

**Communications Studies (COMS) 383 - Lecture 01**  
**Introduction to Public Relations**  
**Winter 2014 (Jan 11 – April 12)**  
**Saturday 1 – 4:30 pm**

NOTE: There **IS class** on February 15, but not on February 22

**Instructor:** Jeremy J. Hexham  
**Office Location:** SS 335  
**E-Mail:** [jhexham@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jhexham@ucalgary.ca) – See Note below  
**Office Hours:** Tuesday 11 – 12 pm and 2 – 3 pm

### **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 thru 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 relation 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 presented to the class.

### **Objectives of the Course**

- Gain a basic theoretical perspectives and practical understanding of public relation
- To introduce and define key concepts and practices of public relation
- To develop skill in the field of public relation through active engagement with the material
- Understand the role and challenges of public relation in organizations and society through focused analyses, case studies and speakers.
- Develop critical think through examination, analysis and discussion of public relation cases

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

- Cell phones must be put away at the start of class: there will be no texting, twittering, the 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 need to get instructor permission and sit at the back of the class 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 a student 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 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 that you 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 blackboard 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* (12<sup>th</sup> 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 blackboard on the first day of class as well as being discussed in class

- Biography 10% (January 25)
- Interview a PR practitioner 30% (February 15)
- Communication Plan 50%
  - Situational Analyze and Research plan 10% (March 15)
  - Communications Plan 30% (April 5)
  - Presentation 10% (April 5)
- Class participation 10%

### Biography

Students are to write a 250-300 word biography of another member of the class. Information to include is place of birth and where they grew up, an event that has profoundly shaped their life, education and work experience and hobbies or extra curricula activities. A headshot photograph will need to be included in the document as well as a .jpeg attachment with your name on it large enough to read.

### Interview a PR practitioner

Students will interview a PR practitioner and write a maximum 4 page paper about the interview. You will need to have outside information about their job and what they do as well as a minimum of 4 quotes from your interview. In the interview you want to find out things about what they do, what a typical day might look like, their education, how they got to where they are now, what they like about their job and the PR field as well as a minimum of two things they do not like about their job and the profession.

### Communications Plan

In groups of 5, students will produce a communication plan for a small organization, preferably a small non-profit organization. The communication plan will include a situational analyze and research plan, and a group presentation. The communication plan will include an event, a press release, a media relation plan and a social media campaign.

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**

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

### **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 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>