

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

REVISED

COMS 383 (L01) Introduction to Public Relations

Winter 2020: January 13 – April 15 (excluding February 16-22 & April 10 & 13)

Lecture: January 13 – March 9 MWF 10:00 – 10:50

ONLINE: March 17 - April 15

Instructor	Dr. Monique Solomon
Email	solomonm@ucalgary.ca
Web Page	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Communication Availability	<p>Email</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekdays (9-5). Response usually within 24 hours.• Include COMS 383 in the subject line of all email sent to your professor.• Include your name in the body of the email as it appears on your university registration. <p>D2L</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• M/W 10:00 – 12:00, F 10:00 – 11:00

Course Description

In this introductory course students will learn foundational principles and practices of Public Relations (PR). The course covers history, ethics, and theory, and the role of public relations in corporate, government, and cause-related organizations. Weekly topics include strategic planning, research and evaluation in PR programs, writing for PR, media relations, issues management, and PR specializations.

Additional Information

Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline. In this class, students are introduced to course material through lectures and discussion, readings, and in-class activities. Students practice writing for PR by preparing materials relevant to professionals in the field. The course emphasizes learning through participation, which means attendance and attention during class time are strongly encouraged for success in the course.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this courses, students should be able to:

- understand the principles and practices of public relations.
- think critically about relationships between organizations, stakeholders, and publics.
- discuss the relevance of public relations cases in class, group, and individual work.
- apply best practices and ethical approaches in preparation of foundational public relations and communications materials.

Textbook

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

Assignments and Evaluation

Instructions will be posted on D2L.	Weight	Due	REVISED
<p>Test 1: The test evaluates student knowledge of course concepts from the weekly readings and classes. These are closed book tests and the material is not cumulative. The test format includes multiple-choice and short answer questions.</p>	15%	February 14	Completed
<p>Test 2 *REVISION* The test evaluates student knowledge of course concepts from the weekly readings and course materials (Chapters 6, 7, 8, 11, 12). The test format includes 25 multiple-choice and two short answer questions. Posted on D2L in the <i>Quizzes</i> section March 27. Time: 60-minutes (10 more than usual class time)</p>	15%	March 27 in class	Available on D2L March 27 (24-hours)
<p>Media Kit: Students prepare five one-page assigned PR materials that comprise a basic media kit. Time will be allotted in class. A final version of each document will be submitted together as a Media Kit.</p>	25%	March 20	Extension granted to March 23
<p>Communications Plan Student groups of four research and write a Communications Plan (3200-3500 words) for an assigned case study organization. Groups may submit a draft outline of their plan for feedback by April 3. Meetings online via D2L.</p>	30%	April 15	April 15
<p>Group Presentation *REVISION* Groups prepare a PowerPoint presentation (10-12 slides) explaining key points of their Communications Plan. Submit slides and notes. Details posted on D2L.</p>	5%	April 8, 10, 13 in class	April 15
<p>Class Participation January 13 - March 11 Participation will be evaluated based on in-class activities and your comments and contributions during class discussions. Participation involves attentive listening, making informed thoughtful comments, and demonstrating knowledge of the readings.</p> <p>Class Participation *REVISION* March 23 - April 15 Participation in discussion on D2L. Check-in March 20 Prompts posted March 23, 30, and April 6 Details posted on D2L</p>	10%	Ongoing throughout term March 20 (check-in) Prompts March 23 March 30 April 6	D2L participation will be considered in addition to participation already achieved in class

Policy on the use of Electronic Communication Devices

- Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones may be used in class for course-related purposes if their use is not distracting others or negatively impacting the learning environment.
- Come to class ready to participate in discussions and activities. Please keep your focus on our class not on searching the internet, gaming, messaging, or shopping etc., or working on material for other classes.
- Close all electronics during presentations by your fellow students. Working on a laptop or device during student presentations will impact your participation grade.
- NO audio or video recording or photography of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments

You must complete all assignments and exams or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. If you miss a required course component, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Assignments for the course are due via submissions to D2L on the due date stated on the course outline, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Follow assignment instructions carefully. Check the assignment instructions to see if a printed copy of an assignment is required.

Include your name and ID number on all assignments and hand-in your assignments as directed by the professor. If you are unable to do so, please contact your professor to confirm that you will use the drop box 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.

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

Be prepared to provide photo ID to pick up assignments in SS 320. Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the ***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act***. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recorded for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a partial letter 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); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation 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) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, see Section M.1 of the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>. Also see FAQs for Students: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses 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 and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade. In this course, letter grades will be used for the communications plan and presentation, while numeric scores will be converted to percentages for the media kit, participation, and the tests.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%

0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%
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* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: 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. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

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.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, 3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success?utm_source=ssc&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

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, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferrals of exams and course work, requests for reappraisals, and other matters, please see the relevant sections in the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk.

For resources on D2L, visit <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students>. IT support is available at itsupport@ucalgary.ca or by calling 403-220.5555.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found on the course D2L.