

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**

**Communications Studies (COMS) 383 - Lecture 01**  
**Introduction to Public Relations**  
**Winter 2015**

**Saturday, January 17 – April 11 (excluding Feb. 21 & April 4)**  
**Saturday 1:00 – 4:30 pm**

**Instructor:** Jeremy Hexham  
**Office:**  
**Office Phone:** 403-536-9183  
**Text:** 587-774-2235  
**E-Mail:** jhexham@ucalgary.ca  
**Office Hours:** By Appointment. Most weeks I will be in the classroom by 12:00 pm

**Course Description**

Coms 383 will introduce students to the principles, theories, and practices of Public Relations *as a professional field*. It is intended to help students develop an awareness of how courses in Communications and other fields apply to the practice of Public Relations by exposing them to real life issues and techniques. In other words it seeks to bridge the gap between the university and the issues faced by of Public Relations practitioners.

The course covers the development of public relation as a professional field through to its role in organization and society today. Topics will include public relations research and planning, strategic messaging, ethics, issues management, media, government, and investor relations as well as social media.

Students will learn and understand the course concepts through simulating real situations. Case studies will be examined and speakers brought in to illustrate the challenges and successes of public relations practice. Students will also be required to actively participate in discussions and class activities as well as working in small groups to develop and prepare a Public Relations Communications Plan. These plans will be presented to the class by each group.

**Objectives of the Course**

The course will help students to:

- gain a basic theoretical and practical understanding of public relations
- develop an understanding of key concepts and practices of public relations
- develop skill in the field of public relations through active engagement with the material
- understand the role and challenges of public relations in organizations and society through focused analyses, case studies and speakers.
- develop critical thinking through examination, analysis and discussion of public relations cases

### **Textbooks and Readings:**

Wilcox, D & Cameron, G. Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics (11<sup>th</sup> Edition)  
The 10<sup>th</sup> Edition is also acceptable.

### **Recommended:**

The Canadian Press *Stylebook* (Any edition)  
The Canadian Press *Caps and Spelling* (Any edition)

### **Internet and electronic communication device information:**

- Cell phones must be put away at the start of class: there will be no texting, twittering, use of Facebook, emailing, and so on during this class. If any of these activities persists, students may be asked to leave the class.
- If you wish to use a laptop you **must get** the instructor's permission and sit at the back of the class so as not to disturb other students.
- Laptop computers may be used only to take notes during class. Please do not use your laptop to view non-class related content or to do work unrelated to this class. Under no circumstances should students use their laptop during a student presentation. Those who do not adhere to this rule will lose the right to use a laptop. Please note that if you are using a laptop, you may be asked to provide notes to other students and the instructor.
- **Recording of lectures:** Recording any part of any lecture in any form, including through a computer, without permission is not permitted. Nor will the Power Point slides or lecture notes be posted on the web. The photographing of Power Point lectures with a cell phone or other device is not permitted. These restrictions are due to copyright and intellectual property issues and are strictly enforced.

### **E-mail Policy:**

- When sending me an email, make sure to have COMS 383 in the subject line
- Please ensure that your name is visible in the "from line." This way I can identify you and not play email tag.
- Before this course begins please go to the D2L site and send an email to yourself. If you do not receive the email it is your responsibility to update your email address in the University of Calgary system. Instructions on how to do this are provided on the E-learn page. If you neglect to update your email address in the system, you will miss important messages related to the course.

### **Assignments and Evaluation:**

Each assignment will be discussed in class and details about each assignment will be posted on D2L after the first class on January 17, 2015.

- In Class Introduction 5% (January 17)
  - Please Note: This will be done in the first class and will not be repeated if you miss it. Details will be available on D2L and emailed to students prior to the first Class
- Biography 5% (February 7)
- Quiz 1 15% (February 14)

- PR Profession Research Essay: 20% (February 28)
- Communication Plan 35%
  - Research and Situational Analysis 5% (February 28)
  - Communications Plan 20% (March 28)
  - Presentation 10% (April 11)
- Quiz 2 10% (April 11)
- Class Participation 10% (Ongoing)

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No**

**Submission of Assignments:** The first assignment, the biography, is to be submitted via Dropbox, the second assignment, the interview, is to be handed in at the beginning of class and the third assignment is to be submitted in both hard copy and via Dropbox.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, except the first assignment the Biography, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

**Note:** It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

**Policy for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of the course.

**Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you

need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

### Grading System & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Work in this course will be graded using letter grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good—clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	0%

### Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people’s words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight

word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

### Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/research/research-ethics>

This course does not require students to conduct, or act as participants in, primary research involving surveys, interviews, or observations although it does involve gathering publically available data for the purpose of providing students with insights into how PR is practiced.

### Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (PIC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:picarts@ucalgary.ca">picarts@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> 403-220-5333 <b>403-266-1234      Emergency: call 911</b> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a> If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort ( <b>220-5333</b> ). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a> 403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Student Services Mobile App</li> </ul>	<a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a>

<p><b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html">http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds">http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</a></p>
<p><b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling Services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<p><b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a></p> <p><b>403-266-HELP (4357)</b></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a></p> <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

**Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

Reading and lecture schedule will be on D2L and discussed in class.