MPPR 605-02 – Public Relations Case Studies
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY: MPS-Public Relations and Corporate Communications
Tuesday, 5:30 – 7:50 p.m. | Spring 2015

Instructor: Diane R. Johnson, MPH
Location: Downtown campus, room C220
Office hours: By appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW
Just as history provides a framework for leaders on how to govern, the study of past and current public relations campaigns test public relations theories, illustrate the challenge of setting objectives, and offer valuable lessons on how to execute and evaluate PR campaigns.

This class will offer students the opportunity to review, discuss, and critically analyze multiple PR campaigns across a variety of disciplines. Using various models that will be discussed in the beginning of the semester, students will be able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of individual campaigns. In addition, students will gain a valuable body of knowledge of public relations tactics. While reviewing each case, students will be able to answer these types of questions:

• How exactly did a particular company generate so much media coverage for a product launch?
• How did that nonprofit manage to bring so much awareness to their campaign?
• What exactly can a news release do for a campaign?
• How big of a budget do you need to execute a successful PR campaign?
• Or even though a particular event generated maximum media coverage, did it really meet its original objective?

COURSE OBJECTIVES
By the end of the semester, students will:
• Understand the basic models that are used to develop, implement, and evaluate public relations campaigns.
• Apply models while evaluating various PR campaigns in a multitude of PR disciplines as well as some of the classic PR campaigns in history.
• Create a knowledge base of various PR tactics that can be used when planning a PR campaign.
• Assess what constitutes a successful PR campaign.

REQUIRED READING
Title: Public Relations Practices: Managerial Case Studies and Problems, 7th Edition
Author(s): Center, A. et al. (2008)
Publisher: Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall
Year: 2008
Price: $0.01 - $48.46 price range on Amazon

Title: Public Relations Cases, Ninth Edition
The instructor will also assign specific articles to read as part of the homework. Students must be prepared to discuss any of those assigned readings in class.

ATTENDANCE
As outlined by the university, missing more than two classes will result in a final grade reduction of one level (for example, an A will be converted to an A-). **More than two absences will result in further reduction of the final grade.** If you are absent for more than four classes, you will be in danger of failing this course.

Punctual attendance is critical. If you have to miss a class – family emergency, medical emergency or other act of God – you must let the instructors know in advance and work out a proposal for making up whatever work you will miss. Exceptions will be made only in extraordinary circumstances.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE, CLASS PARTICIPATION AND OTHER GUIDELINES
A successful class depends on the active engagement of all students. Students should turn off all cell phones, pagers or other communication devices while in class. Class discussions should be respectful and considerate of others’ views and opinions. What happens in class stays in class unless you receive permission from the instructor to share something.

If you are running late, please send an email to the professor with the reason for lateness as soon as you know that you will not be able to arrive at class on time.

Your active participation in class discussions and exercises is a critical component of this course and your learning, as well as contributing to your overall grade. At the start of each class, we will have a discussion of current events and how they impact public relations and/or issues/crisis management for the companies/individuals involved. Please come to each class with current event discussion topics that you would like to discuss. In order to contribute to the class discussion on PR case studies, students will need to read the assigned case studies before class.
ASSIGNMENTS
Timely completion of all assignments is critical to student success in this graduate program. Students are expected to meet all deadlines outlined in this syllabus, should take assignment deadlines seriously, and plan in advance to allocate sufficient time to meet deadlines. **Assignments should be submitted to the professor via email by 5 p.m. on Tuesday the week the assignment is due; a print copy is to be turned in at class.** As a rule, no late work will be accepted; however, we understand that extenuating circumstances may arise. Please inform the professor in advance via email. Late submissions that have not been approved by the instructor (and for assignments submitted after an extension due date) will be penalized one full letter grade reduction for every week that assignments are late.

PROJECTS
The projects for the semester are listed below. Students should incorporate public relations model approaches, such as ROPE, RACE, and Grunig’s models, into assignments noting potential positive or negative attributes.

1. **Individual Case Studies Mini-Presentations**
   Each student will be assigned one case study from the textbook to present to the class on the day the case is scheduled to be discussed. The student should be prepared to outline the case using a PowerPoint, Prezi or other presentation format and lead class discussion and analysis of the case study. Assignments will be made on the first day of class.

2. **Homework Assignments**
   There will be three homework assignments during the semester. These assignments will be completed prior to class and students must be prepared to briefly present (5-10 minutes) key learnings with their peers. Presentations will count toward class participation grade.

   **Assignment:** Students will prepare analyses of the “Questions for Discussion” listed at the end of the cases due that assigned week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PR Practices Cases</td>
<td>Cases 3-1 &amp; 3-2</td>
<td>Tues., Feb. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR Practices Cases</td>
<td>Cases 7-1 &amp; 7-3</td>
<td>Tues., March 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR Practices Cases</td>
<td>Cases 10-3 &amp; 10-4</td>
<td>Tues., March 31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   *All assignments are electronically due by 5 p.m.; a printed copy will be turned in before class.

3. **Group Case Analyses**
   There will be two group case analyses throughout the semester. Groups will not be assigned; therefore, students will be responsible for selecting three or four teammates during the first week of class and will share the group breakdown with the professor. The week before the group assignment is due; the professor will dedicate 20-30 minutes of class time for group meetings/discussion. It is important to note that groups are responsible for adhering to the same grading standards as individual assignments; keeping in mind that group submissions must be written in one clear voice.

   **Assignment:** The group will select two unique cases either a case featured in the textbook not used during the semester or from other reputable sources. Using a different PR model for each assignment, the group will prepare a formal case study and offer creative suggestions for how
the company/organization could have improved the campaign. Groups will share their key findings with the class on the day the assignment is due. Presentations will be approx. 30-45 minutes per group to allow time for class discussion of the case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Cases</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case #1</td>
<td>Tues., Feb. 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #2</td>
<td>Tues., April 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All assignments are electronically due by 5 p.m.; a printed copy will be turned in before class.*

4. **Final Individual Paper – Silver Anvil Case Assessment**

Select a Silver Anvil Award winner from recent years and provide a 10-15 page in-depth assessment of the case. See the blackboard for listings of recent Silver Anvil winning entries. To view the case, enter the title of the program in the search box on the PRSA website: [http://www.prsa.org/Awards/Search](http://www.prsa.org/Awards/Search). If you have trouble downloading the case, let me know, and I will download it for you.

This final paper will involve extensive research into the campaign itself, networking with the agency/nonprofit/organization who conducted the campaign, and any additional information about the current status of the campaign. A list of detailed questions will be provided to help analyze the case. Students may not select any cases discussed in class or in the Google Group. *All assignments are electronically due by 5 p.m. A final printed copy of this assignment must be turned in at the beginning of class on Tues., May 5.*

**GRADING**

Your course grade will be based on the following:

Graduate course grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, and F. **There are no grades of C+, C-, or D.** The following is a breakdown for final grades for this course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92.99-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89.99-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>87.99-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82.99-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79.99-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>69.99-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Criteria for Grading**

**Class Participation** 25%

- Active contribution to class on class subjects
- Participation in weekly current event discussions
- Presentation of individually assigned case study and facilitation of class discussion about the case
- Application/demonstration of concepts explored in class and in assignments
The individually assigned mini-case study is graded on a 100% scale, along with overall class participation. The average of these two elements contributes to 25% of the student’s overall grade.

**Homework Assignments (3) 25%**
- Clarity of writing
- Strength of argument/critical thinking/recommendations
- Completion of all questions assigned
- Sharing insights learned through brief in-class presentations

Each homework assignment is graded on a 100% scale. The average of the three individual case assignment grades is then factored into the final grade for this section, which contributes to 25% of the student’s overall grade.

**Group Case Analyses (2) 25%**
- Deep understanding of communications challenge
- Comprehensiveness and depth of analysis, including incorporation of one PR model approach
- Insights gained from in-depth research
- Organization
- Clarity of writing
- Strength of argument/critical thinking/recommendations
- Citation of research
- Adherence to *AP Stylebook* and APA formatting requirements
- Team member assessment

Each group presentation is graded on a 100% scale. The average of the two group assignment grades is then factored into the final grade for this section, which contributes to 25% of the student’s overall grade.

**Final Paper: Silver Anvil Case Assessment 25%**
- Deep understanding of communications challenge
- Comprehensiveness and depth of analysis, including incorporation of one PR model approach
- Insights gained from in-depth research
- Organization
- Clarity of writing
- Strength of argument/critical thinking/recommendations
- Citation of research
- Adherence to *AP Stylebook* and APA formatting requirements

The final paper is graded on a 100% scale, which contributes to 25% of the student’s overall grade.

The instructor will provide a warning by mid-semester to any student who appears to be on track for a poor final grade.
PROFESSIONALISM/GRADING
Students are expected to be professional in all dealings associated with this class. This includes treating any guest speakers with respect and providing them with your full attention. In addition, all written assignments should be typed, proofread, grammatically correct and follow the AP Stylebook. Good writing is critical to success in public relations, therefore, excessive punctuation and grammatical errors will affect your grade.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES
Georgetown offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed on main campus or at the downtown location:

- **MPS Writing Resource Program**
  202-687-4246
  http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/

- **Academic Resource Center**
  202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
  http://ldss.georgetown.edu/

- **Counseling and Psychiatric Services**
  202-687-6985
  http://caps.georgetown.edu/

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY
Students with documented disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

GEORGETOWN HONOR SYSTEM
All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Honor Code. The Honor Code pledge follows:

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*
PLAGIARISM
Stealing someone else’s work is a terminal offense in journalism, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as “the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another.” More guidance is available through the Gervase Programs at http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html. If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing and the need to credit, check out http://www.plagiarism.org.

SYLLABUS MODIFICATION
The syllabus may change to accommodate discussion of emerging topics. Also, the schedules of guest speakers may require some shifting of the agenda. The instructors will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR
Students may contact the instructor via email or by phone. The instructor will also be available before and following class each week. Please note that during normal business hours, the instructor may not be able to respond immediately to inquiries. All inquiries will receive a response within 24 hours.