Public Relations Case Studies

Professor: Phillip Madison, Ph.D.

Email: madisontp@sfasu.edu

Phone: 936-468-1050

Office: Boynton 204

Office Hours: MWF 12pm-1pm, T/TH 9:15am-10:30am and by appointment

Department: Mass Communication

Class time & place: MWF, 11:00-11:50am Boynton 209

Course Description

An in-depth study of the profession of public relations with a focus on contemporary issues, problems, and challenges using guided discussion and analysis of case studies. Prerequisite: MCM 380 & advanced standing.

Purpose

To provide an intellectually stimulating course examining public relations, its role in mass media and society, and the challenges facing public relations professionals today.

Required Text


Helpful Materials

Public Relations Society of America: www.prsa.org

Select articles and papers will be assigned and made available in D2L or in class. The reading load for the course will be extensive at times and will require that adequate time and attention be devoted to the course materials.
Program Learning Objectives (PLOs)

1. Demonstrate the ability to write effectively across a variety of platforms appropriate to the discipline.

2. Gather, organize and analyze discipline-appropriate research and communicate information about it.

3. Understand the role of media in society.

4. Comprehend legal and ethical principles relating to media.

5. Demonstrate the application of media technology, terminology and techniques.

Strategic Communication Concentration PLOS:

1. Demonstrate the ability to construct and create an advertising and public relations campaign effectively in written form utilizing multimedia platforms.

2. Analyze and apply data relevant to advertising or public relations.

3. Demonstrate the application of media technology and terminology to develop advertising or public relations campaigns.

4. Understand effective visual language and how to apply it to build creative advertising or public relations messages.

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

1. Students will be able to analyze public relations cases and identify the basic concepts and processes at work in those cases.

2. Students will be able to analyze public relations cases using the four-step public relations process.

3. Students will have a thorough understanding of how and why various public relations strategies succeeded or failed.

Format

I will lecture a few times during this course to refresh your knowledge of principles, PR concepts, and familiarize you with the weekly themes, but the bulk of learning is your responsibility. This class is structured in a discussion format and is designed to create an environment for students to discuss topics of interest as they relate to public relations. Students will be expected to come to class prepared to engage with the material and with fellow classmates.
Course requirements*

Participation .................................................................10%

5 Quizzes .................................................................10%

Two Reaction Papers ................................................20%

Two Discussions .........................................................20%

Final Case Study Analysis (30%) and Presentation (10%) ..40%

*This is a writing-enhanced (WE) course. As such, >60% of your grade will come from the written materials you turn in. I am always happy to help you with your writing during office hours, but ultimately your writing is your own responsibility. I can always try to help you catch GSP errors (and will never catch them all), but I cannot be held responsible for things you write.

Participation (10%)

Because each student is expected to contribute to the discussions with intelligent and informed comments and questions, participation is a must. I do not always always take attendance, but I do notice your absence, and frequent absences will affect your participation grades.

5 Quizzes (10%)

Quizzes could occur at any time and often strike without warning. They will cover cases in the current chapter of the book. Makeup quizzes will not be given without documentation of an emergency or medical issue.

Two Discussions (@10% each = 20%)

Each student will be required to research, analyze, and lead two class discussions on public relations case studies assigned by the professor. I will grade you on your knowledge of the material, how well you engage the class with the material you have researched, how far beyond the case you take the discussion, and how well you apply the principles of PR to your particular case. Remember: your classmates are to have read the same materials, and should therefore have the same knowledge of the case that you have. Feel free during your discussion to call on them individually for their input on the cases. This assignment is as much about you engaging your classmates as it is about you doing research, analysis, and critical thinking.
This course is also about going beyond what's in the book and looking at the bigger picture in which cases occur. Please bring us (at least one) video, a PowerPoint, or some other source of information that adds depth and breadth to your discussion. Students have used videos, found competing opinions, and brought in a number of different sources to enrich their discussions. I have even brought phoned guest speakers with whom students could interact about the case, and invite you do to the same if you so choose. Your additional materials don't necessarily need to cover the case itself, but they should help us understand the case material and the context in which the cases occur. For example, very few of us know or understand the dangers of oil speculation. In a previous class, one student used a video on oil speculation that wasn't about the case, but because oil speculation is a complex topic, the video helped us understand the environment in which the case occurred.

Please see Discussion Grading Rubric to see how I will grade the discussions you lead. I am specifically looking for you to go beyond the case and engage your fellow classmates. The best discussions are those we want to continue even after it's time for the next class. The worst discussions are the ones where the student lectures or runs out of ways to engage their fellow students early-on, looks at me for help, and I have to jump in and save the discussion. Also, don't fall into the trap of thinking you need to know everything about the case -- just find some ways to get your peers excited about it and engaged in discussion with each other. Don't think for a minute that getting other people to talk about a case is the easy way out -- it requires knowing your peers and playing on their strengths to get them in motion.

After the second week of class, we will begin our discussions. I will go first, leading us in discussion and providing you with a reaction paper. Come prepared by reading the case and finding any other pertinent information that can add to our discussion and understanding of the case. The discussion I lead will provide you with a model for when your turn comes.

**Two Reaction Papers (@10% each = 20%)**

Because this is a writing enhanced course, I will also require you to turn in a reaction paper for each of your assigned cases. Your reaction papers are due on the day you lead a discussion and should be no more than two pages, double spaced, and reflect thoughtful analysis of the cases. You are welcome to use these to help guide your discussion.

I will grade these on the quality and depth of your analysis as well as GSP (please see Reaction Paper Grading Rubric to see how I grade reaction papers). A good summary of a case is not what I want. I am looking for your reasoned opinions, going beyond the textbook, and thinking critically about the case. Moreover, I will need you to submit them to the D2L Dropbox the day of your presentation so that others can look at them during the discussion -- OR (and many students prefer this route) -- print out a copy for everyone in the class.
Please see Dr. Madison - Reaction Paper - Case 3-1 for an example of a reaction paper. But be warned -- I have graded this reaction paper before each semester and the grades I give myself have ranged from 78 to 82. In other words, it's a C+/B- paper. See the notes I wrote in the margins to find out how it could be better.

Final Case Study Analysis and Presentation (30%)

Presentation

At the end of the term you will turn in a written assignment and present your work to the rest of the class in lieu of taking a final exam. Dress up for this – it’s sad, but in the professional world you are judged on many superficial things, and personal attire is one of them. I will grade you mostly on the written work you turn in (G-S-P, coherence, flow of ideas, argument, etc.), but your presentation will also factor heavily into your grade. Please use Powerpoint, Prezi, or other visual aids.

Case Study Analysis

I will give a more detailed assignment after the first week of class, but in general, you will have to write up a case study. First, pick a case. It can be pretty much any topic in PR, but I would suggest focusing on a campaign, crisis, or other visible event that a real-live organization has undertaken. I require that you write me a proposal (~1 page, double-spaced, check the Tentative Course Calendar for due date), giving me a brief description of what you plan to do. I will return these to you the following week. Later (again, check the course calendar), an initial draft of your final paper is due. It must be a minimum of 2500 words (not including works cited pages or appendix items). I will return these to you with suggestions and corrections, you will then revise it turn in your final revised copies before you make your final presentation.

This assignment will require interacting with professionals. You will need to find out who handled the case you are studying and e-mail or call them for information. It is important that you tell them who you are, mention you are a student at SFA writing a case study, explain to them the type of information you need, and explain to them that your work may be published at some point. Use common-sense rules of etiquette when dealing with these people -- be polite or they won’t talk to you. If they refuse to talk to you, you’ll have to pick another topic – I have no control over what people in the industry choose to do or to not do, so it’s up to you to figure out how to get the info.

As I mentioned, you will be allowed to revise your work before submitting a final copy. How do I review your work? First, I give each paper a reading for ideas. I then give it a second reading for GSP issues. I will try to catch as many errors as I can during these readings and point them out to you, but invariably there will be errors that I do not catch in the initial drafts that make their way into the final drafts. This is especially true with writers who do not spend time revising their own work. The bottom line is this: YOUR
WRITING IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY – MAKE SURE YOU CATCH ANY ERRORS THAT I MISS AND FIX THEM FOR YOUR FINAL DRAFT.

Technology

I invite you to use technology for research and other class-related purposes during class. I believe having access to information beyond the class enriches the learning experience – I'll even hop on Google, YouTube, and Wikipedia every now and then during lectures to find information. As much as I enjoy technology in the classroom and find it beneficial, using it for non-class purposes such as Tweeting, Facebooking, etc. make me very grouchy. Texting and phone calls during class are completely unacceptable without my blessing.

Grading

Final letter grades are assigned according to the following scale:

A = 92 - 100   B = 82 – 91   C = 72 - 81   D = 60 - 72   F = 60 and below

PRSSA

The Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) is a student organization whose membership is open to any SFA student. PRSSA regularly features guest speakers, as well as additional opportunities to learn more about the field of PR. This is a formative time in your lives, and any experiences outside the classroom that you have can help shape the course of the rest of your life. I cannot give extra credit for joining the organization, but STRONGLY ENCOURAGE you to do so, as it opens up many, many doors to your future careers.

Communicating with Dr. Madison

For communicating to all members of the class, I prefer to use Facebook, D2L, and e-mail -- in that order. Please join the Facebook page Dr. Madison's Case Studies Course - MCM 382 before you read the next sentence. One caveat about D2L: I rarely check my D2L e-mail and it doesn't work well with outside e-mail systems. You will get quicker responses Facebooking or e-mailing me at the email address listed above, or just coming by during my office hours. Also, I do not generally check e-mail after 5pm, but will get to your e-mails as soon as I can.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)

Students in this class are expected to read and abide by the university policy on academic integrity. If a student is found in violation of this policy, he/she will be subject
to receiving a failing grade for this course, and the violation will be reported to the proper university authorities.

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Using Or Attempting To Use Unauthorized Materials To Aid In Achieving A Better Grade On A Component Of A Class;

- Falsification Or Invention Of Any Information, Including Citations, On An Assignment; And/Or,

- Helping Or Attempting To Help Another In An Act Of Cheating Or Plagiarism. Plagiarism Is Presenting The Words Or Ideas Of Another Person As If They Were Your Own. Examples Of Plagiarism Include, But Are Not Limited To:

  - Submitting An Assignment As If It Were One's Own Work When, In Fact, It Is At Least Partly The Work Of Another;

  - Submitting A Work That Has Been Purchased Or Otherwise Obtained From The Internet Or Another Source; And,

  - Incorporating The Words Or Ideas Of An Author Into One's Paper Or Presentation Without Giving The Author Due Credit.

**Procedure for Addressing Student Academic Dishonesty**

A faculty member who has evidence and/or suspects that academic dishonesty has occurred shall gather all pertinent information, approach the student(s) involved, and initiate the following procedure:

- The faculty member shall review all evidence of cheating or plagiarism and discuss it directly with the student(s) involved. The faculty member shall inform the student(s) of the procedure for addressing academic dishonesty, as well as the appeals process.

- After hearing the student(s)' explanation or defense, the faculty member will determine whether or not academic dishonesty has occurred and will inform the student(s) what action will be taken. Penalties may include reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, re-submission of the work, make-up exam, or failure of the course. The faculty
member may consult with the academic unit chair/director and dean in making these decisions.

• After a determination of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall notify the office of the dean of the student's major by submitting a Report of Academic Dishonesty, along with supporting documentation as noted on the form. This report shall be made part of the student's record and shall remain on file with the dean's office for at least four years.

• Upon second or subsequent offenses, the dean of the student’s major will determine a course of action, which may include dismissal from the university. The dean may refer the case to the college council for review and recommendations before making this determination.

A student's record of academic dishonesty will not be available to faculty members. The purpose of the record is for the dean to track a pattern of academic dishonesty during a student's academic career at Stephen F. Austin State University. Students who are found to have demonstrated academic dishonesty and have withdrawn prior to the award of a grade will continue to have the determination of the infraction within their student records.

**Student Appeals**

A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic integrity should follow procedures outlined in Academic Appeals of Students (A-2).

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Withheld Grades**

**Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325. 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a
timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate or inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

Boynton Lab Schedule

The Boynton lab will be available for weekly use. The lab schedule will be posted by the second week of the semester. Questions, comments, complaints are welcome and should be directed to Mr. Patterson during office hours.

Lab Facility, Computers, and Printers

Food and/or drinks are not allowed in the lab due to the nature of the equipment. Please help us with this policy by being responsible with yourself first. Printing that is unrelated to your registered class (which uses Boynton 202 or 209 labs) may revoke ALL printing privileges. Printing to the Color Printer requires approval and must be for specific class assignments. Lab assistants are available for general assistance. If you experience a problem with computer equipment, please note the problem in detail, computer used and report this information to the lab assistant.

Department of Mass Communication: WRITING ENHANCED POLICY

Students in each of the courses below will, at a minimum:

1. Write at least 3000 words on projects and/or assignments throughout the semester.

2. Be required to revise and re-submit at least one assignment during the term.

3. Complete at least one out-of-class writing assignment.

Total writing assignments for the course will count for a minimum of 50% of the course grade.
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Mondays</th>
<th>Wednesdays</th>
<th>Fridays</th>
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<td>1/18-22/15</td>
<td>MLK Day</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>Principles Review</td>
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<td>Ethics (p. 7-9)</td>
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<td>01/25-29/15</td>
<td>Principles Review</td>
<td>The PR Process</td>
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<td>Assign Cases</td>
<td>Read Chapter 2</td>
<td>Read Chapter 2</td>
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<td>02/01-05/15</td>
<td>Media Relations</td>
<td>Case 3-3:</td>
<td>No Class (Advertising candidate visiting)</td>
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<td>Case 3-1 (Dr. Madison)</td>
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<td>02/08-12/15</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Case 4-2:</td>
<td>Case 4-4:</td>
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<td>Case 4-1</td>
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<td>02/15-19/15</td>
<td>Internal Relations</td>
<td>Case 5-2:</td>
<td>Case 5-3:</td>
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<td>Case 5-1:</td>
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<td>02/22-26/15</td>
<td>Community Relations</td>
<td>Case 6-2:</td>
<td>Case 6-3:</td>
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<td>Case 6-1:</td>
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<td>02/29-03/4/15</td>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>Case 7-2:</td>
<td>Case: Harrison County Libertarian Party by Moss and Madison, 2014</td>
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<td>Case 7-1:</td>
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<td>03/07-11/15</td>
<td>Financial relations</td>
<td>Case 8-1:</td>
<td>Case 8-3:Dr. Madison</td>
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<td>Crisis Videos</td>
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<td>PROPOSALS DUE</td>
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<td>03/14-18/15</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td>03/21-25/15</td>
<td>Consumer Relations</td>
<td>Case 9-2:</td>
<td>EASTER</td>
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<td>9-1:</td>
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<td>1st DRAFT FOR REVIEW</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Case: <em>Jersey Strong, Right?: A Communications Analysis of New Jersey’s Post-Hurricane Sandy Tourism Recovery</em></td>
<td>Lecture: International PR Case 10-1:</td>
<td>Note: I am not requiring that you submit a first draft, but I highly recommend you do so. This is your opportunity to revise, improve, and enhance your work.</td>
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<td>Case 10-2:</td>
<td>Case 10-3:</td>
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<td>04/04-08/15</td>
<td>Case 10-3:</td>
<td>SSCA Convention</td>
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<td>Case 10-3:</td>
<td>Spend this time working on your case studies.</td>
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<td>04/18-22/15</td>
<td>Lecture: Crisis Communication Case 12-1:</td>
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<td>05/02-06/15</td>
<td>FINAL WORK WEEK One-on-One project meetings with Dr. Madison 1) One-on-One project meetings with Dr. Madison 1)</td>
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<td>05/09-13/15</td>
<td>Finals</td>
<td>Final Presentations:</td>
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