

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 383, L01
INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC RELATIONS

Spring 2019

Monday, May 6 – Monday, June 17

(No class on Monday, May 20)

Lecture: MW 13:00-15:45

Instructor: Dr. Monique Solomon
Office: SS 218
E-Mail: solomonm@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Mondays 4 pm – 5 pm or by appointment

Course Description

This course introduces students to the principles and practices of public relations (PR). The course covers theory, history and developments in PR, and the role of PR in corporate, government, and not-for-profit organizations. Topics include strategic communications planning, research, analysis, and evaluation, writing in public relations, media relations, internet and social media, corporate social responsibility, cause and environmental PR, crisis and issues management, and PR specialisations.

Additional Information

Students are introduced to course material through lectures, readings, discussion, and in-class activities. Students practice preparing materials relevant to professionals in the field. The course emphasizes learning through participation, which means attendance and participation 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 foundational principles and practices of public relations.
- think critically about relationships between organizations, stakeholders, and publics.
- discuss the value and significance of PR cases in class, group, and individual work.
- apply best practices and ethical approaches in preparation of foundational public relations and communications materials.

Textbooks and Readings

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

Additional readings may be posted on D2L throughout the term.

Internet and electronic communication device information

- Come to class ready to participate in discussions and activities.
- During class you may use a laptop or tablet for taking notes or in-class activities.
- Please keep your focus on our class and not on surfing and searching the internet, gaming, messaging, or shopping etc., or working on material for other classes.
- Turn off cell phones, gaming and similar devices during class time.
- 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 of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the professor.

Email

Include **COMS 383** in the subject line of all email sent to your professor. Include your name in the email as it appears in your university registration. All communication with your instructor and your fellow students should be written in a courteous, professional manner.

Email is best used for short specific inquiries. If you have detailed questions about the course material or assignments, please speak with your professor during office hours.

Email will be answered weekdays during regular working hours, and usually on a first-come, first-served basis. You can generally expect an answer within 24 hours, but email will not normally be answered in the evening or on weekends. Emails sent in the evening or on weekends will not be replied to until the next business day.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment and test details will be posted on D2L and reviewed in class.	Weight	Due
Class Participation Participation is evaluated based on in-class activities and your comments and contributions during class discussions. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in discussions, individual and group activities, and impromptu speaking and writing activities to gain checkpoints indicating participation in class.	10%	Ongoing throughout term.
In-class Test 1 In-class Test 2 Students will be tested on their knowledge of course concepts from the weekly readings, case studies, and lectures (Test 1, 65 min., Ch.1-5) (Test 2, 50-min., Ch. 6, 7, 8, 11). Closed book tests. Test format is multiple choice, true-false, matching, and short answer questions. Test material is not cumulative.	15% 10%	May 27 June 12

Assignment and test details will be posted on D2L and reviewed in class.	Weight	Due
Media Kit Students prepare 5 one-page documents that together comprise a Media Kit. Details for each document will be reviewed in class, and posted on D2L. The completed Media Kit is due on D2L on June 5.	25%	June 5
Communications Plan Student groups prepare a Communications Plan (2800-3000 words) for a case study organization.	30%	June 17
Group Presentation of Communications Plan (10-12 minutes)	10%	Scheduled last week(s) of classes.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Submission of Assignments

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

Assignments for the course are due via uploads to D2L on the due date stated on the course outline, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Please follow assignment instructions carefully. Please check the assignment instructions to see if a printed copy of the assignment is required.

As directed above, please hand in your assignments directly to your instructor. 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/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

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 and Deferrals:

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) or for another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request. For the policy on supporting documentation the use of a statutory declaration, please see the following:

- Section N.1 of the *University Calendar*:
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/n-1.html>
- FAQs for Students at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

Note that 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 that of another assignment or test.

For information on deferrals, see the following sections in the *University Calendar*:

- Section G.7 Deferral of Term Work at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>
- Section G.6 Deferral of Final Exam at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Assignments, exams, and other work in the course are graded using a combination of letter grades and weighted raw scores. Letter grades will be used for written assignments. Raw scores will be used to calculate scores on exams, and this is converted into a percentage and letter grade per the department chart below. All assignments are then weighted based on the percentage value for the course and the scale below is used to calculate the final grade.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

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%

* 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.

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 support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

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 at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. Research and citation resources are also available on the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) website at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>. If you have questions about citing sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at <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, including 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 https://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising
CAMPUS SECURITY & Safewalk Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly 	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
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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Events & Info for Students 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombuds 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Services • Mental Health Services • Distress entre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus
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.	

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

COMS 383 P19 Schedule		
<p>This is the anticipated schedule of topics. Changes to the schedule will be communicated via D2L or in class. Required course readings are in the textbook. Additional required readings may be posted on D2L. It is a student's responsibility to check D2L for news and updates, and to ensure email is being received at their correct email address. Participation (10%) ongoing throughout term.</p>		
Week	Date	Topics, Assignments, and Readings
Week 1	May 6	Introduction - What is Public Relations? (Chapter 1)
	May 8	Foundations - History and Ethics (Chapter 2)
Week 2	May 13	Strategic Planning – CSR & Relationship Building (Chapter 3)
	May 15	Strategic Planning - The PR Plan (Chapter 4)
Week 3	May 20	<i>Victoria Day (No class today)</i>
	May 22	Tactics – Writing for PR (Chapter 5)
Week 4	May 27	In-class Test 1 (15%) Strategic Planning – From Planning to Evaluation
	May 29	Tactics - Media Relations (Chapters 6 & 8)
Week 5	June 3	Tactics - Social Media & PR Online (Chapter 7)
	June 5	Contexts - Crisis and Issues Management (Chapter 11) DUE: Media Kit (25%)
Week 6	June 10	Communications Plan - Group work and meetings with professor
	June 12	In-class Test 2 (10%) Contexts – PR Specialisation and Future Directions
Week 7	June 17	Communications Plan Group Presentations (10%) DUE: Communications Plan (30%)