

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 383, L01
INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC RELATIONS

Winter 2016

Wed., Jan. 13 – Wed., April 13 (excluding Feb. 17)

Lecture: W 14:00-16:45

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

Course Description

The course introduces students to the principles, theories and practices of public relations in Canadian society. The course covers the development of public relations as a professional field, its role in organizations and society today, and future directions of public relations. 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.

Additional Information

Students will learn through lectures, readings, discussion, and in-class activities. The course emphasizes learning through participation; therefore, regular attendance is strongly encouraged.

Objectives of the Course

- To provide an introduction to the foundational principles and practices of public relations in Canada.
- To actively engage students in critical consideration of approaches to public relations in various industry sectors.
- To guide students in developing practices and skills of public relations and to encourage critical thinking in analysis of public relations cases.

Textbooks and Readings

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

The textbook is available at the University Bookstore, online at CourseSmart.com, and will be placed on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library Reserve Desk.

Additional readings may be assigned in class.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops and other electronic devices may be used during class for course related work and note taking, but not during student presentations. Cell phones must be turned off for the duration of class. No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

Email

When sending email to your instructor include COMS 383 in the subject line, and be sure your name appears somewhere in the email. Please allow up to 48 hours for responses to emails. All electronic communication with your instructor and your fellow students regarding group projects and/or assignments should be addressed and written in a courteous, professional manner.

Email correspondence to your instructor is most useful for short specific inquiries. If you have detailed questions on the course material or assignments please speak with your instructor during office hours.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignments for COMS 383 L01 W16	Weight	Due Date
Quiz 1 & 2 The quizzes test student knowledge of course concepts covering chapters from the readings, lecture and tutorial materials. The format may include multiple-choice, true-false, and short answer questions. Material is not cumulative. For each quiz missed students will receive zero points.	10% 10%	February 3 March 2
Communications Plan In groups students will prepare a communications plan for a case study organization. The plan is comprised of a situational analysis, presentation (to be scheduled), and final plan (due last day of class). Further details will be posted on D2L and discussed in class.	35%	To be scheduled
Media Kit Throughout the term students will draft copies of various public relations documents that make up a media kit. Time will be provided in class for drafting the documents. The final polished version of these documents will be handed in as a media kit. Further details will be posted on D2L and discussed in class.	35%	March 30

<p>Participation Students are encouraged to take part in class discussions, individual and group activities, and impromptu speaking and writing exercises to gain checkpoints indicating participation in class.</p>	10%	Ongoing
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Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

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

Submission of Assignments

Assignments are due in class, in hard copy, on the due date unless you are otherwise instructed. Some assignments may be due via uploads to D2L please follow assignment instructions carefully.

As directed 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 final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. 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/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your assignments.

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

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_0.pdf .

Please note:

1. Students seeking accommodations for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors directly. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
2. 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 another assignment or test.
3. For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

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. 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. Sources used in 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 & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments, exams, and other work in the course are graded using a combination of weighted raw scores for each individual assignment. This is converted into a percentage and letter grade for the assignment. 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 grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good—clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%

2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	0%

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 provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <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 (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 <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 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	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 If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
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 • Student Services Mobile App 	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 Ombudsman 	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"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 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 Lectures and Readings

A schedule of lectures, readings, and assignments will be posted on D2L, and discussed in class.