

University of Calgary
Department of Communication and Culture

Communications Studies (COMS) 383 - Lecture 01
Introduction to Public Relations
Summer 2014 (Thurs., July 3 – Thurs., Aug. 14)
Tuesday & Thursday 8:30 – 11:15 am

Instructor: Jeremy J. Hexham
Office Location: SS307
E-Mail: jhexham@ucalgary.ca – See Note below
Office Hours: Tuesday 11:30 – 12:00 or by appointment
I will try to be in the classroom by 7:45 each morning

Course Description

Coms 383 is an introduction to the principles, theories and practices of public relations as a professional field. 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 'doing': case studies will be examined and speakers brought in to illustrate the challenges and successes of public relations practice. Students will 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 which includes analysis and messaging, and which will be presented to the class.

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

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.

Textbooks and Readings:

Required:

Seitel, Fraser *The Practice of Public Relations* (12th edition)

Recommended:

The Canadian Press *Stylebook* (Any edition)

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

Assignments and Evaluation

* Detailed assignment descriptions will be available on D2L and will be discussed in class

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|-------------------------------------|-----|-------------|
| • Biography | 15% | (July 15) |
| • Quiz 1 | 15% | (July 24) |
| • Quiz 2 | 10% | (August 12) |
| • Communication Plan | 50% | |
| ○ Research and Situational Analysis | 15% | (July 29) |
| ○ Communications Plan | 25% | (August 12) |
| ○ Presentation | 10% | (August 14) |
| • Class Participation | 10% | |

Biography

The purpose of this assignment is to develop your story telling abilities. For this assignment you are to write a 325 word, 1 page single spaced, biographical story of yourself, that you would be able to use as part of an employment package (résumé, cover letter and biography) and/or website or company newsletter. You need to include basic biographic information as well as at least one story about yourself. The story can be about where you grew up, an event that profoundly shaped your life, hobbies or extra-curricular activities but the details must fit in and be relevant to the biography. With this assignment you must submit two photographs from the waist up, with no other person in the picture. One of these photographs must be included in the Word document and one must be uploaded as a jpeg image with your name on it large enough to read.

More detail about this assignment and an example will be available on D2L after the 2nd class.

This assignment is to be submitted via dropbox in a Word document and the 2nd photograph is to be submitted as a jpeg

Quizzes

There will be two quizzes in this class. The questions will come from the textbook, handouts and lecture materials.

Communications Plan

In groups of 8-10, students will produce a communication plan for a current issue or situation that could be used by an organization that is affected by the topic. Some example are: raising awareness of a health issue, saving the Silver Springs outdoor pool, awareness for or against school buses being allowed to use the eight light system in the city of Calgary, secondary suites, a festival. The opportunities and issues are endless. This issue/situation needs to have a local audience (ie Calgary and surrounding area). Research is to be done using the internet, organizations publications, media stories, library research and personal knowledge, but there is to be no contact (interviews etc) with any organization that deals with the topic.

The communication plan will include a situational analysis and research plan, and a group presentation. The communication plan will include the planning of an event, a press release, a media relations plan that includes a traditional and new (social) media campaign.

More detail about this assignment, an outline and examples of communications plans will be available on D2L.

Communication plan topics will need to be approved by the instructor.

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

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

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or 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.

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 (3rd 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 Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) 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/ethics/cfreb>