

USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
Jour 508: Introduction to Strategic Public Relations, Fall 2007
Instructor: Dotty Diemer
Course Description and Assignment Schedule

Class Facts

- When: Tuesdays, 6:30 – 9:10 PM, August 28 – December 4, 2006
- Where: ASC – G38

Course Description

JOUR 508 offers a practical and theoretical survey of the strategic public relations profession as it is currently practiced, focusing on its key role in today's information-based society. The course provides a social/contextual backdrop for further study of the field. Emphasis is placed on strategic problem solving skills rather than tactical execution.

Course Schedule

- Session 1: Introduction, Strategic Planning Model
- Session 2: Practitioners, Strategic Planning
- Session 3: Organizational Settings, History
- Session 4: Defining PR Problems, Research, Planning and Programming Session
- Session 5: Taking Action and Communicating
- Session 6: Evaluating the Program
- Session 7: Internal and External Media
- Session 8: Mid-term
- Session 9: Theory: Adjustment and Adaptation, Communication and Public Opinion
- Session 10: Ethics and Professionalism
- Session 11: Legal Aspects
- Session 12: Business and Industry, Government and Public Affairs
- Session 13: Non Profits, Health Care, Trade Associations, Education, etc.
- Session 14: Final Presentation Work Session
- Session 15: Final

Course Text

- Cutlip, Center and Broom: *Effective Public Relations, Ninth Edition* (Prentice-Hall, 2006)
- Readings will also include various handouts and articles. Students will also be expected to read the Web sites of major daily newspapers (i.e. *LA Times*, *NY Times*) and ***stay current with breaking general and business news having public relations implications.***

Assignments and Grading

- Written assignments 30% (25)
- Participation in brainstorming, class discussions, weekly cases 10% (25)
- Mid-term project 30% (25)
- Final project 30% (25)

Mid-Term (Individual) Project – Select from recent history (i.e. the last 5 years) an event or situation having significant public relations implications for an organization. Dissect and analyze your topic by writing a 15 – 20 page case study in which you follow the Strategic Planning Model (excluding Evaluation, Timeline and Budget), indicating: (1) how the organization appears to have addressed each step of the process; (2) your own analysis and commentary on their approach, and (3) possible alternatives to that approach. Feel free to hypothesize in those instances where insufficient data are available to you, making certain that your hypotheses make sound intellectual and strategic sense. Be sure to cite your research sources and indicate those areas in which you are hypothesizing. Bear in mind that this is primarily a deconstructive, rather than constructive, exercise. You are analyzing a program that has already taken place, not creating a new one (except to the extent that you offer suggested alternative approaches as part of your analysis). You may use a case from one of the on-line sources provided that: (1) the source document does not provide the majority of the information you present; (2) you cite the source document, and (3) you carry the analysis well beyond the level of the source document.

Final (Group) Project -- As groups, develop a 20 - 25 page, one-year communications plan for a real organization (company, non-profit, product, etc.) of your choice (pending instructor approval), based on the Strategic Planning Model. Students are expected to utilize current, professional media and methods for their presentations.

Cases of the Week – Each week, the instructor will ask for each member of the designated work group to submit (by email) recommendations for PR Cases of the Week to be discussed in class. (These will contribute to the Class Participation aspect of the each student’s grade.) Case of the Week submissions should be brief communiqués that take this form:

- In 1-2 sentences, identify a current news event, issue, problem, etc. having serious PR implications for an organization.
- Identify the point of view from which it should be discussed. (Example: in a labor-related matter, should the class take the union’s or employer’s point of view?)
- In several paragraphs, briefly discuss the rationale for your recommendation, i.e. why the matter is interesting from a PR/communications standpoint.
- Case of the week, as assigned to each group, are due no later than Monday, 5:00 pm, each week. As time allows during each class session, at least one, possibly two cases, will be chosen by the class and/or the instructor for in-class discussion and dissection, based on the Strategic Planning Model. However, the process of identifying and explaining such cases, in itself, will contribute to the students’ understanding of the public relations function.

Pop Quizzes – From time to time, students will receive a pop quiz on the readings at the start of class. These are fairly straightforward and not detailed. However, the quizzes help assure that students have completed the required reading before class and are prepared to discuss key findings. Students late to class will not be able to take the quiz once class has begun.

Standard Procedures/Ground Rules

- All written assignments are to be double-spaced with 1.5 inch margins and 12 point font, ideally Arial or Times New Roman.
- All papers must be footnoted as appropriate, with a source page at the end.
- Wikipedia can not be used or cited as a source for written assignments.
- Students are expected to attend all classes. Unexcused absences, tardiness, and failure to meet deadlines will have a negative impact on the student's final grade. Students who unavoidably miss a class are still responsible for getting that class assignment in on time, getting any new assignments from other

students, and completing the work by the assigned due date. All written assignments must be typed.

➤ Grammar, spelling and writing ability are of critical importance. This is not a course in English and/or writing, per se, and the instructor expects students to have learned from prior courses and experience how to produce written materials that are error-free and meet the quality standards of this school. All students' written work will be evaluated according to the same standards. Students who are not confident in their writing abilities are urged to purchase and utilize a standard grammar reference work and an *Associated Press* Stylebook and/or seek remedial coaching (available in this school).

➤ Cell phones and pagers are to be turned off before class. Answering them during class will result in a full grade reduction for the entire course, as will reading/sending text messages, IM or reading/sending emails. If you use a computer to take notes, you may not be logged on to email during class.

➤ Students and instructor must work collaboratively to maintain the feel of a true seminar experience.

To that end, the instructor intends to manage the class as he would an agency brainstorming or professional development session, with similar ground rules applied:

1. There are no bad ideas. All ideas are to be treated with respect for their creators and acknowledgement that ideas of all stripes and types can contribute to ultimate success. Nonetheless, it is always wise to mentally review the strategic appropriateness of any idea before vocalizing it.
2. Constant student/instructor interaction and feedback are extremely important. Everyone is expected to contribute.
3. Only one meeting/discussion can take place at a time, and it must be the one in which the instructor is participating. Avoid disconcerting side conversations.
4. Always pay attention, because to do otherwise is a sign of an unprofessional attitude. *Avoid even the appearance of nodding off.*

Important Notes

1. Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own; in public relations and journalism this means appropriating the words 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 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."
2. No doubt this syllabus will be subject to some change and adjustment throughout the semester to accommodate timely, late-breaking topics and events, the unique needs of each student and groups of students, etc. Students having any doubt or questions regarding assignments, schedules, etc. should immediately check with their fellow students and/or the instructor.
3. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.
4. The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course who undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to one percent of the total available semester points for this course.

NOTE: Adjustments to this course schedule will likely be made throughout the semester. Each student is responsible for keeping up-to-date on these changes (which will typically be announced in class or via email) and completing the reading and/or assignment as required.

☐ **Session 1, August 28**

- A. Self introductions
- B. Review of student and course goals; syllabus
- C. Introduction to contemporary public relations - evolution of the PR concept, definitions
- D. Brief introduction to concept of strategy and Strategic Planning Model document

Assignments

- A. Read Cutlip, Center & Broom, Chapters 1 (Introduction), 2 (Practitioners) and 12 (Planning and Programming).
- B. Read handouts: PR Strategic Planning Model; Lukaszewski's series on strategic thinking (16+++); "Listen Up: Your Gut is Talking" (241); "Corporate Image and Reputation Recognized as Critical Assets" (216); "PR Resources On-Line" (72); PR Week Salary Survey 2222 (179).
- C. Do (and be prepared to present) the self-analysis suggested by Lukaszewski in "How to Develop the Mind of a Strategist" and, citing examples from your own personal or professional experience, write a 5 – 6 page paper describing your approach to problem solving. *Relate your analysis to the four role models described in Chapter 2 of the textbook. (Note that there is no "right" or "wrong" answer for grading purposes, and you do not have to agree with Lukaszewski. Grades will be based on quality of thought rather than self-categorization.)*

☐ **September 4**

- A. Practitioners – Number and distribution; functions, work assignments and roles; education and preparation; the new majority (women); professionalism; requirements for success.
- B. Strategic planning and programming - Strategic thinking, strategic management, writing the program; planning for implementation.
- C. Review of the Strategic Planning Model
- D. Case of the Week: Format, examples, division of class into four work groups
- E. Students present Lukaszewski papers

Assignments

- A. Read Cutlip, Center & Broom, Chapters 3 (Organizational Settings) and 4 (Historical Origins)
- B. Read handouts: GAP IV data re: budgets, responsibilities, etc. (246)
- C. Members of Group 1: Recommend Case of the Week by e-mail.

☐ **Session 3, September 11**

- A. Organizational Settings – Working with top management; staff roles; internal departments; other departments, outside consulting firms; integrating the function.
- B. Historical Origins of Public Relations – Ancient genesis; American beginnings; evolution to maturity; World War I period; the 1920s; Roosevelt era and World War II; postwar boom; the global information age.
- C. Case of the Week
- D. Guest speaker

Assignments

- A. Read Cutlip, Center & Broom, Chapter 11 (Defining PR Problems) and review Chapter 12 (Planning and Programming)
- B. Read handouts on research and program planning: “Guidelines for Setting Measurable Objectives (178); Nuffer on Trends Analysis (62); “Secondary Research Can Reduce Costs” (89); “Research a Fixture on Local Level: Schools are Leaders” (157).
- C. Write a 5 – 6 page paper analyzing a current or recent event or situation having PR implications for an organization based on the following elements of the Strategic Planning Model: Background, Business Goal, Statement of the Problem; Research Methodology, and Situation Analysis. Due at start of class September 25.
- D. Members of Group 2: Recommend Case of the Week by e-mail.

□ **Session 4, September 18**

- A. The Management Process, Step One: Defining Public Relations Problems – Problem statement; the situation analysis
- B. Research – Its role in strategic planning; the research process; informal research methods; formal research methodology.
- C. Business Goal, Statement of the Problem; Research Methodology, and Situation Analysis.
- D. Case of the Week
- E. Guest speaker

Assignments

- A. Read Cutlip, Center & Broom, Chapters 13 (Taking Action and Communicating)
- B. Read handouts on program planning, execution: Hollister Planning Process Chart (48); “How to Effectively Budget a PR Program” (145); PRR on Strategic Philanthropy (92)
- C. Members of Group 3: Recommend Case of the Week by e-mail.

□ **Session 5, September 25**

- A. The Management Process, Step Three: Taking Action and Communicating -- The communication components of strategy (framing the message, target audiences, semantics, barriers, the overall campaign, disseminating the message); implementing the strategy.
- B. Review sample PR plan
- C. Discuss mid-term project: Mid-Term (Individual) Project – Select from recent history (i.e. the last 5 years) an event or situation having significant public relations implications for an organization. Dissect and analyze your topic by writing a 15 – 20 page case study in which you follow the Strategic Planning Model (excluding Evaluation, Timeline and Budget), indicating: (1) how the organization appears to have addressed each step of the process; (2) your own analysis and commentary on their approach, and (3) possible alternatives to that approach. Feel free to hypothesize in those instances where insufficient data are available to you, making certain that your hypotheses make sound strategic sense. Be sure to cite your research sources and indicate those areas in which you are hypothesizing. Bear in mind that this is primarily a deconstructive, rather than constructive, exercise. You are analyzing a program that has already taken place, not creating a new one (except to the extent that you offer suggested alternative approaches as part of your analysis.) You may use a case from one of the on-line sources provided that: (1) the source document does not provide the majority of the information you present; (2) you cite the source document, and (3) you carry the analysis well beyond the level of the source document.
- D. Case of the week

Assignments

- A. Read Cutlip, Center & Broom, Chapters 14 (Step Four: Evaluating the Program)
- B. Read handouts re. research and evaluation: GAP IV data on evaluation (245)
- C. Prepare a 2-3-page paper identifying the case study you will analyze for your mid-term project, with a rationale for your selection (including some of the key issues you expect to encounter). Mid-term due date is Session 8 (October 16)
- D. Members of Group 4: Recommend Case of the Week by email

☐ **Session 6, October 2**

- A. The Management Process, Step Four: Evaluating the Program; Evaluation Research; Output vs. Outcomes
- B. Briefly present the case study you will analyze for your mid-term project, key issues and your rationale for your selection (5 minutes per student)
- C. Case of the Week
- D. Guest speaker

Assignments

- A. Read Cutlip, Center & Broom, Chapters 9 (Internal Relations and Employee Communications), 10 (External Media and Media Relations)
- B. Read handouts: “Spin’ – How Did PR Get Stuck With this Bum Rap?” (93); “Items to Consider in a Surgical Media Strategy” (36); Ketchum memo: Pharmanex long-lead media plan (61); “Selecting Media to Meet Key Communication Goals” (57); “Too Often Employers Don't Get the Broad Message” (174); “In a World Where Relationships are the Bottom Line...” (100); “Communications is a Tool to Change Corporate Culture” (10); “Rethinking Employee Communication” (102).
- C. Members of Group 1: Recommend Case of the Week by e-mail.
- D. Work on mid-term project

☐ **Session 7, October 9**

- A. Internal Relations and Employee Communication
- B. External Media and Media Relations -- Media for internal publics; media for external publics; working with the media; the role of "new media."
- C. Case of the Week
- D. Guest Speaker

Assignments

Complete mid-term project

☐ **Session 8, October 16**

Mid-term presentations – All mid-term papers must be handed in today at the start of class; as many 10 - 15 minute presentations as time allows.

Assignments

- A. Read Cutlip, Center & Broom, Chapters 7 (Theory: Adjustment and Adaptation) and 8 (Theory: Communication and Public Opinion).
- B. Read handouts re. theory: “Diffusion Process” (51); “The Communications Process in Marketing” (52); “Persuader’s Edge: The Psychology of PR” (107).
- C. Read handouts re. changing public opinion: “Mobilizing Employees as Community Members...” (233); “Health Educators Use Commercial Marketing...” (234); “Case Study: New Jersey Recruits Teens...” (224); “Case Study – How the Army Used Extensive Research...” (236); “Changing Teens: Johns Hopkins Report Recommends...” (237); “Fear Isn’t Enough in Public Health Campaigns...” (238); “Courting Gen Y” (239); “Battling the Rumor Mill” (240)
- D. Members of Group 2: Recommend Case of the Week by e-mail.

□ **Session 9, October 23**

- A. Theory: Adjustment and Adaptation, Communication and Public Opinion – Trends and changes; systems perspective; communication models; cybernetics, open and closed systems, diffusion process, etc.
- B. Developing PR campaign timelines and budgets
- C. Distribute/discuss mid-term projects
- D. Case of the week
- E. Guest speaker

Assignments

- A. Read Cutlip, Center & Broom, Chapter 5 (Ethics and Professionalism).
- B. Read handouts: “PR’s Role in a Civil Society” (8); “Ethics, Professionalism and Hypocrisy” (23); “On Ethics I and II (175); PRSA Code of Ethics (187); “Journalists Are Not in the Truth Business, and PR People are not Just Dissemblers” (228).
- C. Members of Groups 1 and 2: Write a 5 – 6 page paper analyzing a current or recent event or situation having PR implications for an organization based on the following elements of the Strategic Planning Model: Key Audiences; Key Messages; Strategies, and Tactics.
- D. Members of Group 3: Recommend Case of the Week by e-mail. – ethical situation

□ **Session 10, October 30**

- A. Ethics and Professionalism -- Ethical foundations, professional organizations, education, research and the Body of Knowledge; accreditation; codes of ethics, etc.
- B. Discuss final project: As a group, develop a 15-20 page, one-year communications plan for an organization (company, non-profit, product) of your choice (pending instructor approval), based on the Strategic Planning Model.
- C. Case of the Week
- D. Guest Speaker:

Assignments

- A. Read Cutlip, Center & Broom, Chapter 6 (Legal Aspects).
- B. Read handouts: “Nike Settles Lawsuit Over Labor Claims (221); “Nike Takes Ad Liability Case to High Court (229); “Nike Opinion – Beware Clever Metaphors” (188); “PRSA Disappointed by Nike Settlement” (224); “Litigation Communication Strategy Part I” (182); “Communications Strategies for Chapter 11 (226); “Defending Your Client Should Start Before You Enter The Court (227);

“Avoiding PR Mistakes During Litigation” (222); “Managing Litigation Visibility – How To Avoid Lousy Trial Publicity” (223); “SEC Passes Regulation Fair Disclosure (189); “Plain English Handbook for Disclosure” (190).

- C. Members of Groups 1 and 2: Write a 5 – 6 page paper analyzing a current or recent event or situation having PR implications for an organization based on the following elements of the Strategic Planning Model: Key Audiences; Key Messages; Strategies, and Tactics.
- D. Members of Group 4: Recommend Case of the Week by e-mail.

□ **Session 11, November 6**

- A. Legal aspects -- First Amendment issues; *Nike v. Kasky*; lobbying; labor relations regulations; financial public relations and the SEC; media access; libel, privacy and copyright.
- B. Case of the Week
- C. Guest Speaker

Assignments

- A. Read Cutlip, Center & Broom, Chapters 15 (Business and Industry) and 16 (Government and Public Affairs).
- B. Members of Group 2: Recommend Case of the Week by e-mail.
- C. Write (and present) a 4 - 5 page paper describing the organization on which your group will base its final project (a one-year communication plan); describe the situation it faces and the hypothetical research methodology you will follow in developing the plan, for initial instructor feedback and guidance.
- D. Read Handouts: “Glossary of Business Terms” (193).
- E. Members of Group 1-2: Recommend Case of the Week by e-mail.

□ **Session 12 – November 13**

- A. Business and Industry, Government and Public Affairs
- B. Case of the Week
- C. Guest speaker

Assignments

- A. Read Cutlip, Center & Broom, Chapters 17 (Non Profits, Trade Associations, etc.).
- B. Read Handouts: “Coalition Uses Persuasion to Protect Rainforest” (83); “Bringing the 2008 Olympics to Beijing” (199); “Launching the Coalition for Intellectual Property Rights” (202).
- D. Work on final project.
- E. Members of Groups 3 and 4: Recommend Case of the Week by e-mail.

□ **Session 13, November 20**

- A. Non Profits, Healthcare, Trade Associations, Education, etc.
- B. Presentation of GAP IV Study data by Jerry Swerling, Director of Public Relations Studies and the Strategic Public Relations Center
- C. Case of the Week as time allows

Assignments

- A. Read handouts: 2003 Edelman Trust & Credibility Survey (209).
- B. Review final project self-evaluation form (due at end of last class)
- C. Work on final project.

☐ **Session 14, November 27 – Working Session for Final Projects**

☐ **Session 15, December 4**

Final projects: 30 minute student presentations, with Q&A. ***Students are expected to utilize current, professional media and methods for their presentations.***