COM 421: Public Relations Strategies

Syllabus

Spring 2011

Professor	Tom Kelleher, Ph.D.
E-mail	tkell@hawaii.edu
Meeting Times and Place	Monday and Wednesday, Noon - 1:15 p.m. Saunders Hall 637
Office	Crawford Hall 321, 956-9944
Office Hours	Monday, 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Thursday, 10:30 a.m. - Noon By appointment.

Required Resources

- Wilcox, D.L., & G.T. Cameron. (2010). *Public Relations Strategies and Tactics*. (9th ed.) Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Outside readings and research may be assigned from online resources and handouts throughout the semester.

Course Overview

Catalog description: *Practice and effects of public relations. Strategic management, techniques, new communication technologies, diverse publics, ethics and social responsibility all will be emphasized.*

Objectives

In this course, you will learn the basics of public relations by studying public relations practices, history, theory, ethical values, case studies and current events. You will have the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the material covered in course activities and reading assignments through exams, written assignments, class discussions and presentations.

1. Understand defining principles of public relations.
2. Discuss history of the field and the role public relations plays in modern society.
3. Compare and contrast different career paths in public relations.
4. Practice public relations writing.
5. Demonstrate understanding of theories related to the practice of public relations.
6. Identify strategic aspects of public relations programs.
7. Critically evaluate public relations practices in terms of effects.
8. Apply your own values to critically evaluate public relations practices in terms of ethics.

Expectations

Your final grade will be based on exams, written assignments, in-class participation and attendance. For writing assignments, remember that effective professional writing requires careful attention to editing, so refine your work through several drafts. Number grades assigned for late assignments will be divided by two (e.g., a late paper graded 86 will yield a 43). Assignments turned in more than a week late will earn a zero**.**

Exams (2 X 30% = 60%)

Two major exams will cover material from class lectures, class discussion, guest speakers, handouts, and assigned readings. Exams may include multiple-choice, short-answer and essay questions. THERE ARE ABSOLUTELY NO MAKE-UP EXAMS without proper documentation for your absence, which must be provided before the absence if at all possible. A missed exam will count as a zero. *Primary course objectives covered: 1, 2, 5, 6.*

Office visit assignment (10%)

Details and a grading rubric are available online (see links) and will be discussed in class. *Primary course objectives covered: 3, 6, 7, 8.*

News release assignment (10%)

Details will be discussed in class and a grading rubric will be made available. *Primary course objective covered: 4.*

Participation (10%)

Contributions to in-class discussion are essential. At the end of the semester, your participation will be rated based on the following:

- evidence of reading and understanding reading assignments
- resourcefulness of comments (e.g., accurately citing current events and sources)
- collegiality and respect for other students' time
- relevance of comments to course topics and materials

Primary course objectives covered: 2, 6, 7, 8.

Engaging in distracting behavior -- **especially e-mail, phones, texting etc.** -- will hurt your participation grade in the same way that being late will hurt your attendance grade (see next section).

Attendance (10%)
In case of absence due to an emergency such as a death in your family or a serious illness, you must notify me and provide appropriate documentation within a week after first missing class. Excuses for planned absences must be given to me in writing and must be approved one week in advance of the missed class period. One unexcused absence is not a problem. Two unexcused absences will mean 9 points maximum for attendance for the semester, three unexcused absences will mean 8 points, etc. Being late (arriving after attendance is taken) or leaving early without an acceptable excuse or advanced approval will equal one tardy. Being late or leaving early twice will equal one unexcused absence. *Primary course objectives covered: All.*

Grading Weight*

Exam 1	30%
Exam 2	30%
News release assignment	10%
Office visit assignment	10%
Participation	10%
Attendance	10%

Final Grade Requirements
A = 90-100%
B = 80-89%
C = 70-79%
D = 60-69%
F = Below 60%

There will be absolutely no adjustment of grades on an individual basis (e.g., "I'm only one point away from a B, and I must get a B because I'm on probation.") Any requests to do so will be seen as an attempted breach of fairness to the rest of the class.

Guest Speakers
Guest speakers will be invited to our class to discuss their perspectives on public relations. As with other in-class activities, missing class when we have guest speakers will mean missing a valuable resource for assignments and exams.

Special Accommodations
Students requiring special accommodations must notify the instructor and present appropriate supporting documentation by the end of the second week of class.

Seeking Help
This course should provide a great learning experience for all of us. The success of the course depends largely on effective student-teacher interaction. Don't feel like you have to have a pressing problem to talk to me. I look forward to hearing your input. I am normally available during my office hours unless announced otherwise, and I'm also willing to set up an appointment if the office hours don't fit your schedule.

The phone number for the School of Communications is 956-8715.

Academic Honesty
Academic dishonesty of any sort will not be tolerated. I take cheating issues very seriously. Please see me if you have any questions about academic honesty, and I'll be more than happy to discuss such issues *before* you complete your work.

Preliminary Class Timeline

Please make a careful note of the exam and assignment dates. Make sure that you do not have any scheduling conflicts. The exam dates are very unlikely to change. Other topics and readings are subject to change, especially to accommodate current events and

guest speaker schedules. Additional readings and assignments may be added as we go.

Class Days	General Topics	Assignments Due
Jan. 10, 12	• Syllabus • What is PR?	Review syllabus by 1/10 Read CH 1 by 1/12
Jan. 19	• History and evolution of public relations	Read CH 2 by 1/19
Jan. 24, 26	• Ethics	Read CH 3 by 1/24
Jan. 31, Feb. 2	• Public relations departments and firms • Discuss office visit assignment and analysis	Read CH 4 by 1/31
Feb. 7, 9	• Research	Read CH 5 by 2/7 Amy Hennessey, APR, and Shawn Nakamoto, APR, Hawaii Pacific Health, on Wed,. Feb 9.
Feb. 14, 16	• Program planning	Read CH 6 by 2/14 Franklin Clay, Communications Pacific, on Wed., Feb 16
Feb. 23	• Communication and messaging	Read CH 7 by 2/23
Feb. 28, March 2	• Evaluation of public relations work	Read CH 8 by 2/28 Jocelyn Collado, Becker Communications, on Mon., Feb 28
March 7, 9	• Review • **Midterm exam**	**Midterm exam in class on 3/9**
March 14, 16	• Public opinion and persuasion	Read CH 9 by 3/14 Office visit appointments made by 3/16
Spring Break, March 21-25		
March 28, 30	• News releases, media alerts, pitches • Discuss news release assignment	Read CH 14 by 3/28 Kristen Bonilla, APR, University of Hawaii System, on Wed., March 30
April 4, 6	• Tactics for radio, TV and the Web	Read CH 15 by 4/4
April 11, 13	• Global public relations	Read CH 19 by 4/11 **News release due 4/13**
April 18, 20	• Public relations, issues and crises	Read CH 10 by 4/18 Peter Rosegg, Hawaiian Electric Company, on Wed., April 20
April 25, 27	• Public relations and the law • Student presentations	Read CH 12 by 4/25 **Office visit/analysis presentations on 4/27**
May 2, 4	• Student presentations • Review	**Office visit/analysis presentations on 5/2** **Exam review on 5/4**
Monday, May 9 (Noon - 2 p.m.)	• **Final Exam Period**	**Final exam on 5/9**