

## **PR255 - Public Relations Fundamentals**

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

School of Journalism & Broadcasting

Faculty Name: Kenneth D. Payne

Course Title: Public Relations Fundamentals

Class Days / Hours: Online Independent Study

Room: Blackboard - Online

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In Public Relations Fundamentals you will learn about the theory and practice of public relations, how public relations operates in organizations, its impact on publics, and its functions in society. You will study the professional development of the field; concepts, issues, and principles in the practice; and models and theories guiding the practice.

For those planning public relations careers, this course provides a foundation for the public relations major. The course also meets the needs of those planning other professional and managerial careers that require an understanding of public relations concepts and management practices.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this course, each student is expected to:

1. Have thorough understanding of public relations theories and practice. (4)
2. Have knowledge of the contribution of PR in organizational decision-making. (2,6)
3. Have the ability to list and describe PR tools used to communicate with and persuade the various publics. (8)
4. Have the understanding of the legal, ethical and moral considerations inherent in PR. (1,5)
5. Be familiar with the knowledge, skills, and talents needed to enhance an organization's internal and external images through effective planning, execution, and evaluation of PR programs. (6,11)

## COURSE TEXT/READINGS

Required Text:

The Practice of Public Relations, Seitel, 12th Edition

- **ISBN-10:** 0133083578
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0133083576

## GRADE SCALE

Course grades will be assigned based on the following ratio:

Exam One	10%
Exam Two	10%
Exam Three	10%
Exam Four	10%
Lecture Quizzes	15%
PREP Blog Posts	15%
Reading Guides	30%

## ASSIGNMENTS/REQUIREMENTS

**Reading Guides** - Each chapter in the Seitel text has an associated Reading Guide. You should complete the Reading Guide as you read each chapter. Each Reading Guide has 20 multiple choice questions. This assignment accounts for 30% of your final grade with the lowest two (2) grades dropped from the average.

**Lecture Quizzes** – Each chapter of the Seitel text has an associated Tegrity recording lecture. After viewing the Tegrity recording, you should complete a comprehension review for the lecture. Each iLecture Quiz has 10 true/false questions. This assignment accounts for 15% of your final grade with the lowest two (2) grades dropped from the average.

**PREP** – Each chapter discussed in the recorded lecture has an associated blogging assignment based on the Mini Ethical Case Study located in the Seitel text. The Public Relations Ethical Practice (PREP) assignment provides you the opportunity to explore your role in the ethics of public relations work. The PREP assignment accounts for 15% of your final grade for the course.

**Exam One** – The first exam will test your understanding of the definition of public relations, the history and growth of the profession, the role of communication, and the importance of public opinion. (Chapters 1-4). The exam questions are pulled from the chapter Reading Guides, the Lecture Quizzes, and includes short-answer essay questions from the text. This exam accounts for 10% of your final grade for the course.

**Exam Two** - The second exam will test your understanding of public relations relationship to management, public relations ethics, the legal aspects of public relations, and the role of research (Chapters 5-8). The exam questions are pulled from the chapter Reading Guides, the Lecture Quizzes, and includes short-answer essay questions from the text. This exam accounts for 10%

of your final grade for the course.

**Exam Three** – The third essay exam will test your understanding of the media, social media, employee relations and government relations (Chapters 9-12). The exam questions are pulled from the chapter Reading Guides, the Lecture Quizzes, and includes short-answer essay questions from the text. This exam accounts for 10% of your final grade for the course.

**Exam Four** - The fourth exam will test your understanding of community relations, consumer relations, integrated marketing communications, and crisis management (Chapters 13, 14, 16, and 17). The exam questions are pulled from the chapter Reading Guides, the Lecture Quizzes, and includes short-answer essay questions from the text. This exam accounts for 10% of your final grade for the course.

**NOTE: ALL EXAMS ARE PROCTORED BY THE ON DEMAND UNIT OF THE DIVISION OF EXTENDED LEARNING AND OUTREACH (DELO). YOU MUST MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO TAKE AN EXAM. PLEASE ACCESS THE ON DEMAND LINK IN THE COURSE MAIN NAVIGATION FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

**Adaptive Release** - The course is structured linearly and content distribution is controlled. Therefore, new content and tasks are displayed within each chapter based on the completion of the previous content and/or task. For example, when you begin the course the Chapter 1 section will initially display the Chapter Objectives and the Reading Guide for Chapter 1.

**When you submit the Reading Guide for grading, the Lecture recording and the Lecture Quiz will appear below the Reading Guide. When you submit the Lecture Quiz for grading, the PREP assignment will appear.**

**Once you complete the PREP assignment, the Reading Guide for Chapter 2 will appear. The course continues in this way through Exam One where you will stop and make your appointment to complete the proctored exam.**

**Once you receive a grade for Exam One, you will be cleared to continue with Chapter 5 through Chapter 8. The course continues in this way through Exam Four, which is the final task of the course.**

## **CLASS POLICIES:**

### **Special accommodations:**

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course just contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUC A-200 of the Student Success Center in Downing University Center. The OFSDS telephone number is (270)745-5004 V/TDD. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

## Academic Dishonesty:

To represent ideas or interpretations taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of a student must be his or her own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism. Disposition of Offenses - Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal.

## Professional Values and Competencies:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to: 1) understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances; 2) demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications; 3) demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications; 4) understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information; 5) demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity; think critically, creatively and independently; 6) 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; 7) critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness; 8) apply basic numerical and statistical concepts; apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

## Teaching Philosophy

I view teaching as behavior that strengthens and motivates the intent to learn, and learning as the acquisition and command of a realm of knowledge. Thus, as Dr. Steve Thien from Kansas State University reminds us; "teaching others to learn is a

teacher's most important gift." To accomplish this learn-to-learn goal, I've developed a set of tenets that I use to not only develop and design my classes, but also measure my teaching effectiveness and student learning. They are:

Encourage students to take risks.

Experiences of discovery are invitations to deep learning. Whether such experiences take the form of invention, insight, seeing new landscapes, or seeing familiar landscapes in new ways, their impact on the learner is to open new horizons and to develop the habit of curiosity. This philosophy implies a level of accepted risk. I encourage students to take risks – and hold the ladder when necessary.

Allow students to fail.

Collaborative learning thrives on problem-based curricula that require students to grapple with ambiguous and difficult dilemmas. Too often the value of collaboration is thought in terms of a division of labor, instead of leveraging diverse expertise and perspectives to cope with difficult challenges. As one well known business leader lamented, "I never learned anything from my successes, only my failures." I allow students to fail – and pick them up when necessary.

Challenge students to think.

Student's presentations and projects that are given without the benefit of an appointed critic deprive students of meaningful opportunities to model critical thinking. In this manner, students have ample opportunity to hone their skills in critical thinking and dialogue – not only by comparing the performance of other groups with their own, but also by gaining practice in offering tactful and constructive criticism. I challenge students to think – and support their views when necessary.

Evaluate students based on performance.

The learn-to-learn model relies strongly upon the use of rubric-based assessment to distinguish among levels of competency. Rubrics are criteria by which students can judge their own work and the work of others – a way to generalize levels of competency. Assessment criteria are public and provide a helpful way to reinforce expectations for student performance and to benchmark one's own progress on skill development. I evaluate student performance – and hold them responsible for results.