

**The University of Texas at El Paso**  
**Department of Communication**  
**Summer 2, 2021**  
**COMM 4323: Case Studies in Public Relations**  
**CRN 35966**

**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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**Phone:** (915) 747- 5310

**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.
- You will be assigned to read case studies from your book,.
- Based on the textbook readings you will answer discussion questions and respond to 2 classmates
- We will also submit 2 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:

**8 discussion posts @70 points each.....560 Points**  
**2 Case Study Written Assignments @ 150 each.....300 Points**  
**Final Reflection Paper (Written Assignment).....140 Points**

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

### Rubrics

#### Weekly Discussions (8 @ 70 points 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 – 50 Points</b>	<b>Good – 40 Points</b>	<b>Acceptable – 30 Points</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory –20 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 – 10 Points</b>	<b>Good –8 Points</b>	<b>Acceptable – 6 Points</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory – 4 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 – 10 Points</b>	<b>Good – 8 Points</b>	<b>Acceptable – 6 Points</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory – 4 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 (2 @ 150 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>150 Total Possible Points</b>
<p><b>Introduction</b> The purpose of this section is to guide the reader on the relevance of your case study to contemporary business practices</p> <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> <p>Describe what specific business and organizational communication knowledge will a business practitioner obtain from your document.</p>	15 points
<p><b>Problem/Opportunity</b></p> <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>	25 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>	50 points
<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>	30points
<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>	30 points

### **Final Reflection Paper (1 @ 140 points)**

- For this assignment you will reflect on the different PR concepts we have discussed in class for the past 15 weeks.
- **Paper Structure:**

#### **Introduction (20 Points)**

- Provide an introduction to your document discussing why it is relevant to communication professionals and the value your document will provide to them.

#### **Public Relations Definition (20 Points):**

- Now that you have analyzed a series of PR case studies, provide your updated personal definition of Public Relations and discuss how it has evolved since your first PR course.

#### **Course Material Reflection (25 points):**

- Describe which 3 course case studies you enjoyed the most and explain why.

#### **Practical Application (25 Points):**

- Please provide 3 specific examples directly related to how you can apply the knowledge learned in class to your chosen professional life.

#### **Professional Competitive Advantage (25 Points)**

- Describe how the material covered in our course can help you become a more competitive professional in your field.

## **Conclusion (25 Points)**

- Provide a strong conclusion to your document. Answer our favorite course question "What did you learn?" (what learning points did you develop from our course?).

## **General Recommendations:**

- Make sure your document flows and proper transitions are applied.
- Use proper citations where 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 is 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
Week 1 July 6 <sup>th</sup> - July 11 <sup>th</sup>	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chapter 1 "A Brief Introduction to Public Relations" (page 1)</li><li>Chapter 2 "Ethics and the Law" (page 18)</li><li>Week 1 videos available on Blackboard</li></ul>	Wednesday July 7th	0
	Discussion 1.1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Introductions Let us know you are here!</li></ul>	Initial Post: Wednesday July 7th, 11:00 PM MST  2 Replies: Thursday July 8th, 11:00 PM MST	70

	<p>Discussion 1.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Concepts of Public Relations</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Friday July 9<sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday July 11<sup>th</sup> , 11:00 PM MST</p>	70
	<p>Discussion 1.3: Case Study: "What would you do? (page 21)</p>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Saturday July 10<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday July 11<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 PM MST</p>	70
<b>Week 2 July 12<sup>th</sup> – July 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict management Chapter 5 (pages 169-174)</li> <li>• Case: "Guitar Hero Strikes a Chord: Social Media Teaches Customer Service Lesson" (page 312)</li> <li>• Case: Flying the Unfriendly Skies: Coffee, tea or savage beating?" (page 175)</li> </ul>	<p>Wednesday July 14<sup>th</sup></p>	0
	<p>Discussion 2.1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Guitar Hero Strikes a Chord: Social Media Teaches Customer Service Lesson" (page 312)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Wednesday July 14<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday July 18<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 PM MST</p>	70
	<p>Discussion 2.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case: Flying the Unfriendly Skies: Coffee, tea or savage Beating?" (page 175)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Friday July 16<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday July 18<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 PM MST</p>	70

	<p><b>Written Case Study Assignment #1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Case: Flying the Unfriendly Skies: Coffee, tea or savage Beating?" (page 175)</b></li> </ul>	Sunday July 18 <sup>th</sup> , 11:00 PM MST	150
<b>Week 3 July 19<sup>th</sup>- July 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activism Chapter 6 (pages 257-261)</li> <li>• Case: "Blackfish Documentary Mobilizes SeaWorld Activists"" (page 262)</li> <li>• Case: "SeaWorld Responds with Truth Campaign" (page 278)</li> </ul>	Wednesday, July 21st	0
	<p>Discussion 3.1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case: Blackfish Documentary Mobilizes SeaWorld Activists"" (page 262)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Wednesday July 21<sup>st</sup>, 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST</p>	70
	<p>Discussion 3.2 :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case: "SeaWorld Responds with Truth Campaign" (page 278)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Friday July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 11:00 PM MST</p> <p>2 Replies: Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST</p>	70
	<p><b>Written Case Study Assignment #2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Case: "SeaWorld Responds with Truth Campaign" (page 278)</b></li> </ul>	<b>Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST</b>	150
<b>Week 4 July 26<sup>th</sup>- 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 10: "Cultural and Other Considerations" (page 489-491)</li> <li>• Hofstede Dimensions of Culture</li> <li>• Case: "Shark Fin Hong Kong" (page 512)</li> </ul>	Tuesday July 27 <sup>th</sup>	0
	<p>Discussion 4.1 :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case: "Shark Fin Soup: Disney Hong Kong Loses Magic for Some" (page 512)</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Discussion Post: Wednesday July 28<sup>th</sup> 11:00 PM MST</p>	70





		2 Replies: Friday July 30 <sup>th</sup> , 11:00 PM MST	
	<b>Final Written Assignment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reflection Paper</li></ul>	<b>Friday July 30th</b>	<b>140</b>