

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 383, L01
Introduction to Public Relations

Winter 2019

Fri., Jan. 11th – Fri., April 12th (excluding February 18, 20, 22)
Lecture: MWF 10:00-10:50

Instructor: Dr. Monique Solomon
Office: SS 218
E-Mail: solomonm@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2 pm – 4 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 its role in corporate, government, and not-for-profit organizations. Weekly topics include strategic planning, research and evaluation of PR programs, writing for PR, media relations, new media, issues management, and PR specializations.

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 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 foundational 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, & 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.

Any additional readings will be posted on D2L in the term.

Internet and electronic communication device information

- 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. Come to class ready to participate in discussions and activities.
- Close all electronics during presentations by your fellow students. Working on a laptop or device during student presentations will impact your participation grade.
- Turn off cell phones, gaming and similar devices during class time.
- No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

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 instructor 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 read or replied to until the next business day.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignments will be posted on D2L and reviewed in class.	Weight	Due
Tests 1 & 2 The tests evaluate student knowledge of course concepts from the weekly readings and classes. Closed book tests. Format may include multiple-choice and short answer questions. Test material is not cumulative.	15% 15%	February 15 March 22
Media Kit Students prepare assigned PR materials. Class time will be provided. A final version of each document is to be handed in as a Media Kit.	25%	March 29
Communications Plan Student groups prepare a Coms Plan (3200-3500 words) for a case study organization (30%). Group Presentation of Communications Plan (15 min.) (5%)	35%	April 12 Presentations in last week(s) of classes.

<p>Class Participation 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>10%</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout term</p>
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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; however, instructors may not require that a medical note be presented. 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	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)

LINE	http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online resources and tips 	
<p>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.</p>	

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

<p>COMS 383 Schedule: This is the anticipated schedule of topics. Changes to the schedule will be communicated via D2L. It is your responsibility to check D2L for schedule and reading updates, and to ensure D2L emails are received at your correct email address. <i>Readings follow from the course textbook. A schedule of readings will be posted on D2L.</i></p>	
Dates	Topics and Assignments
January 11	Course Introduction
January 14, 16, 18	Foundations - What is Public Relations? PR & Communications
January 21, 23, 25	Foundations - History and Ethics
Jan. 28, 30. Feb. 1	Strategic Planning – Relationship Building
February 4, 6, 8	Strategic Planning – Relationship Building
February 11, 13, 15	Strategic Planning – The PR Plan February 15: Test 1
<i>February 18, 20, 22</i>	<i>Reading Week – No classes</i>
Feb. 25, 27. Mar. 1	Strategic Planning – Research to Evaluation
March 4, 6, 8	Tactics – Media Relations & Media Materials
March 11, 13, 15	Tactics – PR Online
March 18, 20, 22	Contexts – Corporate Social Responsibility & Issues Management March 22: Test 2
March 25, 27, 29	Contexts – Stakeholder PR Due March 29: Media Kit
April 1, 3, 5	Contexts – Stakeholder PR
April 8, 10, 12	Group Presentations of Communication Plan Due: April 12 Communications Plan