

## **Public Relations Case Studies**

JOUR 3409-M50

Spring 2016

Instructor: Darrin M. Devault, M.A.

Office: Meeman Journalism Building, Room 332

Office hours: By appointment

Office Phone: (901) 678-2405; Cell Phone: (901) 569-6353

E-mail: [darrin.devault@memphis.edu](mailto:darrin.devault@memphis.edu)

Twitter: [@DarrinDevault](https://twitter.com/DarrinDevault)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Case studies and typical public relations problems; planning and preparation of communications materials for various media; application of public relations techniques.

### **PREREQUISITE:**

JOUR 3400

### **TEXTBOOK:**

*Cases in Public Relations Management: The Rise of Social Media and Activism* by Swann, P. (New York: Routledge, second edition). ISBN: 978-0-415-51771-3

### **CLASSROOM FORMAT:**

This course is delivered online in an asynchronous format. You must have Internet access and Microsoft Word or other word processing software that generates a “.doc” extension.

You must have Microsoft Word software. I must be able to open your work to grade it. Work submitted in a software package not noted as acceptable in this syllabus (Microsoft Word) may result in point deductions being assessed to your work.

### **COURSE WEB SITE ADDRESS: (The course page will be open from January 19 to May 8, 2016.)**

1. Go to the University of Memphis home page: <http://www.memphis.edu>
2. Click on the “MyMemphis” link at the bottom of the left column menu.
3. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
4. Click on the “eCampus Resources” tab.
5. In the center column of the page, click on the blue UofM eCourseware link.
6. Down on that page, in the Spring 2016 course list available to you click on the link for JOUR 3409 - M50 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page.

### **GRADING:**

**Testing Procedures:** Course work will be accomplished each week. Five exams will be part of your final grade; each one will cover material in your textbook. Each must be completed by its due date and time (Central Standard Time), which varies by exam. Check each due time to ensure that you post by the deadline. Exams will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions, which will contain one or more units of study. Exams will have a time limit. Desire2Learn will

cut you off at the end of the prescribed time period, regardless of whether you have completed all questions. You may use your textbook to confirm an answer, but be aware that time limits will not allow you to spend much time flipping through it. You should read and be familiar with each section before taking its exam.

Other parts of your grade will come from participation in weekly online discussions and submission of six case study assignments. This work must be submitted per instructions; no credit will be given outside of the proper submission guidelines.

**Grading Procedure:**

**\*\*\*ONLINE SUCCESS:** Your success in this online course will depend on your willingness to read the textual material, successfully complete exams, and complete written work as scheduled.

All work submitted will be considered final, as each student has unlimited access to the course to ask questions. There will be no re-submission of papers to increase the initial grade given. You are required to ask via e-mail, set up an appointment in the chat room, or call me with your questions as to the proper completion of coursework. It is your responsibility to ensure clarification of instructions.

All work submitted must reflect critical thinking and knowledge of the material; that is, examples found within or outside of class, along with elaboration, are required to achieve an “A” grade. Material on all exams and most of our assignments come from our textbooks; check these resources first for your material.

No work will be accepted after the final day of class.

**Grading Scale:**

Five Exams Covering Textbook — 250 points  
Individual Participation in Class Discussions — 300 points  
Six Case Study Assignments — 450 points  
**TOTAL: 1,000 points**

**A** = 900-1,000 points  
**B** = 800-899 points  
**C** = 700-799 points  
**D** = 600-699 points  
**F** = 599 and fewer points

**TENTATIVE TIMETABLE:**

**Individual Participation in Class Discussions**

- Participation #1 (25 points):** January 19-24
  - Participation #2 (25 points):** January 25-31
  - Participation #3 (25 points):** February 1-7
  - Participation #4 (25 points):** February 8-14
  - Participation #5 (25 points):** February 15-21
  - Participation #6 (25 points):** February 22-28
  - Participation #7 (25 points):** February 29 - March 6
  - Participation #8 (25 points):** March 14-20
  - Participation #9 (25 points):** March 21-27
  - Participation #10 (25 points):** March 28 - April 3
  - Participation #11 (25 points):** April 4-10
  - Participation #12 (25 points):** April 11-17
- PARTICIPATION TOTAL: 300 points**

**Exams**

- Exam #1 (50 points):** available February 1-14
  - Exam #2 (50 points):** available February 15-28
  - Exam #3 (50 points):** available February 29 - March 20
  - Exam #4 (50 points):** available March 28 - April 10
  - Exam #5 (50 points):** available April 11-24
- EXAMS TOTAL: 250 points**

**Case Study Assignments**

- Case Study Assignment #1 (75 points):** due February 7
  - Case Study Assignment #2 (75 points):** due February 21
  - Case Study Assignment #3 (75 points):** due March 6
  - Case Study Assignment #4 (75 points):** due March 27
  - Case Study Assignment #5 (75 points):** due April 10
  - Case Study Assignment #6 (75 points):** due April 24
- WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS TOTAL: 450 points**

**TOTAL POSSIBLE SEMESTER POINTS: 1,000 points**

## ASSIGNED READINGS

Here are the assigned readings from your textbook:

**Chapter 1:** A Brief Introduction to Public Relations, January 19-24

**Chapter 2:** Ethics and the Law, January 25-31

**Chapter 3:** Corporate Social Responsibility, February 1-7

**Chapter 4:** Media Relations, February 8-14

**Chapter 5:** Conflict Management, February 15-21

**Chapter 6:** Activism, February 22-28

**Chapter 7:** Consumer Relations, February 29 - March 6

**Chapter 8:** Entertainment and Leisure, March 14-20

**Chapter 8:** Entertainment and Leisure, March 21-27

**Chapter 9:** Community Relations, March 28 - April 3

**Chapter 10:** Cultural and Other Considerations, April 4-10

**Chapter 11:** Financial Communications and Investor Relations, April 11-17

## FIVE PILLARS OF JOUR3409

- *Professionalism:* Students learn the professional and ethical standards of the public relations industry by discussing current events and case examples.
- *Writing:* JOUR 3409 focuses on the application of the four-step process. Students dissect cases, identify each step in the process and discuss the ramifications.
- *Multimedia:* Students participate in PRSA Twitter chats and learn how to effectively manage their own social media.
- *Critical Thinking:* Students demonstrate an understanding of each step in the public relations process.
- *Media Literacy:* Students increase their media literacy by looking at previous events where public relations affected the outcome. Students discuss each step in the public relations process and its impact.

## ASSESSMENT

### PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOUR3409:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communication;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;

- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

**HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:**

**Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically):**

Students will:

- Apply their knowledge of public relations theories and concepts in various professional settings to build problem-solving and critical thinking skills;
- Develop counseling and peer feedback skills;
- Build teamwork skills; and
- Distinguish between goals, objectives, strategies and tactics using the case method: diagnosing public relations problems and suggesting solutions with detailed messages, timelines, budgets and details.

**Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies):**

Students will:

- Understand and discuss how different public relations processes lead to difficult outcomes in various professional settings;
- Successfully analyze and prescribe solutions for text and contemporary problems;
- Work in teams to plan solutions focusing on goals, objectives, strategies and tactics; and
- Offer constructive criticism by evaluating the work of their peers on a group project.

**HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR JOUR3409:**

The course is designed to equip students with knowledge necessary to analyze public relations problems, postulate alternative solutions, evaluate alternatives and develop appropriate public relations strategies and tactics.

*Awareness:*

- Identify and solve public relation problems through classroom discussions, individual written assignments, exams and group work.

*Understanding:*

- Define publics, examine motivators, establish message content, select media and conform to budgetary limitations. Students pay special attention to diversity among organizational constituencies and the implications of diversity in the development of public relations plans.

*Application:*

- Students review and analyze case problems covering textbook and contemporary scenarios and submit individual written assessments. Each assessment will be graded.
- Students successfully execute group work. This work will be graded (including a peer grade).
- Students successfully complete periodic exams covering textbook materials and contemporary case problems.

**PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:**

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be to

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:**

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and innovation. Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

- *Awareness:* familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
- *Understanding:* assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.
- *Application:* competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

## **DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

### **PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:**

All Department of Journalism undergraduate students are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Students are to begin the portfolio in JOUR 2121 and contribute to it during every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their concentrations.

### **EMAIL:**

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to <http://iam.memphis.edu> to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the university.

### **MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone to be used during class or to complete class assignments. Others do not allow them. Your instructor will set the policy for her/his specific class.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. Students are permitted three total unexcused absences without penalty. After three absences, the student's final grade will be deducted one letter grade for each absence. After seven unexcused absences, the student will fail the course. Absences for illness and other catastrophic emergencies, such as a death in the family, must be documented (e.g. doctor's note or obituary) to be excused from the total absence count. Students with excessive unexcused absences are encouraged to withdraw from the course prior to the drop deadline.

### **DEADLINES:**

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and mass communications. Assignments turned in late will NOT be graded. Late work is not accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Students are NOT permitted to make up assignments, quizzes, tests, etc. that occurred during an unexcused absence. Students who will miss class and/or a deadline because of an excused absence are expected to notify the instructor immediately upon knowing the absence will occur; exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances. Students who are absent during the final exam are not permitted to make up the exam and will earn a grade of 0, which might result in failure of the course.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, and violations of copyright law as acts of academic dishonesty punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Penalties might include grade reductions or dismissal of the student from the university.

“Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com’s restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.” (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

### **Intellectual property and copyright guidelines**

1. Ideas cannot be copyrighted, but the way they are described can.
2. Anything set down in a tangible form, i.e., written, is by law copyrighted.
3. If, in a paraphrase, your work is “substantially similar” to a copyrighted work, you are guilty of copyright infringement.
4. A citation indicates where you got material. However, that portion you do not show as a direct quote must be “substantially original” to you. In other words, you can’t just paste in something from another’s work, put a citation at the bottom and call it your own. You need a full rewrite in your own words and syntax so the unquoted material is “substantially original” to you.

**Plagiarism: From UM Student Handbook:** The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

### **ONLINE SETEs:**

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

### **DISABILITY:**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

### **DIVERSITY:**

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communications reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.



**WEATHER POLICY:**

Check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.

**AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:**

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don't know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.