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COMX 351.50: Principles of Public Relations (Online)

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COMX 351: Principles of Public Relations

Fall 2021

Contact Information

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Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to help students develop the knowledge base and analytical skills necessary to evaluate public relations programs and campaigns. The course will explore public relations' role in organizations and society through its historical foundation as a discipline. Students will understand the theories, principles, issues, and trends in public relations, including global and ethical issues. Students will examine real-world public relations successes, failures, and mishaps to help them develop a framework for designing campaigns and advising on public relations matters.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate an understanding of concepts and problem-solving techniques in public relations.
2. Analyze how public relations affects various aspects of modern society.
3. Engage in critical thinking to solve public relations issues.
4. Demonstrate effective problem-solving skills.
5. Develop skills from professionals to apply to challenges that affect public relations locally and globally.
6. Apply key processes in public relations such as research, planning, strategy, and evaluation.
7. Differentiate between ethical and unethical practices.
8. Create a framework to resolve ethical issues in practice.
9. Create messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context.
10. Influence public discourse.

Required Course Materials

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Concise guide to APA style* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

Freberg, K. (2020). *Discovering public relations: An introduction to creative and strategic practices*. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Recommended Apps

While not required, the following apps will make it easier for us to connect and communicate and help you make the most of your time:

- **Microsoft Outlook:** I expect you to check your email every day. Downloading the Microsoft Outlook app and connecting your UM email account will allow you to receive notifications when I send you a message and make it faster and easier for you to respond.
- **UM Moodle:** Receive notifications when your peers have responded to your discussion questions and get reminders about approaching deadlines.

- **Hemingway Editor:** This is an incredibly useful tool to help you edit your assignments. Paste in your content, and the Hemingway app will analyze your readability and highlight sections that can be simplified.

Format

The course objectives are met entirely online. Taking an online course may be new for you; it may take a while to get used to the format beyond the time you usually spend on a class.

I am committed to the endeavor of teaching, whether online or in a classroom. I believe I can meet my goals for teaching this course and you can meet your goals in taking this course, even though this will not occur in a traditional classroom setting. The more contact students make (both with their peers and with their instructor), the more successful they are in the course. Thus, my goal is to encourage you to interact and engage as fully as possible.

I should note that I live in Boise, Idaho, not Missoula, so we are unable to meet in person. While we won't meet face-to-face, your questions, comments and feedback are never viewed as a distraction. I check my email frequently and will always respond within 24 hours. Please don't feel uncomfortable calling me, either. I wouldn't include my personal number if I didn't want students to call when they had questions. You can also make an appointment with me on Zoom if you prefer to see a face at the other end of the line.

Policies

Deadlines

Though many of the time and location constraints have been removed, deadlines are still inevitable and are designed to help you stay caught up. All assignments must be submitted by 11:55 p.m. (MT) on the deadline. Late work is not accepted. Communicate with me immediately if you foresee any difficulties in meeting a deadline. You'll find I can be flexible and understanding if you inform me of difficulties meeting deadlines before assignments are due; difficulties meeting deadlines after assignments are due are excuses, and I don't accept those.

Academic Integrity

All students taking this course must adhere to the University of Montana's academic dishonesty policy as presented in the [Student Conduct Code \(SCC\)](#). You're responsible for reading and understanding this code. If you have any questions, please contact me or the department chair.

Original Work

I expect all the work you do in this class to be completely original. No work done by classmates (current or previous) may be used by you, in whole or in part, for your work in this class. Nothing you have written previously (for any other course, in this course if you have taken it previously or anything you have written for other jobs or organizations) may be submitted to fulfill the assignments in this class. Finally, absolutely no plagiarism will be tolerated. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive a zero on the first offense. If you are caught again, you will fail the class, and steps will be taken to initiate university sanctions as per the SCC.

Types of Plagiarism

The advent of the internet has made plagiarizing simpler. However, keep in mind that if you can find something online, I can, too. Generally, plagiarism occurs in three forms:

- Incremental: Failing to correctly attribute source material (e.g., using incorrect style to cite your source, omitting information such as the date of publication or page number or failing to include a source both in the body of the work and on your reference list).
- Patchwork: Copying and pasting material from one or more sources with very little modification (e.g., visiting three web sites and cutting and pasting snippets from each).
- Global: Taking the full text of another source and passing it off as your work.

Disabilities

If you have a disability that may impact your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs so accommodations can be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please contact me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

Consideration

Help foster an atmosphere where a priority for education and a respect for all students is valued by engaging in comments that relate to course content and show tolerance for opinions different from your own. Please understand that whether it is face-to-face or online, harassment of any kind is inappropriate and intolerable, and disciplinary action will be taken should it occur.

Assignments

All assignments must follow APA formatting (typed, double-spaced on standard-sized paper [8.5" x 11"] with 1" margins on all sides, and use 11 pt. Calibri font). More detailed assignment descriptions and rubrics for each assignment are posted in Moodle.

Chapter Quizzes (15 @ 15 points each)

To encourage you to complete the assigned readings, you will have a 15-question quiz on each chapter.

Basics of APA Style (70 points)

I expect you to consult outside sources to complete your written assignments. Regardless of whether you use direct quotations or paraphrase information, you need to cite your sources using APA format, both in the body of your assignment and on your reference list. This assignment is designed to introduce you to the specifics of APA style. Upon completing the tutorial, you'll create a template you can use throughout the semester to ensure you're following proper formatting.

Article Reviews (3 @ 100 points each)

It's important to become familiar with trends and industry publications. You will select and summarize an article, identify its implications for the practice of PR and critique the article.

Case Studies (2 @ 100 points each)

You will select a public relations occurrence and conduct a critical analysis of it using our readings and discussions as a guide. Further research must be conducted, as specific dates and events will be necessary to construct a thorough case analysis.

Discussion Questions (15 @ 16 points each)

Discussion questions take the place of conversations in a traditional classroom; they are an opportunity to explore topics in more depth, learn about your classmates, share ideas and apply course concepts to things you've seen or experienced. Each week, you will respond to an initial discussion prompt and at least one peer post. You will be graded using the following criteria:

	Exceeds expectations (2 points)	Meets expectations (1 point)	Does not meet expectations (0 points)
Thoroughness	All components of the discussion prompt are addressed	Most components of the discussion prompt are addressed	Few, if any, components of the discussion prompt are addressed
Application	Posting reflects clear, specific evidence of assigned readings	Posting reflects evidence of assigned readings, though it could be clearer and more specific	Posting reflects no evidence of assigned readings
Participation	Builds a constructive dialogue by asking follow-up or clarifying questions or providing additional details or examples	Engages with peer responses, though comments could be more specific or detailed	Responds to peers by making useless general or comments (e.g., "Great point!" "I agree!")
Quantity	Responds to more than one peer post	Responds to one peer post	Does not respond to one peer post
Timeliness	Postings are well distributed throughout the week (e.g., the initial response is made on Wednesday; first peer response is made on Thursday; follow-up posts are made on Saturday)	Postings are somewhat concentrated throughout the week (e.g., the initial response is made on Saturday; peer response is made on Sunday)	Postings are very concentrated throughout the week (e.g., all posts are made on Sunday within an hour or two)
Mechanics	Posts are error-free and grammatically correct	Posts contain minor grammatical and mechanical errors	Posts contain excessive grammatical and mechanical errors
Citations	Every post includes relevant citations to support or reinforce ideas	Some posts include relevant citations to support or reinforce ideas	Posts do not include relevant citations to support or reinforce ideas
APA formatting	Citations follow error-free APA formatting	Citations follow APA formatting but contain minor errors	Citations do not follow APA formatting

Get out of Jail Free

I allow each student to miss one deadline with no penalty each semester. If you miss a deadline, I'll still accept your work, but you'll forfeit the extra credit points; if you never use your get out of jail free card, it's worth 10 extra credit points at the semester's end. The caveat is you must submit your assignment within one week of the deadline.

Redo Assignment

You have an opportunity to redo any assignment of your choice the second to last week of class. It can be an assignment you did poorly on, did not turn in, or even one you want to improve for personal

edification. There is one exception: if you are caught plagiarizing and subsequently earn an F on an assignment, you may not redo it.

Grading

There are 1,035 points possible for this course, and you will be graded with traditional letter grades. I do not curve grades, round up or add in extra points you have not earned.

100%-97%=A+	82.9%-80%=B-	66.9%-63%=D
96.9%-93%=A	79.9%-77%=C+	62.9%-60%=D-
92.9%-90%=A-	76.9%-73%=C	<60%=F
89.9%-87%=B+	72.9%-70%=C-	
86.9%-83%=B	69.9%-67%=D+	

All grades will be posted within two weeks of the deadline.

Contesting Grades

I am willing to review any assignment with you to discuss your concerns. This is more difficult online than in person, so we'll have to work with what we've got. Please wait 24 hours after receiving an assignment before you contact me. When you do, please write down your specific concerns and your backing for these concerns, and I will research your situation. We'll take it from there if further discussion is necessary.

Submitting Work

All written assignments should be saved as Word documents to avoid problems with opening files. If I can't open your files, I can't grade them, and if I can't grade them, you'll earn a zero. As a currently enrolled UM student, [you can download Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus for free](#), so there's no excuse not to use Word. Moodle is the ONLY place I will accept written assignments; if you email me an assignment, you will receive a zero.

Class Schedule

Week	Reading	Assignment	Due
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 1: An introduction to public relations	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 1 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 1 quiz	9/5
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 2 – Historical contexts and today's practices	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 2 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 2 quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Basics of APA style	9/12
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 3 – Ethics and the law	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 3 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 3 quiz	9/19
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 4 – Diversity and inclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 4 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 4 quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Article review #1	9/26
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 5 – Research and evidence-based practices	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 5 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 5 quiz	10/3
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 6 – Branding	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 6 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 6 quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Case study #1	10/10
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 7 – Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 7 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 7 quiz	10/17
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 8 – Strategic campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 8 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 8 quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Article review #2	10/24
9	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 9 – Audiences and relationship management	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 9 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 9 quiz	10/31
10	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 10 – Creative content	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 10 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 10 quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Case study #2	11/7
11	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 11 – Management and business acumen	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 11 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 11 quiz	11/14
12	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 12 – Measurement and evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 12 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 12 quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Article review #3	11/21
13	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 13 – Careers	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 13 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 13 quiz	11/28
14	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 14 – Specializations	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 14 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 14 quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Redo assignment (optional)	12/5
15	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 15 – The future	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 15 discussion question <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter 15 quiz	12/12