

Intro to Public Relations

PBRL 3400-M50

Spring 2023 Online

Prof. Shannon Little Briggs

Office: virtual by Zoom or phone

Office hours: by appointment

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Development, scope and modern role of public relations; emphasis on problem-solving, lectures, and application of major public relations tools and practices.

Prerequisites

None

Textbook

Kim, C.M. (2019) Public Relations: Competencies and Practice (1st edition). New York: Routledge

Note: Textbook is available electronically for free through UM library:

<https://ezproxy.memphis.edu:3443/login?url=https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781315148106>

Classroom format

This course is delivered online in an asynchronous format. In other words, there is no required scheduled meeting time for this course. This can be convenient for students juggling several responsibilities, but it also means you must be organized and motivated. You can work at your own pace throughout the week, but work will be due on a weekly basis, and it is imperative that you stay on track with the course schedule to complete all assignments on time.

All course discussions should remain respectful and professional and show respect to all people regardless of background, sex, race, or any other factor. Hate speech will not be tolerated in any form and could result in being dropped from the class for misconduct. Public relations is all about creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships and our virtual classroom should be no different.

This class is meant to serve as an introduction to PR and the fundamentals upon which PR is built. Our course content will include the pillars of PR and the future of the field, as well as PR processes. There will be an emphasis on social media, content creation, stewardship,

stakeholder relationships, and leadership. We will also discuss different areas of PR and application to other fields.

You will upload all required assignments to Canvas and feedback will be given to encourage your improvement. Access to a computer is required. Please be sure to read the instructions for each assignment carefully as requirements for each assignment will vary. Assignments submitted to Canvas must be Word documents (.doc or .docx) unless other noted. Reach out via email if anything is unclear to you. All assignments are due on Sunday nights at 11:59 p.m. (Central time) unless otherwise noted. To allow time for response and clarification, please reach out with questions at least 48 hours before the assignment is due.

To succeed in this course, it's imperative to stay engaged in all coursework. If at any point you are concerned about your grade or struggling to grasp course concepts, I encourage you to make an appointment for a Zoom or phone call so we can discuss your questions/concerns and work together to find a solution. Remember that for me to help you, communication is key.

If at any point in the semester you are struggling with the course load or a specific assignment, please reach out for a meeting so we can get you back on track. I'm happy to assist in any way I can, but you must be an advocate for yourself. It's impossible for me to help if I don't know there is a problem.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis Canvas home page: <https://memphis.instructure.com>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. On your course dashboard, select PBRL 3400-M50.

Course and assignments expectations

Course work will be accomplished each week and may include readings, discussion posts, presentation, and quizzes to check your learning and comprehension. Each assignment must be completed by its due date and time, which may vary by assignment.

Quality of work

All work in this course should represent your best effort, including proper spelling and grammar. Writing should be concise and exhibit a clear understanding of the topic and critical thinking on your part. We write in AP style and cite all sources using APA 7th edition format. If you need help with writing and citing sources, you can access free tutoring at the library. In addition, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

Questions about grades

You are responsible for tracking your grade online and meeting with me early in the semester if you are concerned about your overall grade.

Plagiarism policy

First offense: Redo for 50%, warning

Second offense: Automatic 0, no redo

Third offense: Automatic class fail

Grading

A = 90% - 100%

B = 80% - 89.9%

C = 70% - 79.9%

D = 60% - 69.9%

F = Below 60%

- Assignments – 25%
- Environmental Scans – 25%
- Discussion posts – 20%
- PR Agency Profile & Presentation Project – 30%

COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a tentative course schedule and is subject to change. All readings and assignments may not be listed here. Please refer to Canvas for the most up-to-date information.

Week 1, Jan. 17 – 22 (Note: First day of class is Tuesday)

Course Introduction + Intro to PR

- Read & review content in Getting Started + Week 1 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 1: Introduction (textbook)
- Assignment: Discussion post (due Jan. 22)

Week 2, Jan. 23 – 29

Leadership

- Read & review content in Week 2 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 2: Leadership (textbook)
- Assignment: Discussion post (due Jan. 29)
- Assignment: Review the semester-long assignment PR Agency Profile and Presentation Project. *Note that there are various deadlines for this assignment.*
- Assignment: Select your PR profile agency (due Feb. 5) (*Note: selection is first-come, first-served so consider making your selection early!*)

Week 3, Jan. 30 – Feb. 5

Diversity & Inclusion

- Read & review content in Week 3 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 3: Diversity and Inclusion: A Core Public Relations Mandate (textbook)

- Read Chapter 4: Practicing Public Relations Across Cultures: The Value of Intercultural Communication Competence (textbook)
- Assignment: Discussion post (due Feb. 5)
- Assignment: DE&I: Walking the Talk (due Feb. 12)

Note: Select your PR profile agency discussion post is due.

Week 4, Feb. 6 – 12

Ethics & Business Literacy

- Read & review content in Week 4 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 5: Public Relations Ethics: Responsibilities and Necessary Skills (textbook)
- Reach Chapter 6: Business Literacy: Thoughtful Awareness and Insightful Action in a Changing Workplace
- Assignment: Discussion post (due Feb. 12)
- Assignment: Environmental scan 1 (due Feb. 19)

Week 5, Feb. 13 – 19

Content Creation in PR

- Read & review content in Week 5 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 7: Content Creation in Public Relations (textbook)
- Assignment: Discussion post (due Feb. 19)
- Assignment: Personal digital/social media inventory (due Friday, March 3)

Note: Environmental Scan 1 is due Feb. 19.

Week 6, Feb. 20 – 26

Legal Issues in PR

- Read & review content in Week 6 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 8: Legal Considerations in Public Relations (textbook)
- Assignment: Discussion post (due Feb. 26)

Note: Agency Profile Report is due Feb. 26

Week 7, Feb. 27 – March 5

Measurement & Evaluation

- Read & review content in Week 7 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 9: Measurement and Evaluation in Public Relations (textbook)
- Assignment: Discussion post (due Friday, March 3)

Note: Personal digital/social media inventory is due on Friday, March 3

Week 8, March 6 – 12 (Spring Break)

Week 9, March 13 – 19

Crisis Management

- Read & review content in Week 9 on Canvas

- Read Chapter 10: Crisis Management (textbook)
- Assignment: Discussion post (due March 19)
- Assignment: Environmental Scan 2 (due March 26)

Week 10, March 20 – 26

Stewardship & Work-Life Balance

- Read & review content in Week 10 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 11: Stewardship (textbook)
- Read Chapter 12: Work-Life Balance (textbook)
- Assignment: Discussion post (due March 26)

Note: Environmental Scan 2 is due March 26.

Week 11, March 27 – April 2

Social Media

- Read & review content in Week 11 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 13: Social Media in Public Relations (textbook)
- Assignment: Discussion post (due April 2)

Week 12, April 3 – 9

Media Relations

- Read & review content in Week 12 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 22: Media Relations (textbook)
- Assignment: Discussion post (due April 9)

Note: Agency Profile Presentation is due April 9

Week 13, April 10 – 16

Internal & Health Care PR

- Read & review content in Week 13 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 14: Internal Communication (textbook)
- Read Chapter 15: Health Care Communication: A Growing Area of Public Relations (textbook)
- Assignment: Discussion post (due April 16)
- Assignment: Environmental Scan 3 (due April 23)
- Assignment: Internal Communication: Business Profile (due April 30)

Week 14, April 17 – 23

Sports, Entertainment & Financial PR

- Read & review content in Week 14 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 16: The Challenges and Opportunities in Sports Public Relations (textbook)
- Read Chapter 17: Entertainment Public Relations
- Read Chapter 18: Financial Communications and Investor Relations: Speaking and Translating the Language (and Issues) of Business and Finance

- Assignment: Discussion post (due April 23)

Note: Environmental Scan 3 is due April 23.

Week 15, April 24 – 30

Note: Last day of classes is Wednesday, April 26. There is no 'final' in this class. You will have until Sunday, April 30, to complete this week.

Nonprofit, Politics, Corporate & Agency PR

- Read & review content in Week 15 on Canvas
- Read Chapter 19: Nonprofit Public Relations: Contributing to Social Good (textbook)
- Read Chapter 20: Public Relations in the Political World (textbook)
- Read Chapter 21: Corporate and Agency Public Relations

Assignment: Discussion post (due April 30)

Note: PR Agency Profile Reflections is due Wednesday, April 26 (last day of class).

Note: Internal Communication: Business Profile is due on Sunday, April 30.

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Professional Values and Competencies in PBRL 3400

- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to 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)

- Identify the four-step public relations process and what activities exist within each step.
- Explain the variety of relationships between organizations, media and publics.
- Understand how new technology affects the media and communication.
- Understand what's involved in preparing for and advancing a career in public relations.
- Understand mass communication theories and their application to media professions.

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

- Read and critically reflect on assigned readings, podcasts, videos, etc.
- Demonstrate understanding of class concepts by earning passing scores on periodic tests and/or exams.
- Practice intellectual exchange of ideas with class and professor through meaningful discussion.
- Research, interpret and present findings to class.
- Analyze the impact of digital footprints on personal brands.

- Produce content for class utilizing appropriate technology.

How assessment of student learning will be met

Awareness

- Identify the historical and theoretical foundations of public relations.
- Recognize the importance of ethics.
- Examine the need for diversity in all areas of mass communication.

Understanding

- Recall the historical and theoretical foundations of public relations during class discussions, exercises, and on tests.
- Differentiate between ethical and unethical behavior through examination of PR ethical codes of conduct, situational exercises, and class discussions.
- Express the skills needed to excel in the public relations field.

Application

- Discuss course concepts with class demonstrating reflection and critical thinking.
- Complete assignments sharpening understanding of public relations, such as researching a public relations firm and presenting findings and interpretation of agency portfolio and website; analyzing personal digital media usage and reporting findings, including where and how changes could improve personal digital brand; and/or creating personal videography for use on YouTube.
- Complete several tests and exercises earning passing scores.

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile

- Contact information/means of contact
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C- for undergraduate; B- for graduate) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

Academic integrity

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All

creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

Online SETEs

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. You are responsible for learning these rules and checking your work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Diversity and inclusivity

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

Weather policy

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website and the LiveSafe App regarding inclement weather.

Student support

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.