

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 383, L01
Introduction to Public Relations

Spring 2016

Tuesday, May 10, 2016 – Thursday, June 30, 2016
(May 26 – June 2, 2016 excluded)

Lectures: Tuesday and Thursday, 13:00 – 15:45

Instructor: AnneMarie Dorland
Office: SS 250
Office Phone: 403-220-6207
E-Mail: adorland@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Thursday mornings 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Course Description

In this course, we will explore the principles, theories and practices of Public Relations within a Canadian context. This course is intended to introduce students to the current challenges and opportunities present in the field of public relations. Topics will include planning and executing a public relations program, media relations, strategic messaging, ethics, issues management, government, and investor relations as well as new issues in social media practices.

Additional Information

Through readings, lectures, practical assignments, group discussions and activities, COMS 383 will introduce students to the rapidly evolving field of Public Relations. In addition, this course will seek to introduce students to applied methods of Public Relations with a focus on developing a sample portfolio of work relevant to professionals in the field today.

Objectives of the Course

- To provide an introduction to the foundational principles and practices of public relations in Canada.
- To encourage students to think critically about the challenges and features of public relations practice in various organizational and social sectors.
- To guide students in developing their own best practices of Public Relations through focused analyses of contemporary case studies, active engagement with group work and class participation.

Textbooks and Readings

Cardin, M. and McMullan, K. (2014) *Canadian PR for the Real World (1st ed.)*, Pearson Canada Inc., Toronto, ON.

The textbook is available at the University Bookstore, and used at Bound and Copied, and will be placed on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library Reserve Desk. Additional readings may be assigned in class, and will be posted to D2L.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are permitted during lectures for note taking and course related work only. iPods, cellphones and gaming devices may not be used at all during class. Improper use of electronic devices will impact your participation grade. No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

Please be advised that the instructor will answer student email by the end of the next business day. As email is most useful for short and specific inquiries, detailed questions regarding course material and assignments should be addressed during office hours. To ensure clear and prompt communication, please include your name and COMS 383 in your email correspondence.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
10%	In-class test The test will evaluate student knowledge of course concepts covering chapters from the readings, lecture and tutorial materials. The test will be multiple-choice, and will cover material from the first four classes.	May 24, 2016
35%	Media Kit Throughout the term students will draft copies of various public relations documents that make up a media kit. Time will be provided in class for drafting the documents, and the instructor will provide feedback throughout the term on the individual documents. The final revised and polished version of these documents will be handed in as a media kit. Further details will be posted on D2L and discussed in class.	June 16, 2016
10%	In-class test The test will evaluate student knowledge of course concepts covering chapters from the readings, lecture and tutorial materials. The test will be multiple-choice, and will cover material from classes held from May 24 – June 23, 2016 (inclusive).	June 28, 2016
35%	Communications Plan Working in groups, students will prepare a communications plan based on a real life case study. The communications plan will include a situational analysis, audience analysis, social media, special event, community engagement and traditional media plan, and an in-class presentation to the class on June 30 (last day of class). Further details will be posted on D2L and discussed in class.	June 30, 2016
10%	Class participation Students are required to actively participate in class discussions, in-class assignments and group projects.	Ongoing

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

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Submission of Assignments:

Assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class, on the due date specified unless you are otherwise instructed.

Please hand in your essays directly to your instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. 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>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

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.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

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. 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 & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades in COMS 383 are reported as letter grades. However, in this course, letter grades will be used for written assignments, while percentage grades will be used for exams and quizzes. When letter grades are used for assignments or course components, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade. The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF 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	0- 49.99%	0%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

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 <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd 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 (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

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

<p>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	<p>https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</p>
<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</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 Lecture Topics and Readings

The Role of Public Relations

- May 10, 2016 Public relations in Canada – Influencing public opinion then and now
- May 12, 2016 Ethics and the field of Public Relations
- May 17, 2016 Evaluation of public relations programs, assessment metrics and audience analysis

Public Relations Tactics

- May 19, 2016 Planning a public relations program
- May 24, 2016 Writing for Public Relations
In-class test (10%)
- June 7, 2016 Media relations and media training
- June 9, 2016 Social Media strategies and techniques

Public Relations Strategy

- June 14, 2016 Audience targets and influence groups: investor relations, consumer relations, corporate social responsibility, cause and environmental PR.
- June 16, 2016 Research, evaluation and assessment
Media kit due (35%)

Application to the Field

- June 21, 2016 Issues management and crisis communications
- June 23, 2016 Special events management
- June 28, 2016 Public Relations, Internal communications and Marketing
In-class test (10%)
- June 30, 2016 Class presentations and review.
Communications Plan due (35%)
- July 7, 2016 Communications Plan and Media Kit assignment return (SS250)