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

**Fall 2021**

**TTH 12:30-1:45 p.m.**

**CA 283**

**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:

Exam 1 & 2 200 pts

Team Project

Case Report 100 pts

Presentation 20 pts

Peer Evaluation 30 pts

Class Participation 50 pts

**Total 400 pts (100%)**

**Grading scale**

A 95.00-100%

A- 92.00-94.99%

B+ 87.00-91.99%

B 83.00-87.99%

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**.

**Exam**

Exam is designed to test the student’s knowledge and understanding of the main ideas covered in the readings, discussion, and exercises. The questions consist of multiple-choice, and true/false questions. There is no make-up exam for unexcused absence.

**Team Project**

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).

**Participation**

Class participation consists of attendance, class exercise, and overall participation to class discussion. Students may take upto two unexcused absences without penalty and additional unexcused absences will result in a proportional reduction in the course grade. Students are required to submit document verification for excused absences, which fall under university guidelines.

**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](https://ars.unc.edu/) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](https://eoc.unc.edu/what-we-do/accommodations/) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](https://odos.unc.edu/), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators,](https://womenscenter.unc.edu/resources/gender-violence-services/) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](https://eoc.unc.edu/what-we-do/accommodations/) (EOC).

Please be aware that you are bound by the [Honor Code](http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/honor-code/) when making a request for a University approved absence. *(source:*[*http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/*](http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/)*)*

*Class Policy*

Instructors may work with students to meet attendance needs that do not fall within University approved absences. For situations when an absence is not University approved (e.g., a job interview or club activity), **you have upto two absences of this kind during a semester without penalty. Three absences or more will proportionately affect your course grade.** Please communicate with me early about potential absences.

**Professionalism**

Communication managers must be professional in every sense. Professionalism in this course means:

1. You are required to update yourself about current news cycle, especially business news related to public relations.
2. Attending class, and team meetings held outside of class, throughout the semester.
3. Being prepared for class (including completion of readings and assignments)
4. Treating classmates with respect during discussions and other interactions. Discrimination or harassment with regard to race, gender, creed, etc., will not be tolerated.
5. Completing class and team assignments on time. Any late assignment will receive 20 percent deduction from the original grade.

**Honor Code**  
I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system ([http://honor.unc.edu](https://outlook.unc.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=_PwXhu5wkEKfdEIVTpil9KJAr6RORM8IBwmgW7JyZPUuO4or7Dri_9D4gXEkBO0Z0IIreRKEjIQ.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fhonor.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 in this class. 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](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 ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](https://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](https://unc.policystat.com/policy/4467906/latest/) 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](https://safe.unc.edu/)) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](http://eoc.unc.edu/), 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](http://hussman.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion) with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on [prohibiting harrassment and discrimination](https://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.

**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 -- your classmates and me – as we learn together. 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](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UNCChapelHill&layout_id=23).  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/>.

**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.

**Syllabus Changes**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

**Course Schedule**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Discussion Leaders** | **Readings** |
| 1 | Aug 19 | Course overview; |  |  |
| 2 | Aug 24  Aug 26 | Intro to PR |  | Chapter 1  Appendix A & C |
| 3 | Aug 31  Sep 2 | Ethics and the Law |  | Chapter 2 |
| 4 | Sep 7  Sep 9 | Corporate Social Responsibility |  | Chapter 3 |
| 5 | Sep 14  Sep 16 | Media Relations |  | Chapter 4 |
| 6 | Sep 21  Sep 23 | Conflict Management |  | Chapter 5 |
| 7 | Sep 28  Sep 30 | Activism |  | Chapter 6 |
| 8 | Oct 5  Oct 7 | Exam Prep  **Exam 1** |  |  |
| 9 | Oct 12  Oct 14 | Consumer Relations |  | Chapter 7 |
| 10 | Oct 19  Oct 21 | Entertainment and Leisure  **Fall Break** **(no class)** |  | Chapter 8 |
| 11 | Oct 26  Oct 28 | Community Relations |  | Chapter 9 |
| 12 | Nov 2  Nov 4 | Cultural Considerations |  | Chapter 10 |
| 13 | Nov 9  Nov 11 | Financial and Investor Relations  Exam Prep |  | Chapter 11 |
| 14 | Nov 16  Nov 18 | **Exam 2**  Team Project Prep |  |  |
| 15 | Nov 23  Nov 25 | Presentations  **Thanksgiving** **(no class)** |  |  |
| 16 | Nov 30 | Presentations |  |  |
| 17 | Dec X | **Final Exam Schedule TBA** | Final Case Study Due |  |