

COM 459: Public Relations Tactics

Syllabus

Summer Session II, 2012

Professor	Tom Kelleher, Ph.D.
E-mail	tkell@hawaii.edu
Office	Crawford Hall 321, 956-9944
Meeting Times and Place	Tues and Thurs, 9 a.m. -12:15 p.m. Crawford 212

Required Resources

- Kelleher, T. (2007). *Public Relations Online: Lasting Concepts for Changing Media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Other readings and research will be assigned from online resources and handouts throughout the semester.

Course Overview

Description

This section of COM 459 focuses on public relations tactics, particularly online tactics. This course will enhance your communication skills and equip you with some of the tools necessary for success in public relations. We will apply principles of effective and ethical writing to online assignments likely to be encountered in modern public relations.

We will discuss contexts for traditional public relations tactics and their online offshoots -- news releases and social media releases, professional biographies and profiles for SNS, letters to the editor and blog entries, photo opps and Pinterest boards, pitch letters and persuasive tweets, etc.

Objectives

Success in this class requires the following:

1. Understand reasoning behind major types of public relations tactics
2. Identify norms and values of emerging social media
3. Apply sound professional principles in producing traditional public relations tactics
4. Apply sound professional principles in producing public relations tactics for emerging online media
5. Edit your own writing for online use
6. Edit your peers' writing
7. Critically evaluate online public relations tactics in terms of effects
8. Apply your own values to critically evaluate public relations tactics in terms of ethics

Expectations

Your final grade will be based on quizzes, written assignments, in-class participation and attendance. 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.

Quizzes

Any day with assigned reading due as listed in the course timeline is a likely day to have a brief quiz right at the beginning of the class period. Quizzes mainly will cover assigned readings, but with advance notice, quizzes also may cover material from class lectures, class discussion, online postings and handouts. Quizzes may include multiple-choice, short-answer and matching questions. **THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES** without proper documentation for your absence, which must be provided before the absence if at all possible. You can drop your lowest quiz grade. A missed quiz will count as a zero (and therefore count as your drop).

Although we won't have quizzes on every day with assigned reading, you'll want to be prepared each time. (The idea is to motivate you to keep up with the reading and on-time attendance.) We'll have about one quiz a week this session. Since your quiz average counts for 30% of your final grade, consider this: if we were to have exactly six quizzes and you drop your lowest one, each of the others would count for 6% of your overall grade. Please arrive prepared and on time.

Primary course objectives covered: 1 & 2.

Written Assignments

You'll have the opportunity to do much of your writing in class. We'll discuss expectations and grading criteria before getting started with each assignment. In the beginning of the session, grading rubrics will have heavy emphasis on grammar and mechanics. Assuming mastery of these technical issues, later assignments will be assessed with more weight on assignment-specific criteria such as appropriateness for social media, argument quality, voice, resourcefulness, timing, flow, and other goals for writing that we will discuss in class prior to the assignment.

Primary course objectives covered: 3, 4, 5 & 6.

Participation

Contributions to in-class discussion and activities are essential. At the end of the session, 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)
- participation in small-group activities in class
- completion of in-class activities
- collegiality and respect for other students' time

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

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

Attendance (10%)

In case of absence due to an emergency such as a death in 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. Since we only have 12 class periods, each absence is the equivalent of missing more than a week of school during a regular semester. One unexcused absence will mean 8 points maximum for attendance for the semester, two unexcused absences will mean 6 points, etc. Being late (arriving after attendance is taken) or leaving early without an acceptable excuse or advance approval will equal one tardy. Being late or leaving early twice will equal one unexcused absence.

Primary course objectives covered: All.

Grading Weight

Quizzes	30%
Writing/online tactics	50%
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.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring special accommodations must notify the instructor and present appropriate supporting documentation by the end of the first 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. Just let me know if you'd like to meet and we can set up a time.

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, and I've had some unpleasant experiences dealing with cases of plagiarism recently. 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

Make sure that you do not have any scheduling conflicts. Topics and readings are subject to change, especially to accommodate current events and emerging innovations! Additional readings and assignments will be added as we go.

Class Days	General Topics	Assignments Due
July 3	Course overview: the bridge from traditional to "new" PR	Review syllabus, confirm computer access, get textbook Read entire May 2012 issue of <i>Public Relations Tactics</i>
July 5	Interactivity, systems approaches to public relations, your online social networks and profile	Read CH 1 & 2 Read Five tips for using social media to find a job Read Companies to fill 80 percent of jobs through social media in 2012 Online social network profile assignment
July 10	One-way, two-way, P2P PR tactics, feature writing	Read CH 3 & 4 Read Let's write a feature story!
July 12	The <i>publics</i> and the <i>relations</i> in public relations	Read CH 5 Feature story assignment
July 17	Media relations, news releases, social media releases, etc.	Read CH 6 Read How to write a press release Read Reviving the traditional press release Read http://www.pitchengine.com/Home/HowItWorks (review all tabs and videos from main page: <i>Create, Publish, Engage, Follow, Manage</i>)
July 19	Media relations, news releases, social media releases, etc.	News release/social media release assignment
July 24	Commerce-driven public relations, integrated communications	Read CH 7 Read Five digital tools to boost your brand in 2012 [INFOGRAPHIC] Read Sixteen ways to use Pinterest for PR
July 26	Visual media	Pinterest assignment
July 31	Issues-driven public relations, persuasion, social marketing	Read CH 8 Read How to write a great pitch letter Read Nine ways to pitch via social media
August 2	Writing to persuade	Letter to editor /pitch letter assignment

August 7	Strategic planning, new media tools and tactics not covered yet (tba - maybe you tell me!)	Read CH 9 Read Model program/Campaign plan outline Read How to develop a social media plan for your business in five steps
August 9	Putting it all together - neat new tactics + solid public relations principles	Social media plan assignment