

Course: PUR 3801 Section 5081

## Public Relations Strategy

Times: Tues. 10:40 a.m. – 12:35 p.m. & Thurs. 11:45 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.

Classroom: Weimer 1070

Instructor: Matt Ragas

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Instructor Web page: <http://www.matragas.com>

Class Web page: <http://lss.at.ufl.edu/>

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Office Hours: Tues. 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., Thurs. 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. or by appt.

*“A fool with a plan can outsmart a genius with no plan.”*

*-- T. Boone Pickens*

### Course Description:

This course is designed to facilitate an understanding of the strategic management of public relations by analyzing the public relations process – audience/situation research, objective, program and evaluation. Specifically, this course reviews public relations strategy and tactics to analyze the environment of an organization, develop informed objectives and strategies, implement public relations campaigns, and to evaluate overall campaign effectiveness. Using current cases of public relations campaigns and problems, students will study various roles of public relations, and analyze successful and failed case studies in various public relations functions: media relations, community relations, government relations, consumer relations, crisis communication, etc.

### Prerequisite Classes:

You must have taken and passed PUR 3000 and PUR 3500 with a grade of C or higher; be at least junior standing; and have taken and passed a statistics course.

### Required Reading Materials:

Smith, R. D. (2009). *Strategic Planning for Public Relations* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. **Available at the UF bookstore, Amazon.com and off campus.**

### Course Objectives:

- To provide an overview of the various functions of public relations and the normative process of public relations program development and implementation
- To develop skills in strategic public relations management based on an analysis of current and historical case studies
- To practice developing and applying strategy and tactics based on a sound understanding of public relations concepts and practices

- To enhance your skills in communicating persuasively, clearly and successfully

**Course Evaluation:**

The evaluation of coursework will be based on the student’s performance in five areas, each which constitutes a portion of the final grade. These include: 1) brief introduction assignment at the start of the semester, 2) Three exams, 3) Class attendance/Participation, 4) Case Analysis Team Presentation I (no written report, just Powerpoint), and 5) Case Analysis Team Presentation II and Team Written Report (aka “the final project”). The following provides a point allocation for each of these areas:

Introduction Assignment	(10 points)	10
Three Exams	(3 exams worth 100 pts. each)	300
Class Attendance and Participation	(see next page)	60
Case Analysis Team Presentation I	(see next page)	30
Case Analysis Team Presentation II	(see next page)	40
Case Analysis Team Report (with Presentation II)	(see next page)	60

**TOTAL                    500 possible pts.**

The grading scale for the course is as follows:

- 465 – 500 (93-100) = A
- 450 – 464 (90-92) = A-
- 435 – 449 (87-89) = B+
- 415 – 434 (83-86) = B
- 400 – 414 (80-82) = B-
- 385 – 399 (77-79) = C+
- 365 – 384 (73-76) = C
- 350 – 364 (70-72) = C-
- 300 – 349 (60-69) = D
- Below 300 (below 60) = E

Letter grades are based on the total points accumulated over the term. Students who earn a “C” or better will fulfill the PUR 3801 requirement for graduating with a degree in public relations and will not be required to retake the course.

Grades and Grading Policies:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

1) Exams (300 points)

There will be three exams. The exams will cover all of the course readings (text), handouts, class discussion, guest speakers and student presentations. The exams will be a combination of multiple-choice, short answer and essay. The tests are *not* cumulative.

**IMPORTANT: MAKE-UP EXAMS MUST BE APPROVED AND SCHEDULED IN ADVANCE.** Any student who misses an exam is required to provide notification to the instructor *prior* to missing the exam. Exam grades will be posted on eLearning.

2) Class Attendance/Participation (60 points)

As this is a learner-centered course, your attendance and participation in class discussion is essential. You are expected to always arrive for class on time (arriving late is the same as being absent). Attendance will be taken each class by passing around a sign-in sheet. **Four unexcused absences will be allowed without penalty over the course of the semester.** Excused absences must have either a doctor's note or note from the faculty adviser of a university-sanctioned organization/event. After that, your final grade may be lowered by as much as one letter grade. You can only earn an A on the class attendance/participation portion of your grade if you miss four classes or less and you *consistently* contribute to the class. **IMPORTANT: It is your responsibility to sign-in. If your signature isn't on the sheet for that day, you will be marked absent.**

3) Case Analysis Team Presentation I (30 points)

During the semester, students will be divided into small teams and will be required to make a 10-minute presentation in class. Each team selects a case that covers either: 1) a new product/issue campaign or 2) a reputation-threatening situation during the past year, and analyzes its problem and reaction to the problem. Students may select a case from one of two sources: The PRSA Silver Anvil winning cases or a *PR Week* featured campaign. The purpose of this assignment is to expose you to the current events of the trade and refine your critical thinking skills in analyzing public relations problems as well as evaluating the effectiveness and ethical consideration of the case you select. A detailed assignment sheet will be provided to help guide you in your presentation.

4) Case Analysis Team Presentation II (40 points) and Team Report (60 Points)

Each team will select a real public relations program or campaign as the case study they analyze for the final team presentation and written report. The final case should be a case which received news media coverage. Each team should present at least ten news articles about the case when submitting the final report. The purpose of this final assignment is to research a real case and retroactively apply the strategic planning model to the case. After completing the analysis, each team will be required to make a

~10-minute presentation on your assigned date and to submit a written report of ~20 pages. A detailed assignment sheet on the presentation and report will be provided. Peer evaluations will factor into your final grade on the team presentation and report.

### Deadlines for Presentations and Reports

Deadlines are real. Late work will be reduced by one letter grade for each 24 hour period it is not turned in. Worked turned in at the end of class is considered late. In a professional environment, the consequences for missing deadlines are much worse.

**IMPORTANT: Team presentations *cannot* be made up at a later date.**

### Academic Honesty

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. University guidelines will be followed for any offenses.

- Having someone else do your work for you is also considered academic dishonesty.

The University of Florida Honor Code was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Code: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

For more information about academic honesty, contact, Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

You can review UF's academic honesty guidelines in detail at:  
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/honestybrochure.php>

(University of Florida Honor Code, 2005)

### Inclusiveness

Every attempt is made to make all courses non-sexist, diverse and multicultural in content. Should I ever fail to meet this goal, please let me know immediately.

### Students with Special Needs

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

### Final Notes

- The instructor will make every effort to adhere to this class schedule and grading system, but reserves the right to make necessary changes.
- While laptop computers are welcome for taking notes during class discussions, please do not use them to Facebook, IM, e-mail, etc. during class time.
- *The Alligator* is a great publication, but please don't read it during class time. It is distracting and disrespectful to your classmates and the instructor.
- Please turn your mobile phones to vibrate when in class unless they are needed for emergency purposes. Also, please NO TEXTING during class.
- This class is challenging, but in the end it is rewarding and helps prepare you for internships and the job market. If you notice yourself having trouble, please see me immediately. Also feel free to approach me about any concerns you might have.
- Again, the following dates and topics are a good faith attempt at providing you with a tentative schedule, but please note that they are not etched in stone.

## Tentative Class Schedule

- Week 1: 1/7: Course Overview and Introduction
- Week 2: 1/12: Step 1. Analyzing the Situation  
Step 2. Analyzing the Organization  
1/14: Step 3. Analyzing the Publics
- Week 3: 1/19: Step 4. Setting Goals and Objectives  
1/21: Step 5. Action and Response Strategies
- Week 4: 1/26: Exam 1 Review  
1/28: **Exam 1 (Intro. and Steps 1-5)**
- Week 5: 2/2: Step 6. Effective Communication:  
Persuasion & Ethos, Non-Verbal Communications  
and *Case Analysis Presentation I Overview*  
2/4: Class discussion on "Persuaders" (PBS video)
- Week 6: 2/9: **Case Analysis Presentation I**  
2/11: Step 7. Tactics
- Week 7: 2/16: Step 7. Tactics (cont'd) and Social Media PR  
2/18: Social Media PR (cont'd)
- Week 8: 2/23: "Campaign 2008" (CSPAN video and class discussion)  
2/25: Step 8. Implementation
- Week 9: 3/2: Exam 2 Review  
3/4: **Exam 2 (Step 6-8 and videos)**
- Week 10: 3/9: **Spring Break - NO CLASS!**  
3/11: **Spring Break - NO CLASS!**
- Week 11: 3/16: Step 9. Evaluation  
and *Case Analysis Presentation II and report overview*  
3/18: Guest speaker (Pat Reakes - library)
- Week 12: 3/23: Class discussion on Edelman "Measurement" (webcast)  
3/25: *In-class meetings with teams on final projects*
- Week 13: 3/30: Crisis Communication  
4/1: *In-class meetings with teams on final projects*
- Week 14: 4/6: Exam 3 Review  
4/8: **Exam 3 (Step 9 and Crisis Comm.)**
- Week 15: 4 /13: *Review of Case Analysis Presentation II and report*  
4/15: **NO CLASS - work on final presentations and reports**

Week 16: 4/20: **Case Analysis Presentation II**  
*All case analysis written reports due at start of class!*