

The University of Texas at El Paso
Department of Communication
Fall 2021
COMM 4323: Case Studies in Public Relations
CRN

MATERIALS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *Cases in Public Relations Management* by Patricia Swan, 3rd Edition
Routledge (2020)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Professor : MBA/MA Eli Garcia
Office: COTTON 204
Office hours: T 3:30-4:20 PM
W 3:30-4:20 PM or by appointment

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COURSE CONTENT

Course Description:

This course studies the role of public relations in organizational problem-solving practices. Through the analysis of real-life cases you will study how the functions of public relations help manage and reconcile the conflicts/challenges that arise between an organization and its diverse stakeholders.

Course Learning Objectives:

- Understand the role that public relations plays in effectively developing advancing and managing successful strategic relationships between an organization and its diverse publics
- Implement the *Case-Based* methodology to analyze how a wide range of organizations have used strategic PR plans to handle conflicts and meet organizational goals
- Advance strategic thinking and problem-solving skills
- Develop counseling, time-management, teamwork and strategic planning skills, as these are an integral part of the public relations field.

Course Learning Outcome:

- Competence in applying the *Case-Based* methodology to different organizational situations in which strategic PR plans are utilized to achieve organizational goals

Course Methodology:

- There will be a mix of lectures, student assignments and presentations.
- Students will participate in diverse class exercises that will attempt to recreate “real-world” professional situations.

ASSIGNMENTS

- 4 written case study analyses
- 1 case study discussion leading presentation
- Final Reflection paper

Case Study Written Assignment Criteria:

- Your written reports should be around 8-10 pages.
- They should demonstrate an in-depth written analysis-critique of the assigned case.
- Make sure you answer the required questions in paragraph format.
- Please follow APA style and provide a reference page

Case Study Rubric Written Assignment	150 Points
<p>Introduction The purpose of this section is to guide the reader on the relevance of your case study to contemporary PR practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overview of the PR concepts that will be discussed in your document. • Provide a justification on why your document is valuable to PR practitioners. • Describe what specific business and organizational communication knowledge will a PR practitioner obtain from your document. 	15
<p>Key Players and Corporate Communication Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For this section please <u>identify the key players</u> involved in the case study. • Explain the corporate communication challenges, problems, mistakes or opportunities for <u>all key players involved</u> • Provide a SWOT analysis for all <u>key players</u> involved 	25
<p>Media Coverage/Public Opinion: For this section, you will analyze how the media portrayed the situation and how the public reacted to such portrayals Provide an overview of the media coverage the case received. (Internet, newspapers, TV, radio, etc.)</p>	25
<p>Case Analysis (Answers to Case Questions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you provide your answers from a communication perspective • Identify and discuss how key theoretical concepts discussed in class are portrayed/applied in the case study 	35
<p>Critique.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overall critique on how the organization reacted to this case and conclude your document. • Describe PR successes and failures 	25
<p>Best Practices conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn from this case? • From a <i>Best Practices</i> approach, what would be your 4 Corporate Communication <i>Best Practice</i> recommendations for business professionals? 	25

Case Study Presentation Criteria:

- You will be assigned to present and lead the discussion on one of the written case analysis
- Make sure you have a well-developed presentation plan
- Make sure you cover the points discussed in the different sections of the written assignment
- Be prepared to engage the audience, facilitate discussions and answer direct questions.
- Use strong and interesting visual aids (Power point, posters, videos, etc.)

Case Study Presentation	150 Total Possible Points
Introduction (attention getter, engagement with audience)	25
Identification of key players and main corporate communication challenges, SWOT (clarity, conciseness, interaction with audience)	25
Case Analysis (answers to case study, clarity, conciseness, interaction with audience)	25
Best Practice Critique/Best Practice conclusion (clarity, conciseness, interaction with audience)	25
Overall visual aids (effectiveness, support to main points discussed)	25
Overall flow of presentation and audience engagement	25

GRADING

This course is ambitious and requires your active participation. Students can earn up to 1000 points during the semester. Grades will be based on the following scale:

All turned-in assignments must be hard copy. No e-mails accepted.

- A= 1000-900 points
- B= 899-800 points
- C= 799-700 points
- D= 600-699 points
- F= 599 points and below

Case Study #1 (Written Assignment)	150 Points
Case Study #2 (Written Assignment)	150 Points
Case Study #3 (Written Assignment)	150 Points
Case Study #4 (Written Assignment)	150 Points
Case Study Formal Presentation.....	150 Points
Final reflection paper (Written Assignment).....	150 Points
Attendance and Participation.....	100 Points
Total Points	1000 Points

Your responsibilities:

- All written assignments must be **hard copy** (no e-mails accepted) and handed **on-time**, double-spaced and have adequate margins for reviewer comments (about an inch). Use 12-point type, Times New Roman or Courier font.
- Deadlines for all written assignments will be strictly enforced. **No late assignments please.** Missing a deadline is equivalent of not doing the assignment.
- **Participation:** Students are expected to attend each and every class and to be punctual. This is a discussion driven course; your active participation is extremely important.
- **Show respect.** The use of cell phones, text messages, and social media won't be allowed during class time, unless specifically permitted by the instructor. Please turn cell phones on silent before entering the classroom. Be courteous to classmates by paying attention to discussions and presentations and by being open-minded in regard to the opinions and ideas of others

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

Scholastic/academic dishonesty is prohibited and considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In all matters of intellectual pursuit, UTEP faculty and students must strive to achieve excellence based on the quality of work produced by the individual. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of scholastic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. It is imperative, therefore, that the members of this academic community understand the regulations pertaining to academic integrity and that all faculty insist on adherence to these standards.

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials produced by another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or even the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) and available in the Office of the Dean of Students on the homepage of the Dean of Students at www.utep.edu/dos, may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to failing a grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others.

Absences and Course Drop Policy:

According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, "When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of "W" before the course drop deadline and with a grade of "F" after the course drop deadline." See academic regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excuse absences. Therefore, if I find that, due to non-performance in the course, you are at risk of failing, I will drop you from the course. I will provide 24 hours advance notice via email.

OR

I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registrar's Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an "F" for the course.

Plagiarism Detecting Software:

Some of your course work and assessments may be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

COVID-19 Precautions:

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org

CASS Policy

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu. Or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS' Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

COURSE CALENDAR

The instructor reserves the right to make necessary changes in the schedule/calendar/assignments depending on the needs of the class.

Class Meeting	Topic—Activity	Reading
T/Aug/24	Course Introduction, Syllabus Review, Student Introductions	
R/Aug/26	Purpose of Public Relations cont.	Ch1
T/Aug/31	PR definitions	
R/Sep/2	PR basics	
T/Sep/7	Blackboard Case study activity	
R/Sep/9	Ethics	Ch.2
T/Sep/14	Ethics Cont.	
R/Sep/16	1 st case study explanation	
T/Sep/21	1 st case study workshop	
R/Sep/23	Case Study #1 written report and presentation due: “Domino’s Pizza ” pg. 148	
T/Sep/28	Media Relations	Ch.4
R/Sep/30	Corporate Social Responsibility	Ch.3
T/Oct/5	Second Case study workshop	
R/Oct/7	Case Study #2 written report and presentation due: “Guitar Hero Strikes a Chord” Pg. 312	
T/Oct/12	Activism	Ch.6
R/Oct/14	Activism cont.	In-class notes
T/Oct/19	Public Opinion	In-class notes

R/Oct/21	Case Study #3 written report and presentation due: Lean Finely Textured Beef or Pink Slime?" Pg. 190	
T/Oct/26	Entertainment, Leisure and Sports	Ch. 8
R/Oct/28	Consumer Relations	Ch. 7
T/Nov/2	Consumer Relations Cont.	
R/Nov/4	Conflict Management	Ch5.
T/Nov/9	Conflict Management Cont. 4 th Case study workshop	
R/Nov/11	Case study #4: "Deep Water Horizon Blowout" Pg. 231	
T/Nov/16	Culture and Other Considerations	Ch. 10
R/Nov /18	Culture and Other Considerations Cont.	
T/Nov/23	Public Relations Careers	In class discussion
T/Nov/30	Public Relations Careers	In class discussion
R/Dec/2	Final Reflection Paper due	