

MEJO 531.2 – Case Studies in Public Relations: Spring 2023 Edition

Classroom: Carroll 143

Time: 9:30-10:45 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays

Instructor: Dr. Lois Boynton [she/her/hers]

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Home phone: 919/960-6093 (leave message if needed)

Office: 237 Carroll

Office hours:

M 10-11:30 a.m. and 2-4:30 p.m.

TR 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

W 10-11 a.m. - **Zoom only**
and by appointment.

***See Sakai for Zoom office hours details**

ABOUT

This class 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'll examine real-world situations and strategies and discuss factors that affect how we practice public relations, including research and evaluation; identifying stakeholders; developing goals, strategies, and tactics; embracing diversity, equity and inclusion; and recognizing ethical issues.

Prereq - Just 1

MEJO 137 - Principles of Advertising and Public Relations



UNC E-Mail: Check your school email at least once daily.
You're responsible for course info I send via email.

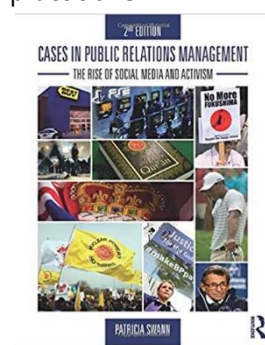


<https://www.clouseronbusiness.com/is-hindsight-really-20-20/>

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be better equipped to:

- ① **Identify** today's public relations challenges and opportunities;
- ② **Apply** public relations concepts by examining recent real-world public relations cases and making recommendations;
- ③ **Critically analyze** a wide spectrum of public relations cases and their research, strategies, executions, and evaluations; and
- ④ **Create your own:** Research and write case studies that reflect your knowledge and expertise as a public relations practitioner.



⚠ Don't buy the book!

Swann, P. (2014). *Cases in public relations management*, 2nd ed.

Available on UNC Library website:
Search <https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/>

and...

Readings: Sakai Resources Folder

[Full text available via the UNC-Chapel Hill Libraries](#)

Where's it at? Syllabus contents:

- ♦ Attendance – p. 2
- ♦ Participation criteria – p. 2
- ♦ What's on the Sakai site – p. 3
- ♦ Grades/grading – p. 3-4
- ♦ Research requirement – p. 5
- ♦ Accrediting council values – p. 7
- ♦ Week by week – pp. 8-14



Always Be Curious

This is a real-world class to examine challenges facing today's public relations professionals. Please keep up with what's going on in the world and in our profession through regular reading/viewing of traditional and evolving media channels.

Some notable resources:

- ♦ [Commpro](#) has daily e-blasts
- ♦ [Marketing Dive](#) – strategic comms campaigns, news, etc.
- ♦ [Ragan's PR Daily](#) runs the gamut
- ♦ [O'Dwyer's](#) Inside News of PR & Marketing Communications
- ♦ [PR Week](#): what's going on in the PR/strategic comm biz
- ♦ [PR News](#): news, cases, etc.
- ♦ [Public Relations Today](#)
- ♦ [Provoke Media](#) – News, reports, stats, da works!
- ♦ [PRsay](#) - blog posts on PR issues
- ♦ [The Skimm](#): sign up for e-blasts

See something interesting? Bring it to class! You don't have to wait for your *PR in the News* day.



Participation

This is a discussion-based course. To promote interesting and insightful discussion, you must be present and be prepared. **Effective participation** requires you to arrive on time and discuss the assigned readings.

If speaking up hasn't been your thing, consider this a safe environment in which to practice.

In addition to warming a chair twice a week, I expect everyone to be **active** participants in the class and online.

Employers don't hire people to sit quietly and nod in agreement, or multitask on some other activity. They invest in people who will boldly share ideas, even if those ideas don't ultimately make the cut.

Negative participation includes not paying attention, being late to class, using social media, doing assignments for other classes, distracting others, or not treating the course or others with respect. Don't do that.



Attendance-ing

I consider this a professional environment and you to be the professionals (OK, I'll be professional, too!). In the professional world, there's no such thing as not attending a meeting or workday "just because."

Bottom line: You can't contribute to class discussion if you're not in class.

The attendance policy aligns with the [university's class attendance policy](#), which states in part, "No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences" – authorized university activities, [religious observances](#), disability, serious health problem, or emergency approved by dean of students.

You may be absent from class **3 times** before I take points off for missed classes.

For each class you miss after 3 – your final grade will be lowered by 3 points. For example, if your grade average is a B- (81) and you have four absences, your final grade will be C+ (78).

DO NOT waste your absences on "the weather's too nice (or too lousy) to come to class" and then ask for an exception to the attendance policy if you are ill.

Please communicate with me **early** about potential absences.

Remember: you are bound by the [Honor Code](#) when making a request for a University-approved [absence](#).



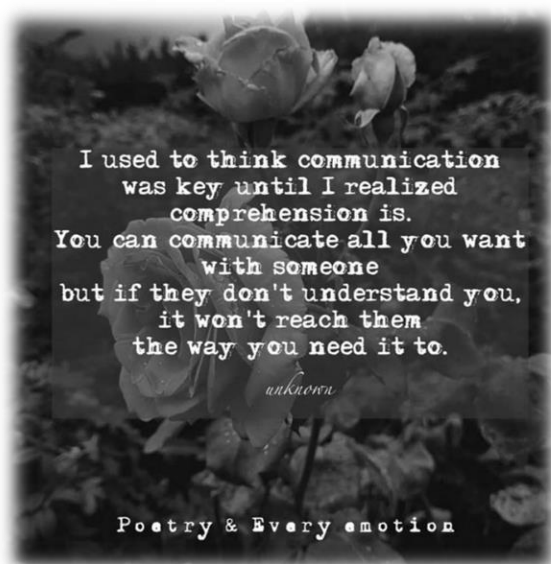
My TAs – Juno and Luna

- ♦ **Calendar** – due dates
- ♦ **Syllabus** – This thing with guidelines and week-by-week
- ♦ **Resources** – Topics folders with readings and any presentation materials.
- ♦ **Assignments** – in-class and homework. Any homework assignments announced in class will be posted after that class period.
- ♦ **Forums**: Post course prep ideas and findings as prompts for class discussion.
- ♦ **Gradebook**: I will post assignment grades. If you have a question about a grade, please bring it to my attention within a week of it being posted (rather than waiting until the semester ends).

What's it at?



NOTE: Save/turn in assignments as Word or PDF documents. I am not able to open assignments in pages



Class Preparation

The case study method is the major learning tool for this course. Group discussion is the heart of the class. You are expected to have read assigned cases, complete case discussion prep activities and be ready to discuss them critically come class time.

By discussion, I mean **voluntarily** offering your thoughts or asking questions. I also will call on you to ask questions about the readings and invite your thoughts beyond the readings.

Professionalism of Work

I expect all your work to be properly edited and professionally presented. Written assignments must be typed using professional guidelines, single-spaced and in a 12-point font. Please turn in assignments on Sakai, and maintain a copy of each assignment until final grades have been reported at the end of the semester.

Assignments and Deadlines

Unless otherwise noted, all homework assignments are due at the beginning of the designated class period (aka, 9:30 a.m.). Late papers (9:31 a.m. and later) will lose 10 points unless you and I agree before the assignment is due that it can be late. No assignment will be accepted if it is turned in more than 24 hours after its deadline – it'll get ya a zero.

In-class activities are just that – you'll work on them in class and turn them in when class ends. **Missing an in-class assignment constitutes a zero for that item.**



Your final grade will be based upon

*Homework and in-class assignments, quizzes	20%
*Participation and attendance	10%
*Follow a professional on social media	10%
*Research participation	5%
*Midterm case brief	20%
*Final case study	35%

Grading Scale

A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
D = 60-69
F = <60
(and +/- as appropriate)

❖ **Extra credit opportunities are unusual in this course. In the rare event that they occur, they will be class-wide, so please don't ask for individual extra credit assignments.** ❖

YOU ≠ YOUR GPA

A Few Words on Grades: I follow the [University's Grading Standards](#), adopted by the Faculty Council. *Fabulous* reading, I assure you!!

Grades are not negotiable, but I will give every consideration to concerns you have about a grade, IF the concern is identified ***promptly***. If you have questions about or dispute a grade, the issue needs to be taken care of within a week of receiving that grade. The only grades I'll discuss at the end of the semester are those assignments you complete at the end of the semester.

Where the grades come from:

Below are *brief descriptions* of the assignments. I will provide full instructions and grading rubrics for each assignment during the course of the semester – See [the Sakai Assignments tab](#). You are responsible for following these assignment rubrics and requirements.

I – Public relations in the news



Source: <https://www.foodbloggersofcanada.com/get-noticed-using-social-media-for-public-relations/>

I hope this will be a fun way to keep up with real-world, current (**in the last 3 months**) and/or ongoing news events that present a public relations issue for an individual, a corporation or a nonprofit organization that you find on your own.

These can come from traditional and non-mainstream news outlets, the InterWebs, books, trade publications, magazines, and occasional activities in the Pit.

II – Follow a public relations/strategic communications professional or topic expert

Learn what the pros think about and do on the job by following one on Twitter, Instagram or LinkedIn. You decide who you'd like to observe. You will submit 3 synopses of what you're learning about your profession through this activity.

III – In-class activities and homework assignments

You'll get to work with concepts through in-class activities and homework assignments, some of which I've identified in the syllabus.

III – Midterm Case Study

Case briefs are several pages in length (not including citations), typed in 12-point, and single-spaced. Your brief will have two parts: a synopsis with pertinent facts (30%) and analysis of the organization's effectiveness (70%), based on your growing expertise as a public relations/strategic communications practitioner. You pick the topic!

IV – The pièce de resistance! Final Case Study

The purpose of this assignment is to act as a capstone of all that you have learned in this course. You will select a case topic that is different from your midterm assignment. This case study is longer, allowing you space to offer a more-critical examination of your topic, based on all the skills and knowledge you've gained this semester.

➡ No tests! ⬅

Class Accommodations: If you require accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. If you need information about classroom/building access, please visit the Accessibility Resources & Service Office [website](#), call 919/962-8300, or use NC Relay 711.



Guess what?! You get to complete **2 hours of research** this semester! How, you ask? Allow me to expound:

Option 1: Participate in two academic research studies in the Hussman School of Journalism and Media. Participating in studies is a valuable way for you to receive first-hand experience with public relations and media research.

You will be able to sign up online to participate in these studies – and, double-dipping is allowed if you are taking another class that requires research participation!

Option 2: Write article summaries (1-2 pages each) of a study topic in [Journalist's Resource](#) with public relations or strategic communications ramifications. Each summary counts for 1 research hour. **Due by May 9 by 8 a.m.**

Option 3: Combo! 1 research study and 1 assessment. Need assistance? Set an appointment with Park Library director extraordinaire Stephanie Willen Brown.



Student Conduct

You are expected to conduct yourself within the guidelines of the University honor system. 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. You may retrieve the full document, the instrument of student judicial governance, [here](#).



The University's Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct is outlined [here](#).

Discrimination violates the university's [Honor Code](#), 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, odos@unc.edu, 919/966-4042 or NC Relay 711.



A few additional reminders:

♦ **Be respectful** – We need to hear what everyone has to say. I hope we have some lively discussions, but we don't all have to agree! So, I request that you be respectful in your disagreement.

♦ **Give social media a rest!** Your laptops and other digital tools are for note-taking and assignments for THIS class. Please postpone social chats, shopping, and doing homework for another class. We only meet 75 minutes twice a week. Focus that time on case studies!

BTW, research shows there is a high correlation between cybersurfing and below average course grades [[Education Psychology](#)]. Just sayin'.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

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](#).

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, ethnicity, 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.



If you haven't already, check out the Heels Care Network – <https://care.unc.edu>



If you or someone you know needs to talk to someone right now:

Text **START** to the Crisis Text Line at **741-741**

[Chat with](#), [call](#), or [text](#) the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline **988**

Call CAPS 24/7 at 919/966-3658 or drop in M-F 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Professional values and competencies: The School of Journalism and Media's accrediting body outlines 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](#). No single course could possibly give you all these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. The values and competencies in **bold** are most relevant for this course:

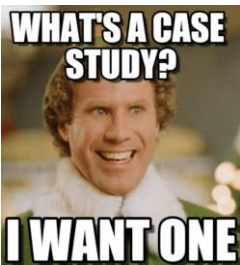
- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- 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;**
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- **Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;**
- **Think critically, creatively and independently;**
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

<http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/principles/>

Week by Week – MEJO 531.2 | Case Studies in Public Relations | Spring 2023

Please note: this schedule may change if speaker opportunities arise, we have a snowstorm, etc. I will advise.

Readings: textbook and in Sakai's Resources tab
Assignments: in Sakai's Assignment tab. Due 9:30 a.m.
Please save/submit assignments in Word or PDF


Date of class	Topic of the day	Readings and assignments due
Jan. 10	Welcome! Introductions, remembering those PR foundations...	☹️ Whine about winter break being over... ☹️ 
Jan. 12	It's déjà vu all over again! <i>Research</i> <i>Publics, influencers, and stakeholders</i> <i>Comm audit</i> <i>Issues management</i>	Readings for this class period (note: they're short!) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ch. 1 intro (pp. 1-15) and Appendices D, E, & F (access book at https://library.unc.edu) ▪ PESO model ▪ Understanding the ROPE Formula in Public Relations (refresher) ▪ How to use influencers in your public health campaigns ▪ Project Unloaded recruits TikTok creators for anti-gun campaign ▪ Introverted? You can still succeed in PR Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum on PR basics
Monday Jan. 16	MLK Day	See the university website for the week's observances https://diversity.unc.edu/events-programs/mlk/
Jan. 17 MEJO Day of Action	Public relations theories and plans	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Textbook – Appendix C (theory) ▪ <i>PR Planning 101: Defining objectives, strategies and tactics</i> (refresher) Homework: Doing theory! Some sources for this assignment are in Sakai's Resources tab, <i>Public relations theories</i> folder. You may find others.
Jan. 19	How to play with case studies 	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Textbook: Appendix A – Guidelines for case study ▪ Textbook: Appendix B – Case preparation ▪ 'Patchwriting' is more common than plagiarism, just as dishonest ▪ Original case study structure handout ▪ Delaware Coastal Cleanup Reimagined Homework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum


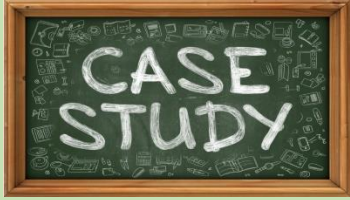
Date of class	Topic of the day	Readings and assignments due
Jan. 24	Ethics 	PR in the News discussion – who's on? Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Sponsored content: 10 rules for getting it right</i> ▪ <i>Native advertising and sponsored content</i> – PRSA Board of Ethics and Professional Standards Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ID the PR professional you will follow this semester. ▪ Class discussion prep-forum ▪ Create citations assignment (APA or MLA)
Jan. 26	Consumer relations Career Services visit	PR in the News discussion Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Textbook – intro to <i>Consumer Relations</i> chapter, pp. 277-279 ▪ <i>Unleash the Cheetle: Introducing Cheetos Popcorn</i> Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
Jan. 31	Consumer	PR in the News discussion Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>PEEPS® makes a triumphant return to shelves for Easter</i> Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum ▪ Follow professional Comment #1
Feb. 2	Consumer	PR in the News discussion Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The world needs more veterinarians. Banfield Pet Hospital and SNL's Kenan Thompson are trying to fix that</i> Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
Feb. 7	Community	PR in the News discussion Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Textbook – intro to <i>Community relations</i> chapter, pp. 422-424 ▪ <i>Little Free Library promotes equity and inclusion through the Read in Color Program</i> Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum

Date of class	Topic of the day	Readings and assignments due
Feb. 9	 <p>Guest Speaker Mercy Quaye Founder & President Narrative Project</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peruse the Narrative Project website; in particular: ▪ <i>About</i> page ▪ <i>RAISED Model of Anti-Racist Public Relations</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
Feb. 14 No class!!	<p>Wellness Days!!</p> <p>Feb. 13-14</p>	<p>and Happy Valentine's Day!</p> 
Feb. 16	Community	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Be Ready opioid overdose prevention campaign</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
Feb. 21	Cultural considerations, diversity, equity and inclusion	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Cultural sensitivity: Why every PR pro needs it and how to gain it</i> ▪ <i>Hofstede's cultural dimensions: Understanding different countries</i> ▪ <i>On a mission to help Ukraine</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
Feb. 23	More DEI	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>This LGBTQ+ group made sure seniors had phone buddies during COVID-19. It really worked.</i> ▪ <i>Black American Sign Language</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum ▪ Follow professional comment #2

Date of class	Topic of the day	Readings and assignments due
Feb. 28	Media relations	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Textbook: read intro to <i>Media relations</i> chapter, pp. 94-100. ▪ <i>Why an all-female Delta crew flew 120 girls to NASA</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
March 2	Media relations again	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Explainer: What does 'off the record' mean?</i> ▪ <i>How to nail a big media interview, according to a PR veteran</i> [and MEJO alum, LaToya Evans] ▪ <i>All aboard: Inside Union Pacific's celebration of the transcontinental railroad's 150th anniversary</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
March 7	Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) policies	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Is corporate America no longer interested in purposeful business?</i> ▪ <i>The inside story on how a viral TikTok video inspired a Sally Beauty campaign</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
March 9	<p>No class meeting!!</p> <p>Finish up your case assignment. I'll be available for questions.</p>	<p>Case due by 5 p.m. March 10</p> <p>Early assignments gratefully accepted! ☺</p>
<p>YAY!</p> 	<p>March 10 @5 pm →</p>	<p>March 19</p> 

Date of class	Topic of the day	Readings and assignments due
March 21	CSR and B-Corps	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Why aren't more brands speaking out on social issues? Here's what we know</i> ▪ <i>Nespresso: Known for human rights violations, now B Corp certified</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
March 23	Social media strategies	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Social media basics: A checklist every marketer needs</i> ▪ <i>How a food influencer's chicken salad recipe helped WeightWatchers create its most popular TikTok video</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
March 28	Crisis communication and Chat about your final case study topic	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Textbook: intro to <i>Conflict management</i> chapter, pp. 154-161 ▪ <i>Elizabeth Holmes and the Theranos case: History of a fraud scandal</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
March 30	More crises!	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Blundering the execution: Better.com CEO fires 900 employees over Zoom</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
April 4	Employee relations, internal communication	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>UNC food workers' strike of 1969, and Cafeteria opens amid pickets, protests</i> (2 short articles in 1 document) <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum

Date of class	Topic of the day	Readings and assignments due
April 6	No class!! Wellness Day!!	
April 11	Advocacy and activism	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washington Football Team drops Redskins mascot: Why? What does this mean? <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion prep-forum Follow professional Comment #3
April 13	Activism and advocacy	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad Council, Meta tell parents to Drop the F*Bomb in fentanyl awareness effort <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion prep-forum
April 18	Even more activism and advocacy	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media activism in 2023: How to go beyond the hashtag Pfizer drafts 49ers running back Tevin Coleman for sickle cell awareness push <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion prep-forum
April 20	Entertainment, sports and leisure	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women can have it all. Herstory: Allyson Felix walks away from Nike <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion prep-forum

Date of class	Topic of the day	Readings and assignments due
April 25	Entertainment, sports and leisure	<p>PR in the News discussion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Launch of the "Nuestras Historias" Exhibit at The Valentine Museum</i> <p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class discussion prep-forum
April 27	<p>LDOC!!</p> 	Everyone share a brief synopsis of your case.
May 9, 8 a.m. our exam day/time (trust me... not my time of day!!)	<p>Final case due</p> 	It won't hurt my feelings if you turn your case in early!!

And then...