



Course Syllabus: Public Relations Principles

College of Fine Arts

MCOM 4683, Section 101

TR, 2-2:30 p.m., D202 Fain Fine Arts Center

Fall 2026, 8/25/2026 - 12/8/2026

Contact Information

Instructor: John M. King, Ph.D.

Office: D207 Fain Fine Arts Center

Office hours: TR, noon-2 p.m. and W, noon-1 p.m.

Office phone: (940) 397-4797

E-mail: john.king@msutexas.edu

Course Description

Prerequisite(s): Junior standing.

This course provides a broad understanding of the nature of public relations and its impact on society. Students will also learn various public relations techniques such as media relations, copy editing, press release writing, event planning, and social media management. Students will conduct research and analyze information that promotes understanding of PR principles and explore various scenarios to develop their PR skills.

3.00 Credit hours

3.00 Lecture hours

Course Learning Objectives

- 1/ Students will be able to explain principles of public relations.
- 2/ Students will be able to explain ethical issues in public relations.
- 3/ Students will be able to explain principles of public relations campaigns.
- 4/ Students will be able to write effectively for public relations across a wide spectrum of traditional and digital formats on deadline.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Required

The Practice of Public Relations, Seitel, 14th Edition (2021), Pearson.

Strategic Writing: Multimedia Writing for Public Relations, Advertising and More; Hendershot, Loewen, Marsh, Guth and Short; 6th Edition (2024), Routledge.

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

Stop by my office during office hours for assistance with the course.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Table 1 Assignments/Grade weights.

Assignments	Weight
In-Class/Out-of-Class Learning Assignments	20%
Mid-term Exam	25%
Writing Assignments	30%
Final Exam	25%
Total %	100%

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Percentage
A	90-100
B	80-89.9
C	70-79.9
D	60-69.9
F	Less than 60

In-Class/Out-of-Class Learning Assignments

Graded in-class/out-of-class learning assignments will be conducted (20% of your final course grade). These are designed to enhance student understanding of professional principles and practices. Students will discuss in small groups and then contribute to full class discussion on professional topics. Students who actively, meaningfully participate will receive full credit; those who don't will receive no credit. No makeups will be available for in-class/out-of-class learning assignments. These assignments will be submitted via D2L.

Exams

There will be two exams, a mid-term exam (25% of your final course grade) and a final exam (25% of your final course grade). The mid-term exam will be administered on 10/6, and the final exam will be administered during the final exam period (12/8, 5:45-7:45 p.m.). Both exams will be timed.

Writing Assignments

Students will complete a wide spectrum of public relations writing assignments on deadline (30% of your final course grade).

Mid-Term Exam

The written mid-term exam (25% of your final course grade) will be administered on 10/6 during the regular class period. This exam will be timed.

Final Exam

The written final exam (25% of your final course grade) will be administered during the final exam period (12/8, 5:45-7:45 p.m.). This exam will be timed.

Extra Credit

There will be no extra credit assignments.

Late Work

Late work turned in by 11:59 p.m. on the due date, will receive a 20-point penalty. After that, no late work will be accepted and will receive a zero grade.

Make Up Work/Tests

Students who have legitimate university accepted reasons for missing the mid-term exam will be allowed to make up the mid-term exam; the professor will schedule the make-up exam as soon as the student returns to campus. There will be no makeups for the final exam nor in-class/out-of-class learning assignments or writing assignments.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: 8/24-27/2026
- Deadline to file for graduation: 9/21/2026
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" 11/23/2026
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are required to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled on time. Students who miss more than three class meetings during the semester may be dropped from the course.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class or face-to-face class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ****Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. ****Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!*** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which

is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations; however, they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Recording Classes

****Recording classes is generally prohibited without the professor's explicit permission.*** Such recordings, when permitted, are for personal use only and may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the professor's prior consent. Some faculty may not permit recordings of their classes. When it is feasible and appropriate, students may record classes to accommodate disabilities under the Americans With Disabilities Act, with prior approval of Disability Support Services. Such recordings may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published.

Instructor Class Policies

Students are expected to fully engage in the course by reading and studying BEFORE each class, arriving on time and attending each class. Professional, respectful behavior is expected. Do not play with phones, laptops, tablets or any other devices during class.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

Course Schedule:

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Be sure to read, study and think about the topics for each class BEFORE coming to class each class meeting.

Week	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 8/25 8/27	Welcome, Intro, Assignments, How to Excel Seitel Ch1, Defining PR/Henderson 2A, PR	8/25 8/27
Week 2 9/1	Seitel 2, PR History In-Class Learning Assignment #1, Ivy Lee or Edward Bernays in PR History, due	9/1
9/3	Seitel 3, Communication	9/3

Week	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 3 9/8 9/10	Seitel 4, Public Opinion Seitel 5, Management	9/8 9/10
Week 4 9/15 9/17	Seitel 6, Ethics/Hendershot 1H, Ethics Seitel 7, Law/Hendershot 1L, Law	9/15 9/17
Week 5 9/22 9/24	Seitel 8, Research Seitel 9, Media In-Class Learning Assignment #2; Paid, Owned Earned Media; due	9/22 9/24
Week 6 9/29 10/1	Seitel 10, Social Media/Hendershot 2B, Social Listening In-Class Learning Assignment #3, Bloggers and PR, due Seitel 14, International Communication Relations	9/29 10/1
Week 7 10/6 10/8	Mid-Term Exam Seitel 15, PR Writing/ Hendershot 1A, Strategic Writing/Hendershot 1B, Good Writing/ Hendershot 1C, Writing Process	10/6 10/8
Week 8 10/13 10/15	Hendershot 1D, Web Writing/Hendershot 1E, Writing for Social Media/Hendershot 1F, Writing for Audio/Video/ Hendershot 1G, Design Hendershot 2C, Social Posting	10/13 10/15
Week 9 10/20 10/22	Hendershot Assignment 2C, Social Media Assignment 1 due Hendershot 2D, Blogs	10/20 10/22
Week 10 10/27 10/29	Hendershot Assignment 2 D, Blog Assignment 2 due Hendershot 2E, Podcasts	10/27 10/29

Week	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 11 11/3	Hendershot Assignment 2E, Podcast Assignment due	11/3
11/5	Hendershot 2F, Websites/Hendershot G-M, News Releases, Alerts and Pitches	11/5
Week 12 11/10 11/12	Hendershot Assignment 2H, News Release 1 due Hendershot Assignment 2I, News Release 2 due	11/10 11/12
Week 13 11/17	Hendershot Assignment 2J, Promotional News Release due	11/17
11/19	Hendershot Assignment 2K, Media Alert 2 due Hendershot Assignment 2L, Pitch 2 due	11/19
Week 14 11/24	Hendershot N-Q, Digital Newsrooms/Media Kits/Hendershot 2R, Newsletters, Magazine	11/24
11/26	Thanksgiving holiday	11/26
Week 15 12/1 12/3	Seitel 16, IMC/Hendershot 1H, IMC Seitel 17, Crisis Communication Seitel 18, PR Careers In Class Learning Assignment #4, Your dream PR job, due	12/1 12/3
Week 16 12/8	Final Exam 5:45-7:45 p.m	12/8