

**Principles of Public Relations****Instructor: Dr. Matt Ragas****E-mail: [mragas@depaul.edu](mailto:mragas@depaul.edu)****Web page: <http://www.mattragas.com>****Office: 14 E. Jackson, Suite 1823 (Loop campus)****Office Phone: (312) 362-6003****Mobile: (407) 963-8763****Virtual and Face-to-Face Hours: Thurs. 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. (or by appointment)****Course Description:**

This introduction to public relations course traces the development of public relations industries and practices. Students are introduced to the theories, principles, strategies, and tactics of public relations, along with the roles and responsibilities of professionals working in public relations and affiliated communication disciplines. Through a combination of real-world oriented assignments, discussions, quizzes and exams, students examine industry regulations, societal implications, and strategic planning processes associated with the PR field.

Please watch the Course Overview and Introduction presentation for more information.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

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

- Identify the communication tools and strategies used in the modern practice of public relations
- Demonstrate that public relations is a process that involves research, planning, communication, and evaluation
- Compare and contrast how public relations is practiced in corporations, non-profits, and governmental organizations
- Define how public relations contributes to the success of corporate, non-profit, and governmental organizations
- Illustrate how public relations may be used to inform, persuade, or build dialogic relationships with publics

**Required Reading Materials:**

Wilcox, D. L., & Cameron, G. T. (2012). *Public relations strategies and tactics* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon. **Available at the campus bookstore, Amazon.com, and off campus.**

- All exams and assignments are based on the 10<sup>th</sup> version of the text. Please do not use an earlier version.
- All other required reading materials are posted to D2L in their respective Modules.

### Course Evaluation:

The evaluation of the coursework will be based on the student's performance in four areas, each which constitute a portion of the final grade.

These areas include: 1) three non-cumulative exams (each worth 100 points), 2) nine weekly quizzes (worth 5 pts apiece), 3) a weekly Talk Back assignment (worth 5 pts. apiece), and 4) the PR in the News assignment, consisting of serving one week as a discussion leader on a post (once during the quarter and worth 75 pts.) and serving as a discussion post commenter for seven weeks during the quarter (worth 5 pts. apiece).

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Point Values</b>
Three Exams (worth 100 points each)	300 points
Quizzes (9 weekly quizzes worth 5 points each)	45 points
Talk Back assignment (9 weekly talk backs worth 5 pts. each)	45 points
PR in the News assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion leader (once during quarter)</li><li>• Commenter (7 weekly comments worth 5 pts. each)</li></ul>	75 points 35 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500 Points</b>

### Course Grading Scale:

A: 463-500  
A- 448-462  
B+: 433-447  
B: 413-432  
B- 398-412

C+: 383-397  
C: 363-382  
C-: 348-362  
D: 298-347  
F: 0-298

### 1) Exams (Three exams worth 100 points each)

There will be three exams given during this course. So that you may plan in advance, the dates when the three exams will be open to take on D2L are as follows:

- Exam 1: Jan. 30, 12:00 am CT (exam opens) – Feb. 3, 5:00 pm CT (exam closes)
  - Exam 1 covers Ch. 1 - Ch. 5 in the text
- Exam 2: Feb. 20, 12:00 am CT (exam opens) – Feb. 24, 5:00 pm CT (exam closes)

- Exam 2 covers Ch. 6 – 9, 14 – 15 in the text
- Exam 3: Mar. 12, 12:00 am CT (exam opens) – Mar. 16, 5:00 pm CT (exam closes)
  - Exam 3 covers Ch. 12, 16 – 17, 19, 21)

Each exam will be *non-cumulative* consisting of multiple-choice, true/false and short answer questions based upon the assigned readings in the text, the slides, and the discussions. Exams are a necessary evil; I am not out to trick you. If you do the readings, watch the class lecture presentations, actively participate, and study, you should be prepared. Downloadable copies of the slides for each presentation are available. Exam review sheets are also posted to the module the week before the exam. While these review sheets will help focus your study efforts, all course content that falls under the parameters of that particular exam are fair game for testing.

## 2) Quizzes (Nine quizzes worth 5 points each)

Starting with Module 2 of the course, each week you will complete a mandatory online quiz based on the chapter(s) in the text covered in that week's module. This short five-question quiz is a combination of multiple choice and true false questions based on the assigned chapters in the text. **You will have 20 minutes to complete the quiz and submit your answers. You will receive a zero if your answers have not been submitted by that time.** There are no make-ups. During the quarter, you will complete a total of nine quizzes, each worth five possible points apiece, for a total possible point value of 45 points. There is also an optional self-assessment posted each week. The quizzes and self-assessments are designed to help prepare you for the exams.

- All quizzes will be open and available for completion on Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT and will then close by the end of the week for that assigned module. For example, the quiz for Module 2 will open on Mon., Jan. 2 and close on Fri., Jan. 13, 5:00 pm CT.

## 3) TalkBack assignments (Nine weekly TalkBacks worth 5 points each)

Starting with Module 2 of the course, each week you will complete a mandatory TalkBack assignment in which you will post a 30-60 second audio comment using VoiceThread (<http://www.voicethread.com>) in response to the scenario posted to the TalkBack for the week's module. Instructions for setting up your mandatory VoiceThread account are provided under PRAD 255 Course Resources. Expectations are to have a headset with a microphone for online class interaction including VoiceThread. The material covered in the TalkBack each module corresponds with the assigned readings and materials for that week. During the course of the quarter, you will complete a total of nine TalkBack assignments, each worth five possible points apiece, for a total possible point value of 45 points. This assignment helps you practice conveying your thoughts and ideas verbally in a concise fashion rather than via text, using real-world scenarios that tie to the readings.

- All TalkBack assignments will be open and available for completion on Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT and will then close by the end of the week for that assigned module. For example, the TalkBack for Module 2 will open on Mon., Jan. 2 and close on Fri., Jan. 13, 5:00 pm CT.
- You will receive a zero on that week's TalkBack if you leave a comment after the module's deadline. There are no make-ups.
- If you choose to work ahead on your TalkBack assignments, keep in mind that you will not receive instructor feedback until the time in the quarter when a particular assignment is due.

## 4) PR in the News assignments (110 points total – 75 points as discussion leader, 35 points as commenter)

A great way to start learning about the public relations profession and its many specialty areas is to start following news stories about current PR campaigns, issues, events, and trends. “PR in the News” is a two-part assignment in which (1) one week during the quarter you will serve as one of the *discussion leaders* for the week, while the rest of the quarter, (2) you will serve as a *commenter* on a post made by one of that week’s discussion leaders. The discussion leader part of the assignment is worth 75 points and the commenter role is worth a total of 35 points (i.e., 5 points each week x 7 weeks since **your lowest grade is dropped and you are off from commenting the week you serve as the discussion leader**). For a specific break-down of the grading criteria for both parts of the assignment, as well as detailed instructions, please see the assignment sheet.

- **Discussion leader role:** on your assigned week during the quarter, you will make a short post (approximately 1 single-spaced typed page using 12 point font) to the class discussion board on D2L summarizing and critiquing a recent example of public relations that you found in the news. The topic of your post must be based on at least TWO news articles. The assignment sheet provides news sources.
- **Commenter role:** During the rest of the quarter (i.e., the other weeks during the quarter when you are *not* assigned to be the discussion leader) you will have to comment each week on one of the “PR in the News” posts made by a discussion leader for that week. In short, you will be expected to provide quality, substantive feedback on one of the discussion leader posts made each week.
- **Lowest grade on weekly comments dropped:** Your lowest weekly grade on your commenter role will be dropped, which means you have the option of taking one week off as commenter if you wish. In short, your lowest grade (including a zero) will be automatically dropped.
- **Instructor feedback on posts:** Please know that while I will only comment on some PR in the News posts made by the class, that I read each and every post and value the contribution that everyone makes!
- **IMPORTANT: Check the class schedule to see which week you have been assigned to serve as the PR in the News discussion leader. On the week you serve as the discussion leader, you will need to have made your PR in the News post by Monday of your assigned week at 5:00 p.m. Central time. Posts made after the assigned date/time will receive a zero. There are no make-ups.**

### Note about Office Hours

I am always happy to meet with you and help in any way that I can. As noted at the top of the syllabus, my virtual and face-to-face office hours are Thurs. 1:00 – 3:00 pm. If this day and time doesn’t work for you, contact me and we’ll find a time that does work. During the work week, I respond to all emails within 24 hours and within 48 hours generally on the weekends (unless I am traveling). Email ([mragas@gmail.com](mailto:mragas@gmail.com)) is the fastest way to reach me followed by phone (312-362-6003). When I say virtual office hours I mean that I will be closely monitoring my email during this time so expect an especially quick response! For a face-to-face meeting, my office is located in the Daley Building (14 E. Jackson) in Suite 1823 on DePaul’s Loop campus.

### Deadlines and Staying on Schedule

Deadlines are very real. As previously noted, there are no make-ups for TalkBack or PR in the News assignments posted after the deadline for a particular module/assignment so please plan accordingly. I would particularly look up the date that you have been assigned to serve as the Discussion Leader for PR in the News and mark down that deadline in several prominent places so that this is a smooth experience for you.

A great way to stay on schedule in this class is to take advantage of the Checklists that you will see posted under each module. These checklists give you a handy way to see what you need to accomplish each week and which assignments are due and when. If something isn't clear, please don't hesitate to send me an email!

### Academic Honesty

Please take all possible steps to avoid plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism (literary or artistic theft), copying someone else's work, or other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any case of academic dishonesty will be considered grounds for an automatic failing grade in the course. Having someone else do your work for you is also considered academic dishonesty. University guidelines will be followed for any offenses.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for more details: <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html>

### Inclusiveness

This class encourages the free exchange of ideas. Every attempt is made to make all course materials non-sexist, diverse, and multi-cultural. Should I ever fail to meet this goal, please let me know immediately.

Students are expected to behave professionally and respectfully towards their classmates and the professor in all online discussions. I expect the same behavior and courtesy as you would give someone face-to-face.

### The Writing Center

Consider visiting the Writing Center at DePaul to discuss your PR in the News assignment/post as the Discussion Leader. You may schedule appointments (30 or 50 minutes) on an as-needed or weekly basis, scheduling up to 3 hours worth of appointments per week. Online services include Feedback-by-Email and IM conferencing. All writing center services are *free*.

Writing Center tutors are specially selected and trained graduate and undergraduate students who can help you at almost any stage of your writing. They will not do your work for you, but they can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts, and polish your writing. They can answer questions about grammar, mechanics, different kinds of writing styles, and documentation formats. They also can answer questions and provide feedback online, through IM/webcam chats and email. Obviously, the tutors won't necessarily be familiar with every class or subject, but they are able to provide valuable help from the perspective of an interested and careful reader as well as a serious and experienced student-writer.

Schedule your appointments with enough time to think about and use the feedback you will receive. Bring your assignment handout and other relevant materials to your appointments.

### **Quick Links & Locations:**

To schedule an appointment at the Center's LPC and Loop locations: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/html/sched/WCOnline.html>

To schedule real-time conversations with IM and/or webcam: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/html/sched/im.htm>

To request feedback by Email: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/html/sched/email.html>

Loop Campus Office: 1620 Lewis Center, 312.362.6726

Lincoln Park Office: 250 McGaw, 773.325.4272

For more information, visit: <http://www.depaul.edu/writing/>

### Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation for disabilities should provide me with written documentation from the appropriate university offices regarding the specific disability and accommodation requested during the first week of class. All discussions will remain confidential. For more information, contact the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) for LD, AD/HD: <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/plus>, (773) 325-1677 or the Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) for all other disabilities: <http://www.studentaffairs.depaul.edu/studentswithdisabilities>, (773) 325-1677. Offices: Student Center #370.

### Final Notes:

- I will make every effort to adhere to the class schedule and grading system, but reserve the right to make necessary changes.
- Again, please don't forget to take advantage of the checklists posted to each module. These checklists are a handy way to help you stay on track!
- Downloadable copies of all of the slides are available under the lectures. I thought this might be a helpful way for you to take your own notes if you so choose when studying.
- This class is challenging, but in the end it is rewarding and helps provide you with a good foundation in PR principles and concepts. If you notice yourself having trouble, please see me immediately. Feel free to approach me about any concerns you might have. I am happy to help with resumes and internships.
- I am open to suggestions as to how to improve the course content, facilitate the learning process, encourage interest in the subject, or any other topic you deem important. Come see me or email me.

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## Course Schedule

Week of:	Week/Module #	Assignment	Release Date/Time	Due Date/Time
Jan. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Module 1:</b> Course Overview and Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post an introductory message on the discussion forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan. 6, 5pm CT</li> </ul>
Jan. 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Module 2:</b> Ch. 1 – What is PR? & Ch. 2 – Evolution of PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly Quiz (Ch. 1-2)</li> <li>Talk Back assignment</li> <li>PR in the News assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan. 13, 5pm CT</li> <li>Jan. 13, 5pm CT</li> <li>Discussion leader: Jan. 9, 5pm CT</li> <li>Commenter: Jan. 13, 5pm CT</li> </ul>
Jan. 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Module 3:</b> Ch. 3 – Ethics & Professionalism & Ch. 4 – PR Departments and Firms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly Quiz (Ch. 3-4)</li> <li>Talk Back assignment</li> <li>PR in the News assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>Jan. 9, 12:00 am CT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan. 20, 5pm CT</li> <li>Jan. 20, 5pm CT</li> <li>Discussion leader: Jan. 16, 5pm CT</li> <li>Commenter: Jan. 20, 5pm CT</li> </ul>
Jan. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Module 4:</b> Ch. 5 – PR Research, Ch. 6 Program Planning, & EXAM 1 review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly Quiz (Ch. 5-6)</li> <li>Talk Back assignment</li> <li>PR in the News assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>Jan. 16, 12:00 am CT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan. 27, 5 pm CT</li> <li>Jan. 27, 5pm CT</li> <li>Discussion leader: Jan. 23, 5 pm CT</li> <li>Commenter: Jan. 27, 5 pm CT</li> </ul>
Jan. 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Module 5:</b> EXAM 1 (Ch. 1 – Ch. 5) & Ch. 7 - Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>EXAM 1</b></li> <li>Weekly Quiz (Ch. 7)</li> <li>Talk Back assignment</li> <li>PR in the News assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan. 30, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>Jan. 23, 12:00 am CT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feb. 3, 5 pm CT</li> <li>Feb. 3, 5 pm CT</li> <li>Feb. 3, 5 pm CT</li> <li>Discussion leader: Jan. 30, 5 pm CT</li> <li>Commenter: Feb. 3, 5pm CT</li> </ul>
Feb. 6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Module 6:</b> Ch. 8 – Evaluation, Ch. 9 – Persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly Quiz (Ch. 8 – 9)</li> <li>Talk Back assignment</li> <li>PR in the News assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>Jan. 30, 12:00 am CT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feb. 10, 5 pm CT</li> <li>Feb. 10, 5 pm CT</li> <li>Discussion leader: Feb. 6, 5 pm CT</li> <li>Commenter: Feb. 10, 5 pm CT</li> </ul>

Week of:	Week/Module #	Assignment	Release Date/Time	Due Date/Time
	and Public Opinion			
Feb. 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Module 7:</b> Ch. 14 – Preparing Materials for Mass Media, Ch. 15 – Radio and Television, & Review for EXAM 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly Quiz (Ch. 14 – 15)</li> <li>• Talk Back assignment</li> <li>• PR in the News assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>• Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>• Feb. 6, 12:00 am CT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feb. 17, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Feb. 17, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Discussion leader: Feb. 13, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Commenter: Feb. 17, 5 pm CT</li> </ul>
Feb. 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Module 8:</b> EXAM 2 (Ch. 6-9, 14-15), Ch. 16 – Meetings and Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EXAM 2</b></li> <li>• Weekly Quiz (Ch. 16)</li> <li>• Talk Back assignment</li> <li>• PR in the News assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feb. 20, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>• Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>• Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>• Feb. 13, 12:00 am CT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feb. 24, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Feb. 24, 5pm CT</li> <li>• Feb. 24, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Discussion leader: Feb. 20, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Commenter: Feb. 24, 5pm CT</li> </ul>
Feb. 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Module 9:</b> Ch. 12 – PR & the Law and Ch. 17 – PR in Corporations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly Quiz (Ch. 12, 17)</li> <li>• Talk Back assignment</li> <li>• PR in the News assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>• Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>• Feb. 20, 12:00 am CT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mar. 2, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Mar. 2, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Discussion leader: Feb. 27, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Commenter: Mar. 2, 5pm CT</li> </ul>
March 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Module 10:</b> Ch. 19 – PR in Politics and Government, Ch. 21 – PR in Non-profit Organizations, &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly Quiz (Ch. 19, 21)</li> <li>• Talk Back assignment</li> <li>• PR in the News assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>• Jan. 2, 12:00 am CT</li> <li>• Feb. 27, 12:00 am CT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mar. 9, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Mar. 9, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Discussion leader: Feb. 27, 5 pm CT</li> <li>• Commenter: Mar. 9, 5 pm CT</li> </ul>

Week of:	Week/Module #	Assignment	Release Date/Time	Due Date/Time
	Review for EXAM 2			
<b>March</b> <b>12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Module 11:</b> EXAM 3 (Ch. 12, 16-17, 19, 21),	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EXAM 3</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mar. 12, 12:00 am CT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mar. 16, 5 pm CT</li> </ul>