MCC-UE 1750
PUBLIC RELATIONS—THEORY AND PROCESS

Course Description
This course considers the role of public relations in persuasion from practitioner, historical, and theoretical standpoints. By the end of the semester, students should have a substantive understanding of the public relations field and its role in the terrain on which it functions.

Class Structure
The course will include lectures, discussions, and guest speakers, with an emphasis on classroom interaction based on the reading material.

Groups to Study/Group Presentation
As part of the coursework, students will serve as mock public relations professionals for real-world organizations by studying these organizations’ goals and press activity. Students will study one organization, which will serve as the source for a group project. These groups will develop a multi-part media strategy for the studied organization. Strategies will be presented near the end of the semester (see “Requirements” below).

The groups to be studied are the following:
Advocacy Groups: Bob Woodruff Foundation/Remind.org (www.remind.org) and Catalyst (www.catalyst.org)
Business Group: Clean Currents (www.cleancurrents.com)
Non-profit Groups: Children Now (www.childrennow.org) and Institute of International Education (www.iie.org)
Research Group: Social Science Research Council (www.ssrc.org)

Requirements
Your grade will be based on the following requirements:

1. **Group assignment/Class presentation**: Your group will develop a public relations campaign addressing a specific goal or problem for a real-world organization. A rough description (one or two sentences) for each group’s plan will be due on **OCTOBER 9** and the presentations will be given on **DECEMBER 4**.

2. **Midterm examination**: An in-class exam that will include short answer and multiple-choice questions as well as one (slightly) longer essay question will be given **OCTOBER 23**.

3. **Analytical paper**: One 3-4 page paper will be assigned during the first half of the semester. The assignment, which will require an analytical application of concepts discussed in class, will be provided approximately two weeks before it is due (due date: **SEPTEMBER 25**).
4. **One assignment:** One 2-3 page paper will be assigned during the second half of the semester. The assignment, which will require a practical application of concepts and examples discussed in class, will be provided approximately two weeks before it is due (due date: NOVEMBER 27).

5. **Final examination:** The format will be the same as the one for the mid-term examination. This will be cumulative, but the focus will be on the latter half of the semester. The final examination is scheduled for the final day of class—DECEMBER 11.

6. **Class participation:** The quality of your in-class comments and analyses will determine your class participation grade.

7. **Weekly “In the News” Minutes:** Each week different students will brief the class with separate three-minute summaries of one item in the news, highlighting the PR aspects/influence of the story. Student assignments will be posted on Blackboard after the second class. You’ll each present one news item in the course of the semester. You will receive a “plus,” “check,” or “minus” for your presentation, which will be factored into your class participation grade.

These items will be calculated in the following manner to determine your grade:

- Analytical Paper: 20 percent
- Assignment: 20 percent
- Midterm: 20 percent
- Group Presentation: 10 percent
- Final exam: 20 percent
- Class participation: 10 percent

**Calculation of Grades**
Letter grades are translated into points out of 100 in the following manner: A+=100/100; A=95/100; A-=92/100; B+=88/100; B=85/100; B-=82/100; C+=78/100; C=75/100; C-=72/100.

The final grade scale for Steinhardt School courses is as follows: A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C-= 70-73; D+ = 65-69; D = 60-64; F = 0-59

**Class Policies**
1. If you miss class, you’re responsible for the material presented.

2. Cheating or plagiarizing the work of another will trigger disciplinary procedures for violation of the university’s academic integrity policy. Under such a circumstance, I will advocate assigning an F in the course.

**Required Text**
- *THINK Public Relations*, Dennis Wilcox et al. (eds.) (Allyn & Bacon)
- Additional reading material—on BlackBoard (under “Course Documents”)—will supplement the textbook.

**Readings for each week are to be completed before class.**

**Weekly Schedule**
**September 4:** OVERVIEW

**September 11:** Understanding Public Relations; History; PR Models
- *THINK Public Relations*: Chapters 1 & 4/3
September 18: Communication Theories, Public Opinion, and Persuasion; Role of the News Media
(ASSIGN GROUPS)
  - THINK Public Relations: Chapter 8/7
  - Drew Westen, “The Evolution of the Passionate Brain” in The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation (PublicAffairs, 2007), pp. 45-68
  - “The End of ‘Objectivity’ in New Era: A Good Thing?” Editor & Publisher, Nov. 1, 2008
  - “Casting about for Your Vote,” California magazine, Spring 2011.

September 25: (ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE): Planning, Execution, and Evaluation
  - THINK Public Relations: Chapters 6/5 & 7/6

October 2: Law and Ethics
  - THINK Public Relations: Chapter 9

October 9: Crisis Communications and Conflict Management (GROUP PRESENTATION TOPIC DUE)
  - THINK Public Relations: Chapter 3/8

October 16: No class (Fall Break)

October 23: MID-TERM EXAMINATION

October 30: Tactics—The Written Word and Media Outreach
  - THINK Public Relations: Chapter 12/11

November 6: Tactics—The Spoken Word; Branding
  - “How Integrated Branding Differs from the Alternatives” (pp. 21-35), in LePla, Joseph and Lynn Parker, Integrated Branding: Becoming Brand-Driven Through Companywide Action (Quorum, 1999)

GUEST SPEAKER: Hayley Berlent, senior brand strategist, Siegel + Gale
November 13: Tactics—New Technologies & Social Media
  • *THINK Public Relations: Chapter 11/12*
  • “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not be Tweeted,” Malcolm Gladwell, the *New Yorker*, Oct. 4, 2010
  • “Does Social Media Have a Return on Investment?” Farhad Manjoo, *Fast Company*, July/August, 2011
  • “A New Kind of Visual News,” July 16, 2012, Project for Excellence in Journalism,

November 20: No class

November 27 (ASSIGNMENT DUE): International Public Relations and Diverse Audiences; Tactics—Visuals; Media Training
  • *THINK Public Relations: Chapters 10 & 14*

GUEST SPEAKER: Patricia Gutierrez, vice president, GFI Group

December 4: Group presentations and final examination review

December 11: Final Examination