

**The University of Texas at El Paso**  
**Department of Communication**  
**Spring 2021**  
**COMM 4323: Case Studies in Public Relations**  
**CRN 23819**

**MATERIALS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:**

**Associate Professor of Practice:** Eli Garcia  
**Office:** COTTON 204  
**Virtual office hours:** by appointment

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**COURSE CONTENT**

**Course Description:**

COMM 4323 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.

**Online Course Format:**

- We will follow an asynchronous online modality (no class meetings).
- We will use the blackboard learning platform.
- The content for the course will be divided in weekly modules.

For each week:

- You will be assigned to read either a case study from your book, or from the journal articles available. If there is a reading from a journal article the link will be provided to you via blackboard.
- Based on the textbook readings you will answer a weekly discussion question and respond to 2 classmates
- We will also submit 4 written case study assignments (check calendar for more information).
- There will be a final reflection paper (check calendar for more information)

## GRADING

We will follow a 1000-point scale.

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

The following pints will be distributed in the following manner:

- 15 weekly discussion posts @ 35 points each.....525 Points
- 4 Case Study Written Assignments @ 100 each..... 400 Points
- Final Reflection Paper (Written Assignment).....75 Points

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_ 1000 Points

### Rubrics

#### Weekly Discussions (15 @ 35 pointes each, due weekly):

Every week we will discuss a series of different topics related to the course’s material. This is a great opportunity to share your perspectives on the PR strategies applied in each of the case studies that we will analyze through our course. You will be asked to post an initial response to the week’s discussion question/s and then post 2 replies to classmates. As always, the golden rule of corporate communication applies: all postings should be professional, respectful and relevant to the focus of the discussion.

Your postings and replies will be graded based on the following rubric:

	<b>Excellent – 25 Points</b>	<b>Good – 20 Points</b>	<b>Acceptable – 15 Points</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory – 10 points or less</b>
<b>Initial Response</b>	Initial reply was posted on time, meets the length requirement, and directly answers the discussion question(s). Excellent replies often include quotes from reading material.	Initial reply was posted on time, meets the length requirement, and answers the discussion question(s).	Initial reply was posted late or does not meet the length requirement. However, the post still directly answers the discussion question(s).	The initial reply is missing or does not answer the discussion question(s).
	<b>Excellent – 5 Points</b>	<b>Good – 4 Points</b>	<b>Acceptable – 3 Points</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory – 2 points or less</b>

<b>Peer Response 1</b>	First peer reply was posted on time and contributes meaningfully to the discussion by introducing new perspectives.	First peer reply contributes meaningfully to the discussion.	First peer reply was late but still contributes to the discussion.	First peer reply is missing or only states "I agree" or "I disagree" without advancing the discussion in any way.
	<b>Excellent – 5 Points</b>	<b>Good – 4 Points</b>	<b>Acceptable – 3 Points</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory – 2 points or less</b>
<b>Peer Response 2</b>	Second peer reply was posted on time and contributes meaningfully to the discussion by introducing new perspectives.	Second peer reply contributes meaningfully to the discussion.	Second peer reply was late but still contributes to the discussion.	Second peer reply is missing or only states "I agree" or "I disagree" without advancing the discussion in any way.

### **Case Study Written Assignment Rubric (4 @ 100 points each):**

You will have the opportunity to analyze, critique and report on real life public relations case studies. Case studies are available in your textbook, please check calendar for additional info.

**Please follow the instructions and rubric mentioned below:**

- Your individual written reports should be around 5 -7 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.

<b>PR Case Study Rubric Written Assignment</b>		<b>100 Total Possible Points</b>
<b>Introduction</b> The purpose of this section is to guide the reader on the relevance of your case study to contemporary business practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an overview of the corporate communication concepts that will be discussed in your document.</li> <li>• Provide a justification on why your document is valuable to Business and Corporate Communications practitioners.</li> </ul> Describe what specific business and organizational communication knowledge will a business practitioner obtain from your document.		10 points
<b>Problem/Opportunity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify main key players and explain their influence in the case study</li> <li>• Explain the <b>communication and ethical</b> problems and opportunities the case presents for all parties involved. (You can use the PRSA and Arthur Page codes of ethics to help you identify main problems and opportunities.)</li> <li>• Provide a SWOT analysis for <b>all key players identified in the previous section</b></li> </ul>		15 points

<b>Case Analysis</b> (Answers to Case Questions from textbook) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure you provide your answers <b>from a communication perspective!</b></li> <li>• Identify and discuss how key PR <b>concepts are portrayed/applied in the case study</b></li> </ul>	35points
<b>Critique</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an overall critique on how the key players reacted to this case</li> </ul>	20 points
<b>Best Practices conclusion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you learn from this case?</li> <li>• From a <i>Best Practices</i> approach, what would be your <b>4 Best Practice recommendations</b> for business and corporate communication professionals?</li> </ul>	20 points

### **Final Reflection Paper (1 @ 75 points)**

- For this assignment you will reflect on the different corporate communication concepts we have discussed in class.
- Provide an introduction to your document discussing why it is relevant to business professionals and the value your document will provide to them. **(5 Points)**
- Present & provide your personal definition of strategic business/corporate communication and discuss its relevance to contemporary business practices. **(15 points)**
- Describe which 3 course topics you enjoyed the most/ found most relevant and why **(15 Points)**
- Please provide 3 specific examples directly related to how you can apply the knowledge learned in class to your chosen professional life. **(15points)**
- Describe how the material covered in our course can help you become a more competitive professional in your field. **(15 points)**
- Provide a strong conclusion to your document **(10 points)**
- Make sure your document flows and proper transitions are applied.
- Use proper citations were applicable.
- Use font 12, double space, times new roman
- Have fun!!

### **What to Expect from the Instructor**

The best way to communicate with your instructor is via email. Always include in the subject of your email “Online COMM 4323” When sending an email and your name. All emails will be answered within 48 hrs. Graded assignments will be posted a week after the submission date.

### **Participation**

Your active participation extremely important! There will be an opportunity to discuss and interact with classmates through *discussion questions* and *assignments*, which will be graded. Please refer to the “Assignments and Grading ” sections for discussion questions and assignments’ points and value.

### **Academic Dishonesty Statement**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

- *Cheating* may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports.
- *Plagiarism* occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents another person's words or ideas as his or her own.
- *Collusion* involves unauthorized collaboration with another person or group to commit any academically dishonest act.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. You can find more information in the UTEP *Handbook of Operating Procedures*, under the heading "[Alleged Student Scholastic Dishonesty](#)," and in the [Regents' Rules and Regulations](#).

### **Late Policy**

Deadlines for all discussion questions and written assignments will be strictly enforced. No quizzes, discussion questions or written assignments will be accepted after deadline. Missing a deadline is equivalent of not doing the assignment. PR professionals must meet strict deadlines. Students are expected to do the same.

### **Library Information**

Access the UTEP Library by visiting <http://libraryweb.utep.edu/>.

### **Disability Statement**

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 at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit the 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).

Have a great learning experience!

### **Responsible, Ethical and Effective Electronic Communication**

It is important to share a word of caution so we can become wiser about interpersonal distance learning communications. In an online environment, many of the feelings or impressions that are transmitted via body language in face-to-face communications are lost. Consequently, interpreting emotions and innuendos can be difficult. Only what is written, or drawn, carries the message. Often, excitement can be misinterpreted as anger or insult. We all need to keep this in mind as we communicate.

Words in print may seem harmless, but they can injure us emotionally when working at a distance. Hence, we must be conscious of how we communicate while working at a distance and use good *netiquette*, that is, online communication etiquette. For example, your classmates may not know who is posting a comment, so clearly identify yourself when posting to a discussion board. Furthermore, avoid using all capital letters in electronic communication, as all caps come across as shouting.

The standard netiquette for participation in networked discussion requires that all comments focus on the topic at hand, without becoming personalized, and be substantive in nature. **In other words, you certainly may disagree with others, but you must do so respectfully.** You may express strong beliefs or emotions, but you may not get so carried away that you lose all perspective on the course itself.

You can find more information on netiquette, the etiquette of Internet communication, at [www.albion.com/netiquette](http://www.albion.com/netiquette)

## COURSE CALENDAR

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

Week	Assignments	Due	Points
<b>Week 1</b> <b>January 19<sup>th</sup>-</b> <b>January 24<sup>th</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 1 “A Brief Introduction to Public Relations” (page 1)</li> </ul>	Thursday January 21st	0
	Discussion 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introductions Let us know you are here!</li> </ul>	Initial Post: Wednesday January 20th, 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Saturday January 23rd, 11:00 PM MST	0
	Discussion 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Concepts of Public Relations</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday January 21st 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday January 24th , 11:00 PM MST	35
<b>Week 2</b> <b>Jan 25<sup>th</sup> - Jan 31st</b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 2 “Ethics and the Law” (page 18)</li> </ul>	Wednesday Jan 27th	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Study: “What would you do? (page 21)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday Jan 28th, 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday Jan 31st 11:00 PM MST	35
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Feb 1st- Feb 7th</b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Chocolate Milk Study’s News Release Brings Unwanted Attention (page 24)</li> </ul>	Wednesday Feb 3rd	0

	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case study “Chocolate Milk Study’s News Release Brings Unwanted Attention (page 24)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday Feb 4th 11:00 PM MTS</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday Feb 7th 11:00 PM MTS</p>	35
<b>Week 4 Feb 8<sup>th</sup>- Feb 14<sup>th</sup></b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 4: “Media Relations” (page 103)</li> <li>Case study: “Domino’s Regaining Customer Trust After Employee Prank” (page 148)</li> </ul>	Wednesday Feb 10th	0
	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case study: “Domino’s Regaining Customer Trust After Employee Prank” page 148</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday Feb 11th 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday Feb 14th 11:00 PM MST</p>	35
	<p><b>Written Case Study Assignment #1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>“Domino’s Regaining Customer Trust After Employee Prank” page 148</b></li> </ul>	<b>Sunday February 14th</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Week 5 Feb 15<sup>th</sup> -Feb 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: When every Drop Counts. ALS Ice Bucket Challenge Floods Nonprofit with Cash” (page 121)</li> </ul>	Wednesday Feb 17th	0
	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“When every Drop Counts. ALS Ice Bucket Challenge Floods Nonprofit with Cash” (page 121)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday Feb 18th 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday Feb 21st 11:00 PM MST</p>	35
<b>Week 6 Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>- Feb 28<sup>th</sup></b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 8; “Entertainment and Leisure” (page 378)</li> <li>Case: “Disclosure is always in Style” (page 34)</li> </ul>	Wednesday Feb 24th	

	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “Disclosure is always in Style “ (page 34)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday Feb 25th 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday Feb 28th 11:00 PM MST</p>	35
<b>Week 7 March 1<sup>st</sup>- March 7th</b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Lean Textured Beef or Pink Slime?” (page 190)</li> </ul>	Wednesday March 3rd	0
	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Lean Textured Beef or Pink Slime?” (page 190)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday March 4th 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday March 7th 11:00 PM MST</p>	35
	<p><b>Written Case Study Assignment #2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Case: Lean Textured Beef or Pink Slime?” (page 190)</b></li> </ul>	<b>Sunday March 7th</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Week 8 March 8th- March 14th</b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 6 Activism (page 257)</li> <li>Case: “Guitar Hero Strikes a Chord: Social Media Teaches Customer Service Lesson” (page 312)</li> </ul>	Wednesday March 10th	0
	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “Guitar Hero Strikes a Chord: Social Media Teaches Customer Service Lesson” (page 312)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday March 11th 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday March 14th 11:00 PM MST</p>	35
<b>March 15<sup>th</sup>- March 21st</b>	Spring Break !		
<b>Week 9 March 22<sup>th</sup>- March 28th</b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “Blackfish Documentary Mobilizes SeaWorld Activists”” (page 262)</li> </ul>	Wednesday March 24th	0
	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Blackfish Documentary Mobilizes SeaWorld Activists”” (page 262)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Thursday March 25<sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST</p>	35



		2 Replies: Sunday March 28th 11:00 PM MST	
<b>Week 10 Thursday March 29<sup>th</sup>- April 4<sup>th</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “SeaWorld Responds with Truth Campaign” (page 278)</li> </ul>	Wednesday March 31st	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “SeaWorld Responds with Truth Campaign” (page 278)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday April 1 <sup>st</sup> 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday April 4 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST	35
	<b>Written Case Study Assignment #3:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“ Case: “SeaWorld Responds with Truth Campaign” (page 278)</li> </ul>	<b>Sunday April 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Week 11 April 5<sup>th</sup>- April 11<sup>th</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 10: “Cultural and Other Considerations” (page 489)</li> <li>Case: “Shark Fin Hong Kong” (page 512)</li> </ul>	Wednesday April 7 <sup>th</sup>	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: “Shark Fin Soup: Disney Hong Kong Loses Magic for Some” (page 512)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday April 8 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday April 11 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST	35
<b>Week 12 April 12<sup>th</sup>- April 18<sup>th</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 5: Conflict Management (page 168)</li> <li>Beyond Disgusting : Bacteria-Fighting Mom Takes on restaurant Play Areas” (page 296)</li> </ul>	Wednesday April 14 <sup>th</sup>	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beyond Disgusting : Bacteria-Fighting Mom Takes on restaurant Play Areas” (page 296)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday April 15 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday April 18 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST	35

<b>Week 13</b> <b>April 19<sup>th</sup>-</b> <b>April 25<sup>th</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Flying the Unfriendly Skies: Coffee, tea or savage Beating?" (page 175)</li> </ul>	Wednesday April 21st	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Flying the Unfriendly Skies: Coffee, tea or savage Beating?" (page 175)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday April 22nd 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday April 25th 11:00 PM MST	35
	<b>Written Case Study Assignment #4:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Case: Flying the Unfriendly Skies: Coffee, tea or savage Beating?" (page 175)</b></li> </ul>	<b>Sunday April 25<sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Week 14</b> <b>April 26<sup>th</sup>-</b> <b>May 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: "Deepwater Horizon Blowout: Rehabilitating a Catastrophic Spill" (page 231)</li> </ul>	Wednesday April 28th	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: "Deepwater Horizon Blowout: Rehabilitating a Catastrophic Spill" (page 231)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday April 29 <sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Sunday May 2nd 11:00 PM MST	35
<b>Week 15</b> <b>May 3<sup>rd</sup>-May</b> <b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Going back in time: The Titanic(Available through the library)</li> </ul>	Wednesday May 5th	0
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case: Going back in time: The Titanic(Available through the library)</li> </ul>	Initial Discussion Post: Thursday May 6th MST  2 Replies: Sunday May 9 <sup>th</sup> 1:00 PM MST	35
	<b>Final Written Assignment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Reflection Paper</b></li> </ul>	<b>Sunday May 9th</b>	<b>75</b>