

**The University of Texas at El Paso**  
**Department of Communication**  
**Fall 2016**  
**COMM 4323: Case Studies in Public Relations**  
**CRN 11577**

**MATERIALS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- *Cases in Public Relations Management* by Patricia Swan, 2nd Edition  
Routledge (2014)

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:**

Instructor: MBA/MA Eli Garcia  
Office: COTTON 205  
Office hours: M 10:30-1:00 PM T&R 3:00-4:30 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 group assignments and presentations.
- Students will participate in diverse class exercises that will attempt to recreate “real-world” professional situations.

## ASSIGNMENTS

- As in any “real-world” PR situation, this course will require you to work in teams.
- Your team will explore a series of public relations campaigns/situations.
- Based on your analysis of the mentioned situations your team will report and present your research findings in the following structure:
  - 6 written case analysis
  - One case study discussion leading presentation

### Case Study Written Assignment Criteria:

- Your team 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

PR Case Study Rubric Written Assignment	125 Total Possible Points
<b>Organizational Background (Key Players)</b> External research, provide a general organizational profile of all parties involved in the case: Basic facts, history, organizational culture, relevant factors in their environment, organizational model, etc.	10 points
<b>Case Background</b> Give a short summary of the situation	10 points
<b>Problem/Opportunity</b> Explain Problem and/or Opportunity that the case presents for all parties involved.	10 points
<b>Environmental Scanning</b> (Internet, newspapers, TV, radio, social media, etc.) Provide an overview of the media coverage the case received. Analyze the narrative of media coverage. Give your opinion on its influence for all parties involved. Please provide a portfolio of news articles, video links, etc.	20 points
<b>Case Analysis (Answers to Case Questions)</b> Application of Communication concepts/Theories	30 points
<b>Critique</b> Provide an overall critique on how the organization reacted to this case	20points
<b>Best Practices conclusion</b> What did you learn from this case? From a <i>Best Practices</i> approach, what would be your 4 <i>Best Practice</i> recommendations for public relations professionals?	25 points

### 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.)

<b>Case Study Presentations</b>	<b>150 Total Possible Points</b>
Organizational Background Information	10 points
Case Background	10 points
Problem /Opportunity	10 points
Environmental Scanning (Media coverage samples)	20 points
Case Analysis Discussion (discussion of answers to case questions)	20 points
Critique	20points
Best Practice Conclusion	20 Points
Interaction with audience (engagement, questions, etc.)	30 points
Visual elements	10 points

## 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

<b>Case Study #1 (Written Assignment) .....</b>	<b>125 Points</b>
<b>Case Study #2 (Written Assignment) .....</b>	<b>125 Points</b>
<b>Case Study #3 (Written Assignment) .....</b>	<b>125 Points</b>
<b>Case Study #4 (Written Assignment) .....</b>	<b>125 Points</b>
<b>Case Study #5 (Written Assignment).....</b>	<b>125 Points</b>
<b>Case Study #6 (Written Assignment).....</b>	<b>125 Points</b>
<b>Case Study Formal Presentation.....</b>	<b>150 Points</b>
<b>Attendance and Participation.....</b>	<b>100 Points</b>

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**1000 Points**

## CLASSROOM POLICIES:

### Participation and attendance:

- 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. Please read assigned material prior to class. **I will deduct 10 points** from your class participation score for each **unexcused absence**.

### **Deadlines and late work**

- All written assignments must be **hard copy** (no e-mails accepted) and handed in **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. I won't accept assignments after deadline. Missing a deadline is equivalent of not doing the assignment. PR professionals must meet strict deadlines. I expect you to do the same

### **Be respectful:**

- The use of cell phones and text messages won't be allowed during class time. Please turn cell phones to silent mode before entering the classroom. Be courteous to classmates by paying attention to presentations and by being open-minded in regard to the opinions and ideas of others

## **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

- The University of Texas El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting work for credit that is attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act that gives or attempts to give unfair advantage.

## **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](mailto: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](http://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
M/Aug/22	Course Introduction, Syllabus Review, Student Introductions	
W/Aug/24	Purpose of Public Relations	Ch.1
M/Aug /29	Case Study Methodology	Appendix: pg. 551-558
W/Aug /31st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethics</li> <li>• What would you do? Scenarios</li> <li>• Creation of teams</li> </ul>	Ch. 2, Appendix pg. 575
M/Sep/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labor Day, No Class!</li> </ul>	
W/Sep/7	Media Relations	Ch.4
M/Sep/12	Media Relations cont.	
W/Sep/14	<b>Case Study #1 written report and presentation due: “Two Employees with a Video Camera...” pg. 144</b>	
M/Sep/19	Community Relations	Ch.4
W/Sep/ 21	Community Relations cont.	
M/Sep/26	Corporate Social responsibility	Ch.3
W/Sep /28	Corporate Social Responsibility cont.	
M/Oct /3	<b>Case Study #2 written report and presentation due: “Apple iProblem; Subcontractor Worker Issues brings Negative Attention” pg. 66</b>	
W/Oct/5	Entertainment and Leisure	Ch. 8
M/Oct /10	Entertainment and Leisure cont.	
W/Oct/12	Advocacy and Public Opinion	Ch. 6

M/Oct/17	Advocacy and Public Opinion	
W/Oct/19	<b>Case Study #3 written report and presentation due: “The Politics of Pink...” pg. 183</b>	
M/Oct/24	Financial relations	Ch. 11
W/Oct/26	Financial Relations	
M/Oct/31st	Consumer Relations	Ch. 7
W/Nov/2	Consumer Relations	
M/Nov/7	<b>Case Study #4 written report and presentation due: “Lean Finely Textured Beef or Pink Slime?” pg. 162</b>	
W/Nov/9	Public Relations Careers	In class discussion
M/Nov/14	Public Relations Career cont.	In class discussion
W/Nov/16	Culture and Other Considerations	Ch. 10
M/Nov/21	Culture and Other Considerations	
W/Nov/23	<b>Case Study #5 written report and presentation due: “Shark Fin Soup: Hong Kong Disneyland” pg. 521</b>	
M/Dec/28	Conflict Management	Ch.5
W/Dec/30	Conflict Management	
M/Dec/5	<b>Case Study #6 written report and presentation due: “Deep Water Horizon” pg. 202 1:00-3:45 PM</b>	