



MCOM 4683 Public Relations Principles

Fall 2021 | TR 02:00-03:20PM | FA D101

Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Eunji Cho

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Office hours:

- Mon & Wed: 11:00am- 12:00pm | 1:00pm -2:00pm
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Course Description & Objectives

The course provides a broad understanding of the nature of public relations, its development and practice, and its impact on society. We will also discuss current issues and trends. Students are expected to apply key concepts to public relations planning and management by working in a group on a PR campaign project. Students will conduct research and analyze information that promotes understanding of PR principles and explore various scenarios to develop their PR skills. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Define public relations and how it differs from other forms of mass communication.
2. Clearly describe the role of public relations in modern society.
3. Understand PR's strategic management function and its communication activities.
4. Understand and apply legal, social and ethical standards to the PR campaigns.

Required Text & Materials

- Think Public Relations, by Wilcox, et al. 2nd edition (2013).
- Additional materials will be distributed during class, through email, or posted to D2L (Desire-to-Learn).

Course Requirements

- Exams:
 - Over the course of the semester there will be 2 multiple-choice exams that will test your knowledge of the required reading material and class discussion. (A study guide will be provided prior to each exam.)

- **In-class activities:**
 - During the class, we will have various in-class activities including creating PR plan with various media platforms. The details and instructions will be provided in class.
- **PR Analysis:**
 - In order to assess your learning over the course of the semester, there will be a PR analysis essay. Each student will be required to analyze a particular public relations situation. Specific guidelines and procedures for this assignment will be discussed later on in the semester.
- **Press Conference (group project):**
 - You will have a chance to demonstrate how you can apply the key concepts and the PR process to a presentation (press conference).
 - Key components are:
 - 1) identifying the problem for the selected company
 - 2) doing research
 - 3) coming up with ideas to address the identified problem
 - 4) developing a comprehensive PR campaign plan
 - 5) presenting your idea in the form of a press conference. You will be expected to answer a lot of questions from “journalists” (your classmates).
 - The details and instructions will be provided in a timely way.
- **Quizzes:**
 - Students will take 3~5 quizzes online.
 - The quiz questions will be from lecture notes, student presentations, and class activities.
- **Participation**
 - This class includes various class activities. The activities are designed to be interesting and to help you learn. Thus, your active participation will affect how much you learn and how well you do in the course.
 - If emergencies arise or your circumstances change, please communicate with me. This will help us work together to try to find a solution for your situation.
 - In class, please:
 - behave professionally
 - arrive on time
 - be prepared
 - pay attention
 - actively participate
 - treat others with courtesy and respect
 - use language thoughtfully
 - If you miss class, you miss the chance to participate in your education and the education of others in class. Your peers are counting on you to be in class and to participate.

- **Attendance**

- Attendance will be taken at each class, and you will be allowed a total of three absences without penalty or question (i.e., unexcused absences). This does not apply to exam days or presentation days (see Tentative Class Schedule). After your third unexcused absence, however, you will lose points from your attendance grade, that day's participation grade, and credit for class activities for each additional class missed.
- In case of excused absences, appropriate documentation (e.g., doctor's notes, obituaries) must be handed in to me within a week. If you arrive late or leave early for a class, you will not receive full credit for attendance on that day.
- Finally, if you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and arrange with the instructor to make it up. As for missed assignments, if you have a legitimate explanation, alternate arrangements can be made at my discretion.

Grading

- Exam #1 = 20%
- Exam #2 = 20%
- PR analysis = 10%
- Press conference (group project) = 20%
- In-class activities = 10%
- Quizzes = 10%
- Participation = 10%
- Total = 100 %

Grading Criteria

The following scale will be used to determine the final grade:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F: Less than 60%

Statements Related to the Current COVID-19 Situation

- Scientific data shows that being fully vaccinated is the most effective way to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 and has the greatest probability of avoiding serious illness if infected in all age groups. Although MSU Texas is not mandating vaccinations in compliance with Governor Abbott's executive orders, we highly encourage eligible members of our community to get a vaccination. If you have questions or concerns about the vaccine, please contact your primary care physician or health care professional.

- Given the recent rise in cases, individuals are also strongly encouraged to wear facial coverings when indoors among groups of people, regardless of vaccination status. Although MSU Texas is not currently requiring facial coverings, they have been an effective strategy in slowing the spread.
- Safety and health of all are our top considerations. If you feel sick, do not come to class. If you need to miss class, contact me as outlined under class procedures, and I will work with you.

Course Policies

1. **Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is:** (1) using someone else's source material (published or unpublished, including content from the Internet) without following accepted citation guidelines; or (2) submitting work that is not your own. The instructor will take appropriate disciplinary action for students if a student is caught cheating, plagiarizing or fabricating information. The MSU Student Honor Creed in your student handbook and the university catalog reinforces this policy: "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so." Please acknowledge that you have learned the meaning the term academic dishonesty. Students cannot use the excuse that they do not understand the concept of academic dishonesty.
2. **Disruptive Behavior:** Any student's classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or other students' ability to benefit from the instruction – or violates any other Standard of Conduct applicable to the classroom environment – will result in his/her removal from the class. (See MSU Student Handbook, "Standards of Student Conduct.>").
3. **Special Accommodations:** Any student with a disability who is registered with the MSU Office of Disability Support Services (940-397-4140, CSC Room 168) and needs specific accommodations, or requires other considerations because of a disability, should notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester to ensure that these accommodations are provided. Please note that all information provided to me remains confidential.
4. **Cell Phones and Other Recording Devices:** The use of cell phones and other recording or electronic devices is strictly prohibited during class. The instructor may permit, from time to time, the use of cell phones for legitimate class reasons. Recording the class is prohibited, unless it is part of a reasonable accommodation under ADA, or unless students have special permission from the instructor. Laptops may be used for the purpose of taking notes during class; however, their use must be limited to course-related activities.
5. **Limited Right:** The university requires faculty to provide this statement to all students: By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a "limited

- right” in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The “limited right” shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student’s work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and educational purposes.
6. FERPA: As a result of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, federal law bars the instructor from releasing information about students to parties outside the university – including parents/guardian - without the student’s signed consent. Thus, in almost all cases the instructor will not discuss your academic progress or other matters with your parents. The instructor will only discuss grades with students. If there are any grade issues, the instructor will discuss grades during office hours.
 7. Campus Carry: Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective Aug. 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University’s webpage at <https://mwsu.edu/campus-carry/rules-policies>. Please be advised that any violations of the law will be reported immediately.
 8. Senior Portfolio: All mass communication majors are required to submit a portfolio as part of their internship course, which is a pre-requisite for Senior Production. This requirement is a part of MSU’s reaccreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and is non-negotiable. Through the portfolio, students are required to demonstrate communication competence through the written word and visual communication; two examples of each competency are required. As you go through this and other classes, you are responsible for saving course work that could be included in your senior portfolio. Please see your instructor, adviser, the department chair or any Mass Communication faculty member for handouts with more information (“Mass Communication Senior Portfolio Competencies” and “Mass Communication Senior Portfolio FAQ”). These handouts are also available on the department web page: <https://msutexas.edu/academics/finearts/masscomm/>)
 9. Social justice: Social justice is one of Midwestern State University’s core values, and I consider the classroom to be a place where students will be treated with respect as human beings, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Moreover, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged. It is my expectation that ALL students be able to consider the classroom a safe environment.

Tentative Class Schedule

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to change and or move around scheduled lectures in order to facilitate for potential unplanned events (cancellations or guest speakers). You will be notified ahead of time of any changes to the schedule.

Week	Dates	Readings	Lecture / Discussion Topic
1	8/24 8/26		Course introduction
2	8/31 9/2	Chapter 1	What is PR?
3	9/7 9/9	Chapter 5	Research and campaign planning
4	9/14 9/16	Chapter 5	Research and campaign planning
5	9/21 9/23	Chapter 6	Communication and measurement
6	9/28 9/30	Chapter 6 & 7	Communication and measurement
			Public opinion and persuasion
7	10/5 10/7	Chapter 7 & 8	Public opinion and persuasion
			Managing competition and conflict
8	10/12 10/14	Chapter 8	Managing competition and conflict
		Exam1	
9	10/19 10/21	Chapter 10	Reaching diverse audiences
10	10/26 10/28	Chapter 11	The mass media
			Stating a group project (reviewing clients)
11	11/2 11/4	Chapter 12	The Internet & social media
			Developing a final group project
12	11/9 11/11	Chapter 13	Event promotion
			Developing a final group project
13	11/16 11/18	Chapter 16	Entertainment, sports and tourism
			Developing a final group project
14	11/23 11/25		Thanksgiving Holidays
15	11/30 12/2	Press conference	
16	12/7	Exam2	