance reports on Zoom. Attendance will be entered on Sakai under Attendance.

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 these three absences wisely, because anything beyond these absences (other than [university-approved absences](#)) will result in point deductions. For every class beyond three absences, you will lose 2 points or 2% of your overall grade! Also, if you are late to class, there is no guarantee that you will be marked as present.

If you need to be absent, please notify your group members so you can contribute to any group work.

Participation and Professionalism

I expect you to come to each synchronous class having completed any 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.

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.

Assignments

Written assignments must be single-spaced with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Use “Assignments” on Sakai to turn in individual and group assignments. For group assignments, designate one person per group to submit.

Graded assignments (individual and group) 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.

Discussion forum posts have no point-value; rather, they are your attendance activity for the class session on which they are due. To be marked “present” for those sessions, submit your discussion forum posts by the deadline specified in the forum. Forums will close at the deadline; if you do not submit in time, you will be marked “absent.” See attendance policy above.

Individual assignments (2 @ 9 points each; 18% 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.

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 (20%)

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. Format will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer. The exam will be administered using the Tests feature on Sakai.

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 (15% of total grade)

You will submit a written report of the findings of the research you conducted. No formal presentation in class or to the client, because the final presentation will include both the research insights and your plan. Specific guidelines will be provided in class.

Campaign plan (25% of total grade)

You will present (10%) 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) goals/objectives/strategies, timeline, budget, and evaluation plan, 3) two ready-to-use/adapt pieces (e.g., press releases, pitch letters, social media content, etc.) and other communication tools that support campaign objectives, and 4) references and other appendix materials. Specific guidelines will be provided in class. Client evaluations will be part of the grades for the 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.

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.

Assessments	Points	Breakdown		
		Instructor	Client	Peers
Individual work (40 points)				
Individual assignments (case analysis and reflection) 2 @ 9 points each)	18	18		
Test	20	20		
Research participation (1 hour)	2	2		
Group work (50 points)				
Client profile and SWOT	5	5		
Research proposal outline and materials	5	5		
Research report – written	15	15		
Campaign plan – presentation	10	5	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	95-100	Highest level of attainment
A-	90-94	
B+	87-89	High level of attainment
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Adequate level of attainment
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Minimal passing level of attainment
D	60-66	
F	Below 60	Failed, unacceptable performance

Course Schedule – PR Campaigns Spring 2021

- 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, TBD = to be determined
- Discussion forum posts should be submitted by end of the day on which they are due. For individual and group graded assignments, please check assignment submission site on Sakai.

Date	Topic	Readings due	Work due / group work
Tue., Jan. 19	Discussion forum: Introductions		Respond to forum prompt(s) by end of week
Thu., Jan. 21	Synchronous Zoom session: Course overview	Read syllabus	
Tue., Jan. 26	Discussion forum: Strategic approach	A&P Ch 1	Respond to forum prompt(s) by end of day
Thu., Jan. 28	Synchronous Zoom session: Strategic approach Pitches for clients		Submit preferences for client team assignment
Tue., Feb 2	Discussion forum: Goals, objectives, strategies, tactics (GOST)	A&P Ch 2-3	Respond to forum prompt(s) by end of day
Thu., Feb 4	Synchronous Zoom session: GOST Team assignments		Hold first group meeting in breakout rooms during class time Set up time for whole group to meet with client in next week or two.
Tue., Feb. 9	Synchronous Zoom session: Guest talk from Park Library director Stephanie Willen Brown	Readings from Stephanie	Work in groups to do background research on client and specific challenges. Plan for client profile assignment due Feb 18.
Thu., Feb. 11	No discussion forum or Zoom meeting. Use time to meet with clients and get ideas for what research would be most useful.		
Tue., Feb. 16	Wellness Day		
Thu., Feb. 18	Synchronous Zoom session: Present client profiles and SWOT		Submit client profiles and SWOT (graded group assignment)
Tue., Feb. 23	Discussion forum: Determining research needs	A&P Ch 4	Respond to forum prompt(s) by end of day

Thu., Feb. 25	Synchronous Zoom session: Developing a research proposal Research methods review		Work in groups to brainstorm research needs. Begin to fill out research proposal outline.
Tue., Mar. 2	No discussion forum. Submit individual case study summary instead.		Submit case study (individual graded assignment).
Thu., Mar. 4	Synchronous Zoom session: Guest talk TBD		Continue to develop research proposal outline.
Tue., Mar. 9	No discussion forum. Lots of other things to submit!		Submit research proposal outline (graded group assignment) Submit mid-semester & peer evaluations
Thu., Mar. 11	Wellness Day		
Tue., Mar. 16	Group consultations with feedback on proposals		Revise based on feedback; continue to prep for doing research
Thu., Mar. 18	CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH! Zoom classroom open, but no attendance taken.		
Tue., Mar. 23	CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH! No discussion forum. Zoom classroom open, but no attendance taken.		
Thu., Mar. 25	Synchronous Zoom session: Analysis and write-up Progress reports in class	Stacks Ch. 15	Be prepared to give a progress report of how your research went. Work in groups to write up your research report.
Tue., Mar. 30	Discussion forum: Channels	A&P Ch 3 (review) & PESO chapter	Respond to forum prompt(s) by end of day
Thu., Apr. 1	Synchronous Zoom session: Turning insights into a plan		Submit research report to me (graded group assignment). Work in groups to develop your campaign plan using your research.
Tue., Apr. 6	Discussion forum: The “nitty gritty” of planning	B&S Ch 9-10	Respond to forum prompt(s) by end of day
Thu., Apr. 8	Synchronous Zoom session: Budget, timeline, evaluation		Continue to work on campaign plan; begin to draft budget, timeline, and evaluation plan. Incorporate any client feedback from research report.
Tue., Apr. 13	No discussion forum. Individual reflection assignment instead.		Submit reflection (individual graded assignment).

Thu., Apr. 15	Synchronous Zoom session: Developing supporting pieces		Work in your group to develop at least two “ready to use/adapt” items that support key pieces of plan
Tue., Apr. 20	Test / Assessment		
Thu., Apr. 22	Synchronous Zoom session: Prep for final presentations Pair up with another group to critique plans		Submit draft of your campaign plan and supporting pieces to me for feedback
Tue., Apr. 27	Group consultations/practice		
Thu., Apr. 29	Synchronous Zoom session: Client presentations – 2 groups		Presenting groups – submit slide deck
Tue., May. 4	Synchronous Zoom session: Client presentations – 2 groups		Presenting groups – submit slide deck

FINAL PLANS AND PEER EVALUATIONS DUE MAY 13 BY 3PM.

Scheduled final exam date is Thursday, May 13, 12 noon. Although we are not having a traditional final exam during this period, we are required to have a final meeting per university policy. Our Zoom classroom will be open from 12-3pm to allow you and your group to self-assess your work using tools I will provide. I will also be available to answer any questions. Submit your final campaign plan by end of final exam period (3pm) on Sakai. Peer evaluations are also due May 13.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK!

HAVE A GREAT BREAK!

HAPPY GRADUATION TO SENIORS, AND GOOD LUCK TO EVERYONE!