

Spring 2024 – MEJO 531-001: Case Studies in Public Relations

Monday & Wednesday – 12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

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Office Hours: By appointment only

Classroom: Carroll 283

Zoom room info (when applicable only):

Syllabus Changes – expect them, they will happen! As your instructor, I reserve the right to make changes (and updates) to this syllabus throughout the semester, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible if they occur. As a best practice, I would keep an eye on the syllabus in Canvas and attend class every day.

Course Objectives

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

- Critically analyze a wide variety of public relations cases, strategies, and executions
- Identify many of today's public relations challenges and opportunities
- Research and examine recent real-world public relations cases and make recommendations
- Practice effective professionally written and presentation skills
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications

Required Text and Readings

- *Cases in Public Relations Management – The Rise of Social Media and Activism* – Third Edition – Patricia Swann.
- PRWeek.com – UNC has an active subscription with PRWeek, so any student with a valid email address ending in unc.edu or live.unc.edu has ungated access to www.prweek.com How to gain access:
 - Already registered? As long as you are registered with your school email address, all you need to do is 'Sign out' and 'Sign in' at <https://www.prweek.com/login>
 - Not registered? Activate your subscription and complete a short registration form.



- Step 1: To create your online account using your school email address, visit <https://www.prweek.com/register/>. Provide your first name, last name, email and password, select your region and then click “CONTINUE”
- Step 2: Subscribers will automatically receive the Breakfast Briefing, Breaking News, Weekend and Weekly Online editions; Be sure to click “REGISTER” to complete your registration. Once logged in, you may go to My Account, sign up for other newsletters and/or update your newsletter preferences.
- Additional readings may be assigned and posted to Canvas and several are hyperlinked below.

Updates will be frequent, so check back often for important course information. You are responsible for any course changes made on Canvas, including changes to the syllabus or assignments.

Attendance and Participation

This is an in-person course. Arriving on time and being ready to participate is important as this is a discussion-based course. This course will use elements of the Socratic method, which requires thoughtful, engaging dialogue.

Let's be honest with ourselves, however. Life does happen and sometimes prevents us from being in every class. To that end, I have allocated three excused absences for all students to use when there is a personal challenge that you must manage. I believe you are adults and I do not expect you to communicate to me your reason for missing class. For each class after you miss three, your final grade will be lowered by three points. For example, if your average grade is an 80, and you have four absences, your final grade will be a 77.

Additional expectations:

- You take care of yourself and if you need support, please reach out to me. We will talk it through. Also, remember that Counseling and Psychological Services are available. <https://caps.unc.edu/>
- All required assignments are submitted on time. Deadlines are noted below and will be shared in class and on Canvas.
- If you miss class, check Canvas for missed notes and/or updates.
- I love my cell phone just as much as you and enjoy a good long scroll through Tik Tok. In class, this must wait. Use of devices for calls, texts and social networking activity will not be tolerated in class unless the platform is part of the day's lesson plan. Please silence your phones and close all social media before class begins. I'll do the same.



University Policy on Attendance

See the University-approved absences here: <https://uaao.unc.edu/>

Honor Code

Each student will conduct I within the guidelines of the University honor system <http://honor.unc.edu>. All academic work should be done with the highest 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 Julie Dixon-Green, 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>

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), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs.

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) 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.

Accreditation

The Hussman School'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 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. In this class we will address a number of the values and competencies both directly and indirectly.

ChatGPT and Other Generative AI

ChatGPT and other Generative AI (Artificial Intelligence that can produce text, images, and other media) are now widely available. These new tools are important for you to master; however, they must be used appropriately and ethically, and you must understand their limitations as you are responsible for your final product academically and in the workforce.

Generative AI ("AI" going forward) is extremely useful; however, it has the following issues:

- The output may contain biases.
- The output may be incorrect or non-existent, even though it appears to be trustworthy.
- The ownership of the output is currently a matter of debate, e.g., the U.S. trademark office will not provide a copyright to AI-generated images.

Usage Philosophy

Usage of generative AI in your coursework is based on the following principles:

AI should help you think, not think for you.

View these tools as a collaborator to give you ideas, perform research (in compliance with point two below), and analyze problems. Do not use them to do your work for you, e.g., do not enter an assignment question into ChatGPT and copy & paste the response as your answer.



You are 100% responsible for your final product.

You are the user. If the AI makes a mistake, and you use it, it's your mistake. If you don't know whether a statement about anything is true, then your responsibility is to research it, or to choose not to use it. You hold full responsibility for AI-generated content as if you had produced them yourself. This means ideas must be attributed, facts are true, and sources are correct.

The use of AI must be open and documented.

The use of any AI in the creation of your work must be declared in your submission and explained. Details on how to source your AI usage are explained below.

The course professor's guidelines supersede these guidelines.

If the professor has not provided specific guidelines for an assignment or exam, then these guidelines apply. However, any guidelines or limits the professor declares for a submission supersede these guidelines. It is your responsibility to ensure you are following the correct guidelines.

Data that is confidential or personal should not be entered into generative AI tools.

Putting confidential or personal data into these tools exposes you and others to the loss of important information. Therefore, do not do so.

Guideline Specifics

Assignments

Writing and Presentation Assignments. In principle, you may submit material that contains AI-generated content, or is based on or derived from it, if this use is properly documented. This includes, for example, drafting an outline, preparing individual sections, combining elements, removing redundant parts, and compiling and annotating references. Your documentation must make the process transparent – the submission itself must meet the standards of attribution and validation.

Simulations. In principle, you may use AI tools for advice, brainstorming, etc. It should not be used to find cheats or other unfair advantages. If a report is part of the assignment, your documentation of how you used AI in completing the simulation must make the process transparent.

Exams, Tests and Quizzes

Written Exams. Unless explicitly allowed by the professor, the use of AI tools is NOT allowed and is considered a breach of honor code. If the use of AI tools is permitted, you must follow the standards for AI attribution, validation, and transparency below.

Oral Exam. The use of AI tools is NOT allowed.

Sourcing Use of AI

Accuracy. Besides inventing sources, generative AI may invent facts as well. Verification is your responsibility: submitting factually wrong material will lower your grade and whether the source of the error is you or the AI makes no difference. You need to check the facts, the quotes, the arguments, the logic, and document what you did to validate your material.

Attribution. All ideas that are not originally your own have a source and that source must be attributed. Please be aware that generative AI tends to invent sources. You have a two-fold obligation.

(1) Find and attribute the original source of the idea, identify the location within the source, and provide a working link to the location.

(2) Document the process by explaining how you used generative AI. For example, “ChatGPT used to outline this assignment”; “Bing Chat used to develop names for this product”; or “Midjourney used to generate this image.”

If you quote the AI itself, label it as “synthesized communication” and reference it as follows: “Content generated in part using (AI tool name). I reviewed, edited, and revised the language. I ultimately take responsibility for it.”

Note that such attribution is not a valid source for facts, only for the output itself.

Where Grades Will Come From

1. Class Participation - This is a discussion-based course based around comprehension and analysis rather than memorization. Class discussion points will be based on voluntary actions, such as offering your thoughts, asking questions and you will be asked questions by me in class, so do the reading and be ready to participate.

2. PR Case Studies in The News - You will do two of these that will be something happening in the news within the last six months that we can discuss in class. We will discuss at least one write-up from everyone. It will allow you to write up your thoughts and bring attention to something current that’s happening or unfolding in front of us in-depth and in real time. Due dates for submission and class discussion are noted below.

3. Homework and In-Class Assignments - You will be assigned some in-class assignments and homework, some of which is included in the syllabus.

4. Industry Hot Takes – Communications and all it encompasses changes at rapid speed. You will submit three summaries/synopsis about a trend you’re seeing, reading about, or watching in the communications industry.



5. Mid-Term Case Study - A written case study will serve as your midterm exam. Your brief will be graded in two parts: 1) the synopsis of the case situation/facts; and 2) the analysis of the case, including course terminology. We will discuss this in length in class.

6. Final Case Study - The purpose and goal of this final assignment is for you to showcase all that you have learned in this course. You will select a case topic that is different from anything you have written about before (midterm assignment or other). This case study is much longer, allowing you the space and freedom to offer a deep and detailed critical-thinking examination of your topic based on the skills and insights you learned this semester.

Course Grading

ITEM	ALLOCATION OF GRADE
Class Participation	15%
PR Cases in the News	10%
Homework and In-Class Assignments	10%
Industry Hot Takes	10%
Midterm Case Study	20%
Final Case Study	35%
TOTAL =	100%

Grading Details

Grading guidelines can be found here: <https://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/grades/explanation-of-grading-system/>. Grades follow a typical pattern: A = 94-100, A- = 90-93, B+ = 87-89, B = 84-86, B- = 80-83, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66 and F = below 63.

Important Additional Reminders

- Check your school email and Canvas, at least once daily. You're responsible for course communications and directions.
- Negative participation can include not paying attention, being late to class, distracting others or not treating me or the others in the class with respect.
- All work needs to be properly edited and professionally submitted. Assignments need to be single-spaced and in a 12-point font. Maintain a copy of your work until final grades have been reported at the end of the semester.
- Zoom Meeting Link will be provided: Only to be used when instructed.



DATE	ACTIVITIES
Jan. 10	First day of class – Intros/Overview
Jan. 15	No class – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
Jan. 17	CLASS BY ZOOM Required reading prior to class: Chapter 1 – A Brief Introduction to Public Relations Discussion: Complexity of our Industry – 7 Principles We Can’t Forget
Jan. 22	Due before noon 1/22 – Pick a principle warm up exercise. Required reading prior to class: Appendix D and E Be prepared to discuss your principle write up.
Jan. 24	Case Study Workshop Discussion Required reading prior to class: Appendix A and B
Jan. 29	Required reading prior to class: Chapter 4 intro pages 103-111; Case Study: When Every Drop Counts pages 121 – 133 Answer 3 of the 7 questions posed at the end of the section (you pick which 3) and submit before noon on 1/29 Be prepared to discuss Case Study in class.
Jan. 31	No Class Today Required Reading: https://www.prweek.com/article/1851048/chipotle-respended-travis-kelces-charmingly-frequent-misspellings-its-name Submit by 5 p.m. 1/31 – Assessment: What did Chipotle get right and how did it impact the business?
Feb. 5	Required reading prior to class: Chapter 7 intro pages 330-332; Case Study: Starbucks – Two Men Arrested for Doing...Not Much pages 333-352 Answer 3 of the 7 questions posed at the end of the section (you pick which 3) and submit before noon 2/5 Be prepared to discuss Case Study in class.
Feb. 7	PR Case in the News Due before noon 2/7 Come prepared to share and discuss.
Feb. 12	Well-Being Day – No Class
Feb. 14	First Hot Take Due by noon 2/14

	Guest Speaker – More to come!
Feb. 19	<p>Required reading prior to class: Chapter 3 intro pages 48-51; Case Study: Apple iProblem pages 75-90</p> <p>Choose from questions 3-9 and answer 3 (you pick which 3) and submit before noon 2/19</p> <p>Be prepared to discuss Case Study in class.</p>
Feb. 21	Guest Speaker – More to come!
Feb. 26	<p>Required reading prior to class: Case Study: Domino's Pizza pages 148-157</p> <p>Answer 3 of the 8 questions posed at the end of the section (you pick which 3) and submit before noon 2/26</p> <p>Be prepared to discuss Case Study in class.</p>
Feb. 28	<p>Grab Another Slice! More Domino's Discussion</p> <p>Practice for Midterm</p>
March 4	<p>Second Hot Take Due by noon 3/4</p> <p>Required Reading Prior to Class: https://www.prweek.com/article/1839378/ozempic-maker-novo-nordisk-reducing-stigma-people-living-obesity </p> <p>Guest Speaker – More to come!</p>
March 6	Midterm Case Study due by 5 pm. No formal class meeting. Early case studies turned in accepted as well. Have a wonderful Spring Break! Be safe.
March 11	Spring Break
March 13	Spring Break
March 18	<p>Required reading prior to class: Chapter 5 intro pages 168-174; Case Study: Flying the Unfriendly Skies, pages 175-189</p> <p>Answer 3 of the 7 questions posed at the end of the section (you pick which 3) and submit before noon 3/18</p> <p>Be prepared to discuss Case Study in class.</p>
March 20	Guest Speaker – More to come!

March 25	CLASS BY ZOOM COVID-19 Pandemic Discussion Second PR Case in the News Due before noon 3/25 – COVID-19 Pandemic related Be prepared to discuss in class.
March 27	NO CLASS TODAY Practice Assessment due by 5 p.m. – will discuss details prior
April 1	Required reading prior to class: Chapter 10 intro pages 489-491; Case Study: Finding Authentic Moments; Avoiding #EpicFails, pages 492-502 Answer questions 3 and 4 posed at the end of the section and submit before noon 4/1 Be prepared to discuss Case Study in class.
April 3	Guest Speaker – More to Come!
April 8	Last Hot Take Due by noon 4/8 Required Reading Prior to Class: https://www.prweek.com/article/1809339/food-influencers-chicken-salad-recipe-helped-weightwatchers-create-its-popular-tiktok-video Influencer Discussion
April 10	More WeightWatchers Discussion – Come prepared to discuss Required Reading Prior to Class: https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/28/business/sima-sistani-risk-taker/index.html https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/14/business/weightwatchers-ozempic-weight-loss/index.html#:~:text=Simas%20Sistani%2C%20CEO%20of%20WeightWatchers
April 15	Required reading prior to class: Chapter 8 intro pages 378-382; Case Study: Penn State Fumbles, pages 403-423 Answer 3 of the 8 questions posed at the end of the section (you pick which 3) and submit before noon 4/15 Be prepared to discuss Case Study in class.
April 17	Case Study Examination Work – Preparing for Final Case Assessment
April 22	Required Reading Prior to Class: https://www.prweek.com/article/1248817/aaahp-address-lack-health-insurance A Strong Reputation is a Competitive Advantage – Discussion



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April 24	Bringing it all Together
April 29	Case Study Check-in, last minute reminders. Bring your questions and your final case study. Submit your class participation self-assessment in Canvas between 4/17 and 4/29. Due before noon on 4/29
May 1	Reading Day
May 8	Your final case study/exam is due by noon.