

**Communication Studies (COMS) 383 L60  
Introduction to Public Relations  
Summer 2013**

**Saturday: 9:30-2:30 Class Dates: July 6, 13, 20, 27, August 3, 10, 2013**

**Instructor:** Dr. Linda Vennard  
**Office Location:** SS307 (Shared Office)  
**E-Mail:** vennard@ucalgary.ca  
**Office Hours:** Tuesday 10:00-12:00 p.m., or by appointment

### **Course Description**

Coms 383 introduces Students to the principles, theories and practices of public relations as a professional field, its role in organizations and society today, and future directions. Topics include public relations research and planning, strategic messaging, ethics, issues management and social media. Case studies will be examined to illustrate challenges and successes of public relations practice. The format of the course provides an opportunity to develop and enhance oral and written communication, research and analytical skill in strategic and tactical messaging. Students will learn through 'doing', and be required to actively participate in discussions and class activities to facilitate understanding of the course concepts. Students will work in small groups to develop and prepare a Public Relations communications plan which includes analysis and messaging, and present it to the class.

### **Objectives of the Course**

The primary objectives of the course are:

- To develop Students' skills in the field of public relations through active engagement with the material.
- To facilitate Students' understanding of the role and challenges of public relations in organizations and society through focused analysis and case studies.
- To develop Student critical thinking through examination, analysis and discussion of public relations cases.
- To introduce Students to key concepts, theoretical underpinnings and practices of public relations.

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

Students are encouraged to bring their laptops, the use of which will be during designated times in class and only for purposes of the class, and otherwise not permitted. No texting or cell phone use permitted in class.

### **Textbooks and Readings:**

Wilcox, D. & Cameron, G. *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics*. (10<sup>th</sup> Edition) (ISBN-13: 978-0-2-5-77085; ISBN-10: 978-0-205-77088-6)

An Electronic version is available through the University of Calgary Bookstore. Additional readings may be posted on Blackboard.

### Assignments and Evaluation

Quiz #1	20% (July 20, 2013)
Quiz #2 (take-home; see below)	20% (due August 3, 2013)
Small Group Project: (total 50%)	
• Situation Analysis and Research Plan	15% (July 27, 2013)
• Communications Plan	25% (August 10, 2013)
• Project Presentation	10% (August 10, 2013)
Class participation	10% (ongoing)

#### About Quiz #1:

Quiz#1 may contain multiple choice and/or short answer questions and/or short essay questions. It will cover the material in assigned readings of the required text, lecture material and all other material covered to that point in the course.

#### About Quiz #2:

Quiz #2 is a take-home quiz, distributed on July 27, 2013 and due at the beginning of the following class, i.e. August 3, 2013 (hard copy only). Quiz #2 is noncumulative and may contain multiple choice and/or short answer questions and/or short essay questions. It will cover the material in assigned readings of the required text, lecture material and all other material covered in class to that point the course (after Quiz #1).

**About the Small Group Project:** The Small Group Project represents one half of the mark in the course. Students will work in groups of five to complete a project over the length of the course. No individual projects will be permitted; Students are required to work in a group. The only exception to this will be in 'extraordinary circumstances', the definition of which will be determined by the Instructor and made only in response to the unlikely request of a group to remove a member at some point in the Project. The Small Group Project comprises three components: (1) Situation Analysis and Research Plan (15%) (5-7 pages, double-spaced); written 12-15 page (double-spaced) Communications Plan (25%); and Project Presentation to the class (10%).

The Small Groups will be formed on the second day of class (July 13, 2013). Students will form small groups based on their interest in particular contexts of Public Relations: (1) Corporations; (2) Entertainment, Sports and Tourism; (3) Politics and Government; (4) Global Public Relations; (5) Nonprofit, Health and Education. Students can expect to develop considerable expertise in their area of specialization, and will be expected to contribute this to class discussions and activities. An important part of the Small Group Project will be the conceptual inclusion of new media in the Public Relations context.

**About Participation:**

Participation through regular attendance and participation in class activities is an essential component of the course. The course is designed to reinforce student learning and mastery of the material through active engagement and “doing”. Students are expected to attend classes and participate; “participation” is not only attendance per se but contributing to each others’ learning and participating in the creation of a positive atmosphere and learning environment.

**You do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in the course.**

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment

**Note:** Please hand in assignments directly to the instructor if possible. If not possible, 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 instructors mailbox.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO****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.

**Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

**Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although 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. 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**

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

### **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. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

### **Academic Misconduct**

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

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

### **Students' Union**

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

### **Student Ombudsman**

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

### **Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points**

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

### **"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

### **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

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:  
<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreb>

### **Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

A daily schedule of lectures and readings, as well as detailed assignment descriptions, will be made available on Blackboard on the first day of class.