

**Journalism 350, Principles of Public Relations**  
Fall 2007  
Tuesday 6:00 p.m. to 9:20 p.m., ASC 331 Seminar Room

**Erin K. Freeman, Adjunct Professor**

**TEXT REQUIREMENTS:**

Textbook: *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, Wilcox, Cameron, Ault & Agee, 1999.

Additionally: Read *The Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, or another newspaper (a local and a national) daily; news magazines such as *Fortune* or *TIME*; watch television news, magazine and interview shows; listen to radio news and talk radio. In other words, be familiar with a wide array of news media and be up on current events every class session.

*Three students will be selected each class session to discuss a recent news event, share his/her perspective on the company's response and make recommendations for alternative responses that would have lead to a better outcome. I will take the first class session and provide you with an example of my expectations for these weekly presentations.*

**COURSE OBJECTIVE :**

This course is designed to introduce you to public relations as a professional practice. How is public relations defined? What disciplines make up the public relations profession? What are the tenets of public relations? Where might you fit in? How is public relations practiced here and abroad; in a corporation and in an agency; in the political arena and in the non-profit sector?

Public relations means different things to different people. We will define what it means to be a public relations professional, how you learn the public relations craft and how you develop and hone your public relations skills. We will cover the basic process of public relations -- research, planning, communication, evaluation -- and the use of communications strategies to achieve organizational goals.

Through lectures, reading, brainstorming sessions, guest speakers, research, writing, teamwork and individual effort, we will explore the world of PR.

**WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU:**

1. Class starts at 6 p.m. Tardiness and absences will be detrimental to your final grade. You don't have to ask me permission to miss a class, leave early or come late. I leave those decisions to you. Since we only meet once a week, obviously missing class will leave a gap in your information. I suggest you find someone in class you can call to get notes, assignments and handouts from any missed classes.
2. There will be quizzes. If you are late and a quiz is in progress, you may not take it, nor can you make it up.
3. Assignments are due to me in person at the beginning of class. Faxed or e-mailed assignments are not accepted, unless designated by me in advance of class. You are allowed one late assignment that will be graded a full grade lower. If you forget your homework, it is considered late. All assignments will be complete and typed.
4. Class participation is expected and will help your final grade.

5. There will be no make-ups for the mid-term. There will be no extensions for the term paper or oral presentation. You must complete the mid-term, term paper and oral presentation to pass the class.
6. Public Relations is a field where details matter. I am a stickler for grammar and adherence to Associated Press Style Guidelines. A paper or assignment with excessive grammatical errors or typos will be returned for proofing prior to grading. Your grade will be marked down a half grade for every time this occurs.

### **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME:**

Now that I've scared you, let me help you relax...

1. I enjoy the field of public relations, believe in its value and love to teach. I will come to class each week with the goal of helping you prepare for the world of public relations. My hope is to make this class interesting, fun, worthwhile and something to look forward to.
2. I take a practical approach to teaching. I want you to understand theory, but more important than that, I want you to understand how it applies in the real world.
3. I am open to your questions and welcome the opportunity to discuss any issues concerning you.
4. This syllabus is a general guideline for what we will cover during the semester. Other assignments, such as written homework and class projects, will be assigned.
5. Everything in this syllabus will be covered. However, the schedule may change to accommodate the calendars of guest speakers.

### **THE FOLLOWING IS THE USC SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM'S ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.**

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own; in journalism, this includes appropriating the reporting of another without clear attribution. The following is the Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalog: Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence.

Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations or purchasing papers or other assignments will immediately receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed as a major from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to this policy.

**NOTE ON PLAGIARISM:** Everything you turn in to me as an assignment must be written solely by you. Do not rely **in any way** on source material. As you research for a writing assignment, absorb the information, but do not directly use any of the material from your findings. Any use of material from another source is considered plagiarism and can result in your dismissal from the University.

### **ELEMENTS OF J-350**

- Reading assignments
- Quizzes on assigned reading and current events
- Press Release writing
- Case studies
- Brainstorming
- Oral reports
- Research and writing
- Mid-term exam
- Term project

## **GRADING**

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Quizzes                | 10% |
| Homework/Group Project | 20% |
| Mid-Term               | 20% |
| Term project           | 30% |
| Press release          | 10% |
| Participation          | 10% |

## **SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

**August 28, 2007** - WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF J-350

Housekeeping

    Syllabus review

    Policies and procedures

Public Relations

    Defining what it is

    Misconceptions about public relations

    What might your role be?

**HOMEWORK: Review next Monday's *Los Angeles Times* and bring it to class with you on Tuesday. Read preface, chapters 1 and 2**

**September 4, 2007** - WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

**Guest Speaker – Peter Viles, CNN Broadcast Reporter, LA Times Contributor**

The History of PR

    How it got started

    How it has evolved

The Functions of PR

The Model of Public Relations

Review of LA Times

Term paper

    What you need to know

**Homework: Read chapters 6 and 7**

**September 11, 2007** - NOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT PUBLIC RELATIONS IS, HOW DO WE DO IT?

The Public Relations Process – Part One

    Research: Why is it important; How is it done; How to use it

    Planning: The Value of a Communications Plan; How to create one.

**Homework: Read chapters 8 and 9**

**September 18, 2007** - NOW THAT WE KNOW HOW TO DO IT, HOW DO I KNOW IF I DID IT RIGHT OR WELL?

Public relations process – Part Two  
Communication – A Public Relations Perspective  
Evaluation – How'd we do?

**HOMEWORK: Read chapters 20, 21 and 22; Case Study assignment**  
**TERM PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE September 25!**

**September 25, 2007** - THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR: GOOD COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

Good writing – invaluable and achievable  
Oral communication – Forget the ums and ahs, but don't forget your point.  
How to enhance your point – visual aids and props  
Overview of Press Release Assignment  
Case problem assignments

**HOMEWORK: Read chapters 10, 11, 12; begin researching case study. Press Release.**

**October 2, 2007** - YOUR REPUTATION IS EVERYTHING

Defining your audience and targeting your message.  
Role of technology  
What is reputation management???

**HOMEWORK: Read chapters 4 and 5; work on your case study. PRESS RELEASE DUE!**

**October 9, 2007** - Audience Segmentation

Specialty audiences  
Global vs. local/regional/national

**HOMEWORK: Chapter 13 and 14. Case Study due October 16!!**

**October 16, 2007** - Review for Midterm. Case Study Due!

**October 23, 2007** - MID-TERM EXERCISE

**October 30** - DEFINING FURTHER THE DIFFERENT PR DISCIPLINES  
Political  
International

**HOMEWORK: Read chapters 16, 17**

**November 6, 2001** - PR DISCIPLINES, PART 2  
Community relations  
Agency

**HOMEWORK: Read chapter 18**

**November 13, 2007** - PR DISCIPLINES, PART 3  
Education  
Media relations  
Consumer Affairs

**HOMEWORK: Read Chapter 19**

**November 20, 2007** - PR DISCIPLINES, PART 4  
Entertainment  
Sports  
Non-profit

**HOMEWORK: Read Chapter 3**

**November 27** - YOUR REPUTATION IS EVERYTHING

The Ethics of Public Relations

Let your conscience be your guide, but here are some rules to follow as well.  
Defining your audience and targeting your message.

**December 4** - PowerPoint and Oral Presentation Practice Sessions

**December 11 and December 18 – Oral Presentations.** Written term project due. No exceptions