



# HUSSMAN SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA

Spring 2024 – MEJO 634.001: Public Relations Campaigns  
Monday & Wednesday – 9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

**Instructor:** Natalie K. Best

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**Phone:** 919.606.6015

**Office Hours:** By appointment only

**Classroom:** Carrol Hall, Room 142

**Zoom room info (when offered & applicable only):** <https://unc.zoom.us/j/96477575533>

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### ***Syllabus Schedule Changes – expect them, they will happen!***

*As your professor, 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 OVERVIEW**

This course is the capstone for students in the public relations track and is designed to help integrate what you've already learned about public relations in other classes (and through your out of classroom experiences). You will apply those skills in the development of campaigns for real-world clients. I will instruct and guide you using a combination of my experience (25+ years as a working professional myself having created hundreds of PR campaigns), various public relations educational models, highly acclaimed guest speakers and numerous examples of successful campaigns.

**You will work in groups for the entirety of the course in a challenge against your classmates for the contract of the class client.** This will require being a team player and communicating effectively with your group members and our client all semester.

You will:

- (1) Learn the keys to effective client relationship management
- (2) Execute extensive client and industry research and understand how it relates to campaign planning
- (3) Use research results, a diversity-first approach, critical thinking, team input and creative problem-solving techniques to construct messaging for your campaign
- (4) Learn how to implement traditional, social and digital media into your campaign plan using the PESO Model
- (5) Develop a realistic campaign budget, timeline and evaluation plan
- (6) Produce polished campaign materials, hone your presentation/public speaking skills and make a professional campaign pitch that meets your client's needs and exceed their expectations

This is an advanced and exciting process and I look forward to helping you master it!

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK, etc.**

Planning and Managing Public Relations Campaigns, A Strategic Approach by Anne Gregory (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). You can purchase copies of the book at UNC Student Stores or online ([like the paperback version HERE on Amazon](#)). Additional readings will come from several different sources including a leading industry



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trade publication, PRWeek. 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](http://www.prweek.com).

Here's 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.

## STAY IN THE KNOW:

This is a real-world class in which we're going to examine various issues and challenges faced by today's public relations professionals in real-time. You'll need to keep up with what's going on in the world and in your profession, as current events and issues will play a large role in the class. Keep an eye out for PR issues facing professionals in your field, and I encourage you to raise topics in class to discuss. I will raise them, too, and you'll want to be informed and ready to participate and contribute.

## CANVAS/EMAIL:

- Other than this syllabus, important information can be found on Canvas and will also be emailed.
- ***Updates will be frequent, so check the announcements section of Canvas often and your email for important course information.***
- ***You need to closely check when assignments are due. Assignments are typically due before the next class time. I don't make assignments due at midnight.***
- You are responsible for any course changes that may be made on Canvas or via email, including changes to the syllabus or assignments.

## COURSE POLICIES

### Attendance:

Attendance for classes is **essential**. Just as professionals in the real-world go to work each day, you as students in our professional school are expected to come to class on time and be prepared to work.

### University Policy:

**No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences** (<https://uaao.unc.edu/>):

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:**

I will take attendance for every class. *It is your responsibility to communicate with me in a timely manner (within 24 hours) if you are experiencing issues that fall outside of university guidelines that might cause you to miss a class.* **Unexcused absences will result in your final grade being lowered.** The more classes you miss, the lower your grade will be. If you must miss class, excused or unexcused, it is also your responsibility to meet with your classmates and gather the information on what you missed. Missed in-class assessments and activities cannot be made up unless you were absent due to a University Approved Absence.

### **The “Quality Control” Policy**

You are PR and communications practitioners, and, as such, I expect that you will write and present yourself with great professionalism because that is what you have been trained and educated to do. Therefore, your course assignments and presentations will be scrutinized for their vernacular and presentation. **Assignment submissions must be grammatically correct and free from spelling and other errors.**

### **ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING SCHEDULE**

**Submission Requirements:** *Every assignment you submit to me MUST be typed, double-spaced and submitted as a **Word Doc**.* Acceptable citation styles for this course are APA or MLA – if, at any point in your work, you use information from other sources, you must cite it both in the text and with a properly formatted reference list. Not following these specific instructions will result in a loss of points on the assignment.

**Tests and In-class Assignments:** Unless you have a legitimate, documented excuse, there will be no make-ups for in-class assignments or tests and no extra time given if arriving to class late. A make-up assignment or test must be done within the week following the original date and it is your responsibility to set up an appointment with me.

**Grade Questions/Challenges:** If you have concerns about a grade, please inform me via email. I ask that you wait 24 hours after receiving your grade. Please outline your concerns and provide evidence to support your claim. You have two weeks to challenge a grade after it has been posted on Canvas (this does not apply to grades posted during finals). NOTE: After you contact me about a grade, I will set-up a time to meet with me so we can discuss the grade. I do this to protect your grade information.

### **Graduate Students:**

Graduate students enrolled in this course will be held to a higher standard and required to complete at least one additional assignment. **Each graduate student must set-up a meeting with me to discuss the assignment.** Grading for graduate students will be done according to the HPLF grading scale (High Pass, Pass, Low Pass, Fail).

### **HONOR CODE:**

I expect that 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



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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 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> or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

To initiate services with the Hussman Embedded Counselor, Carolyn Ebeling, email [cebeling@email.unc.edu](mailto:cebeling@email.unc.edu) to schedule. Carolyn meets with students by appointment only and works exclusively with Hussman students. Available services include an initial assessment of needs, individualized planning for reported concerns, initiating engagement in brief therapy, connection to group therapy services, medication management, and referral coordination. Services are offered both in-person and by telehealth. Same-day, walk-in services are available at CAPS (3rd floor, Campus Health) Monday-Friday, 8AM-5PM. For crisis or 24/7 support, call CAPS at 919-966-3658 or call/text 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

### **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](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.



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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](#), 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](#). 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.

## ACCREDITATION

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media'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://hussman.unc.edu/accreditation>. 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.

## 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.

## **ASSIGNMENTS (grading rubrics will be provided, and/or direction and discussion will be provided in class)**

### **Research Report (20% of total grade)**

Your group will perform research for a few weeks, and submit a detailed report. The research will be a combination of several things: performing interviews (at least 10), a SWOT Analysis, extensive online research, viewing past materials related to your assignment, reviewing other similar campaigns for best practices and inspiration, and more. Your research report will be one of the most critical parts of creating your PR campaign. It will help you better understand your client, their stakeholders and the current environment in which they operate. It will also be the guiding light to help your group create the client’s campaign. It will be extremely important for each group member to contribute **equally** to ensure the report is detailed and comprehensive.

### **In-Class Case Study Presentation (10% of total grade)**

In addition, each group will also be responsible for presenting a “case study” in class that stimulates a discussion on a current PR event or issue related to the client, the industry or alike. More to come on this in class.

This presentation should not reveal anything about your final campaign ideas, but should be helpful for the entire class. The presentation must be at least 15 minutes with another 10 minutes of Q&A. The entire presentation should last no more than 30 minutes.

### **Midterm Exam – (10% of total grade)**

The midterm exam will be a test of everything learned from the book, our lectures, guest speakers and in-class group presentations to that point.

### **Final Campaign and Presentation – (30% of total grade)**

You will submit an eight to 10-page final campaign document and present your campaigns to the client either in person (or possibly via a recorded presentation – this will require permission) with a separate set of slides. **Your final campaign must address your client’s objectives, be easy to execute, feasible and guided by your research.** I will instruct and direct you through the process, but it will be up to each group to seek me out for extra guidance.

### **Class Participation/Assignments – (15% of total grade)**

You should be participating in almost every class by sharing perspectives, asking questions or raising issues for discussion based on the topic. Keep up with current campaigns and news around the industry. Ask interesting questions and stay engaged. Don’t simply talk for the sake of talking, but appear engaged



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on a regular basis. You should arrive to class on time. I'll also take into account a brief self-assessment document you will complete evaluating your own participation near the end of the semester.

### **Client's Grade – (5% of total grade)**

The class client will be responsible for 10% of your total semester grade. The client will determine this grade by your interactions/communication with them throughout the semester and the quality of your research reports, final campaign, presentation, and slides.

### **Peer Evaluation – (10% of total grade)**

Being a good group member in this class is crucial and I expect everyone to contribute equally. At the end of the semester, you will submit an evaluation for each group member. Should a problem arise with a group member, I expect you to try to solve the problem within the group. If the problem continues, I should be notified in writing. Written documentation of a student's lack of participation will be factored into a student's grade. *I will also be evaluating the quality and quantity of your work.* I reserve the right to base your grade on how much I feel you are contributing to the group, regardless of group grades.

### **TOTAL SEMESTER GRADING BREAKDOWN**

Class Participation - 15%

Case Study Presentation - 10%

Research Reports – 20%

Midterm – 10%

Final Campaign – 30%

Client's Grade – 5%

Peer Evaluations – 10%

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.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change)**

*Please see UNC Academic Schedule for the Spring 2024 schedule.*

#### **January**

10 – First Day of Class; Class intro. Introductions.

15 – NO CLASS. MLK Day.

17 – Choosing an agency. Client-Agency Best Practices. Hussman mental health support presentation from Carolyn Ebeling.



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22 – Class discussion on Intro to PR Campaigns Basics and PR in Context. **Come to class having already read chapters 1, 2 & 3 and ready to discuss. Groups will be announced.**

24 - **CLIENT Visit in person. Campaign Kickoff.**

29 – Unpack client visit. Discussion, questions, impressions. Groups meet in-class to get to know each other's strengths. Start to identify roles, responsibilities and communications habits. Work on a group name, bios and a communications plan for your work together. Discuss your research project approach. **Read chapter 4 before you come to class as this will be part of our discussion.**

31 - Discuss research rubric. Groups meet to plan research, create overall research questions and work on survey/interview/focus group questions. **Group/Individual bios are due before class starts.**

## February

5 – Research and Analysis Guest Speaker; **Come to class having read chapter 5.**

7 – In Class Exercise and close examination of award-winning campaigns. What made them successful? How to select your case study.

12 – No Class. University Wellness Day!

14 – PR Resources, Budgets, Bill Rates, Contracts and more. Business acumen.

19 – No meeting in the classroom. Out-of-class Work Day. Groups meet to work on their Research Reports.

21 – TBD Guest Speaker

26 – Discussion on the Importance of a Diversity First Approach

28 – Short class discussion. Groups meet in class to work on case study presentations. I'm available in class for any input needed on your work.

29 – **Research Reports Due in Canvas by noon.**

## March

4 – Group Case Study Presentations

6 – Group Case Study Presentations

11 – No Class. Spring Break!

13 – NO Class. Spring Break!

18 – Discussion and knowing the stakeholders and context. **Read Chapter 7 before you come to class.**

20 – PESO Discussion. **Read Chapter 8 before you come to class.**

25 – No meeting in the classroom. Out-of-class Work Day. Groups meet to work on their PR Campaigns.

27 – Mid Term Exam/Test



**April**

1 – Making the killer campaign presentation - understanding how to separate your group from the competition; **final campaign planning should be in full force – working on the programming, presentation ideas, final materials, etc.** winning campaign examples: titles and strategies; Group consultations.

3 – Guest Speaker. Emily Broder, Vice President, Head of Global Communications Merz Aesthetics -- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/emily-browder-91814324/>

8 – Client check-in and client communications.

10 – Timescales and Resources/Evaluation and Review (**read chapters 9-10 before you come to class**).

15 – AMP3 President & Founder, Alyson Roy will Zoom in to tell us about their PR firm and their PR campaign pitch ideas to Disney.

17 – Out-of-class Work Day. Groups meet to finalize their final PR Campaign and prepare for final campaign deck, and presentation.

22 – Final in-class lecture and exercise. **Class participation self evaluations are due in Canvas before noon.**

27 – **Group PR Campaign Presentations!!!**

29 – LDOC. Client visits to announce the winning group. **Peer evaluations due in Canvas before noon.**

FINAL EXAM SESSION – TBD

Final exam times are based on the University final exam schedule.

###