

Communication Studies (COMS) 383 - L60
Introduction to Public Relations
Summer 2011

Saturday: 9:30-2:30 Class Dates: July 9, 16, 23, 30, August 6, 13

Instructor: Dr. Linda Vennard
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Web Page: See Blackboard
Office Hours: By appointment

Additional Information

Please note office hours are by appointment.

Course Description

Public relations plays an expanding and increasingly important role in society. This course introduces Students to the principles, practices and theories of public relations as a professional field, its historical development, its role in organizations and society today, and future directions. Topics include public relations research and planning, strategic messaging, ethics, issues management and social media. Public relations is intricately linked with communication theories, and the format of the course provides an opportunity to develop and enhance oral and written communication skills. Students will be required to actively participate in class discussions and, as a group project, to prepare a communications plan and present it to the class.

Objectives of the Course

The primary objectives of the course are:

- To develop Students' skills in the field of public relations through active engagement with the material.
- To facilitate Students' understanding of the role and challenges of public relations in organizations and society through focused analysis and case studies.
- To develop Student critical thinking through examination, analysis and discussion of public relations cases.
- To introduce Students to key concepts, theoretical underpinnings and practices of public relations.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students are encouraged to bring their laptops, the use of which will be during designated times in class and only for purposes of the class, and otherwise not permitted. No texting or cell phone use permitted in class.

Textbooks and Readings:

There is no required text for the course. Online readings accessible through the University of Calgary MacKimmie Library will be assigned and discussed in class.

Assignments and Evaluation

Class participation	10% (ongoing)
Quiz #1	20% (July 16, 2011)
Quiz #2	20% (July 30, 2011)
Group Project	
Proposal – Analysis and Research Plan	15% (July 23, 2011)
Class Presentation	10% (August 13, 2011)
Communications Plan	25% (August 13, 2011)

About the Group Project: Students will work in groups of five to complete a project over the length of the course. No individual projects will be permitted; Students are required to work in a group. The project comprises three components: (1) Proposal – Analysis and Research Plan (15%), Presentation to the class (10%) and written 10-12 page Communications Plan (25%). The Group Project represents one half of the mark in the course.

About Quiz #1:

Quiz#1 will contain short answer questions, and short essay questions. It will cover the material in assigned readings of the required text, lecture material and all other material covered to that point in the course.

About Quiz #2:

Quiz #2 is noncumulative and will contain short answer questions, and short essay questions. It will cover the material in assigned readings of the required text, lecture material and all other material covered in class to that point the course (after Quiz #1).

About Participation:

Participation through regular attendance and participation in class activities is an essential component of the course. The course is designed to reinforce student learning and mastery of the material through active engagement and “doing”.

A passing grade on any particular component of the course is not essential for the student to pass the course as a whole.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment

Note: Please hand in assignments directly to the instructor if possible. If not possible, 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 instructors mailbox.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

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 SS110 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

Writing Skills Statement

Faculty 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 www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/info. 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: www.efwr.ucalgary.ca

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Faculty of Arts: (Revised, effective September 2008).

	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 (MacEwan Student Centre 4th floor, efwr.ucalgary.ca) 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 Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) 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 www.su.ucalgary.ca

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see

<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

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

University of Calgary Research Ethics site:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/compliance/ethics/info/undergrad/>

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

A daily schedule of lectures and readings, as well as detailed assignment descriptions, will be handed out on the first day of class.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.
- For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 4th Floor of MacEwan Student Centre.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

