Course Syllabus
COMM3341.001 – Public Relations Cases & Strategies
Wednesday, 4:20-6:50pm, Bay Hall 103

Dr. Michelle M. Maresh-Fuehrer
Office: Bay Hall 329
Hours: TBA and by appointment
Office Phone: 361-825-2273
E-mail: michelle.maresh@tamucc.edu

Course Description
A study of the key issues in the practice of public relations as a form of corporate discourse; exploration of nature, history, and present status of public relations. Using a case study approach, the material presented in this course provides students with an opportunity to understand the role of ethics, behavior, professionalism, and values in the strategies and tactics used in public relations campaigns. We will study various cases of employee, community, investor, consumer, media relations, as well as individual and corporate crisis management.

Student Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:
✓ Identify components that make public relations messages (in) effective and (un) ethical according to a clearly stated set of criteria;
✓ Recall and critique strategies in external and internal corporate discourse;
✓ Understand the history and present state of public relations as a profession and as a field of study; and
✓ Apply language accurately and effectively through critical analysis of public relations contexts.

Students should also be able to:
✓ Prepare an interview with a public relations professional; and
✓ Analyze a current public relations campaign and offer strategies for improvement.

Required Text
You will not be required to purchase a textbook for this course. However, a good resource is:

Course Assignments & Grade Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview Assignment</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Report &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (10 at 10 points each)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Group Project</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation (14 at 5 points each)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points:</strong></td>
<td>470</td>
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Grade Calculation:

- A  90% of the total points 423 points – 470 points
- B  80% of the total points 376 points – 422 points
- C  70% of the total points 329 points – 375 points
- D  60% of the total points 282 points – 328 points
- F  50% of the total points 000 points – 281 points

A Successful Course Experience
A successful experience in this course will depend on your individual commitment and work ethic. I encourage all students to visit with me frequently throughout the semester, rather than waiting until the end of the semester to ask questions or express concerns. As in most courses, students should be proactive about their work and ready to discuss concepts and share examples during class. Furthermore, a professor who is familiar with their students is better able to help their students accomplish their personal goals, so make yourself known! Be known for doing good work, contributing during class discussion, and talking about your concerns/challenges/successes/goals with me outside of class. If you have suggestions that will enrich your learning experience, please let me know.
Dropping a Course

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this course; however, at times, events can occur that make dropping a course appear to be a wise decision. Before deciding to drop this course, please talk with me to be sure that this is the best possible decision for you. If you do decide to drop this course, you must initiate the process by going to the Student Services Center (the “round building”) and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation will not automatically drop you from the course. Friday, March 30 is the last day to drop a course this semester.

Course Policies

Attendance

- Prompt arrival, attendance, and participation are all vital to your success in this course. Students are expected to contribute to attend all class meetings and contribute to the classroom experience by actively listening, asking questions, participating in discussions, and taking part in class activities.
- Attendance and participation will be graded. Each student will earn 5 points for every class session that they attend. If students attend but do not participate in class, I reserve the right to assign 0 points for the day. In all fairness, students will be notified that their lack of participation will result in 0 points before the points are assigned.

Assignment Deadlines and Absences

- All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date shown on the course syllabus, unless otherwise noted. If otherwise noted, assignments are due on the exact date and at the exact time noted on the assignment.
  - In the event of an excused absence (i.e., athletics, family emergencies, and illness), I must be notified before the missed class period and reserve the right to decide whether an absence is excused. Late work will only be accepted for excused absences and must be turned in by the deadline that I assign to the student.
  - Students will receive a “0” for unexcused late and/or missed work.
  - When a student is absent, they are responsible for obtaining the information that was missed during class. Students should select a classmate at the beginning of the semester who will agree to help with this task.
- Unless otherwise indicated, work that is e-mailed to me will not be accepted for any reason. Students should complete their assignments on time to reduce the risk of emergencies, such as running out of ink, paper, or not having access to a printer or computer. Students should also save their files in multiple locations to reduce the risk of losing their work. Students who turn in e-mailed work, unless otherwise indicated, will receive a “0.”
- Should a student have a question about their grade on a particular assignment, I follow the 24/7 rule: students should approach me no sooner than 24 hours and no later than 7 days after the assignment has been returned.

Preferred Method of Scholarly Citations

- All assignments that require scholarly citations should adhere to the 6th edition of the APA style manual. If you do not have access to this manual, please visit: http://library.nmu.edu-guides/userguides/style_apa.htm#website

Classroom/Professional Conduct

- I treat my classroom as a small community; thus, we will maintain a harassment-free environment that is welcoming to different viewpoints and ideas. Any profane or inappropriate ethnic, gender, racial, age, appearance, and/or lifestyle-related comments will not be accepted. Any student who violates this policy will be asked to leave the classroom.
- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VIII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, online classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Assistance

- I am happy to help students with their understanding of assignments by reading through drafts and answering questions about class assignments; however, I will not be able to provide adequate assistance within 36 hours of a deadline, so students should be proactive about starting their assignments and seeking feedback early.
- Should any situation arise, where I can be of assistance (i.e., does not have a printer), please come talk to me. 😊
Notice To Students With Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5716.

Academic Advising

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

Grade Appeal Process

As stated in the University Rule 13.02.99.C2. Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Academic Honesty

Students unaware of the university’s statement on academic honesty should review it in the Undergraduate Catalog or Student Handbook. Examples of academic dishonesty and plagiarism are using someone else’s ideas and not giving them credit; presenting a paper that is not originally yours; handing in assignments that are not originally yours; presenting “facts” or lifting ideas from sources without crediting the source; presenting falsified opinions and figures; cheating on an exam; and turning in the same work in multiple classes. If you are uncertain as to what actions constitute plagiarism or dishonesty, please ask your professor. Students who violate the code of honesty in this class will receive a 0 on that assignment. Any student receiving more than one “0” for academic dishonesty or plagiarism will fail the course and may be expelled from the program. Note: All violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Dean and Office of Student Affairs who maintains documentation of such offenses for at least 5 years.

Assignment Descriptions

**Full descriptions and grading rubrics will be provided to the student closer to the assignment due dates.

Interview Assignment (50 points)

Each student will be required to conduct a 30-45 minute interview with a public relations professional of their choice. Students will be given a list of 10 required questions to ask during the interview and will write a 3-5 page paper discussing the information that they learned during the interview. The student will be evaluated based on: a signed business card (or e-mail, if a long-distance interview is conducted), and the quality of the information in their paper.

Case Report Discussion (50 points)

Each student will be required to put together a 5-7 minute presentation over a current public relations case that corresponds with the topic we are discussing on the week that they are assigned to present (e.g., crisis management, community relations, investor relations). In this presentation, they will discuss: a) summary of the case, 2) strategies used in the case, 3) critique of how the case was handled. The student should research the case and strategies using the internet, newspaper, television, magazine articles, etc. The student will be evaluated based on: a handout with the key information from their presentation, and the quality of the presentation.

Quizzes (10 quizzes at 10 points each; 100 points)

Students should be prepared for multiple choice, short answer, and application-style questions.
Final Group Project (200 points)
Students will have two options for completing the final project.

(1) Students will be required to write an 8-10 page paper over a public relations case that has not been covered in class. Students will be asked to discuss: a) background of the case, b) strategies used by the PR professionals in charge of the case, c) a critique of the strategies used by the PR professional, d) recommendations for better strategies for the case. Students will also be required to present this information in a 25-30 minute presentation.

(2) Students will be required to choose a local organization that may need help with their public relations. Students will be asked to a) identify and provide a history of the organization, b) identify an element or elements of PR that the organization needs help with (i.e., consumer relations), c) discuss cases (belonging to the organization and/or similar organizations) that led students to believe that this is an element of PR that needs attention, and d) create a training manual to help this organization with their PR needs. Students will also be required to present their training manual in a 25-30 minute presentation.

Attendance and Participation (14 at 5 points each; 70 points)
Attendance ad participation will be graded. Each student will earn 5 points for every class session that they attend and sign the sign-in sheet. If students attend but do not participate in class, I reserve the right to assign 0 points for the day. Students should sign the sign-in sheet before they leave the classroom—the professor will not be responsible for “remembering” that a student attended a class that they did not sign in for.
### COMM3341.001 Schedule

**This schedule is tentative and subject to change. All changes will be to the benefit of the student.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Activity</th>
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| **Wednesday, August 22**  | READ: N/A
DISCUSS: Course Introduction                      |
| **Wednesday, August 29**  | READ: Chapter 1
DISCUSS: The Purpose of PR                         |
| **Wednesday, September 5**| READ: Chapter 2
DISCUSS: PR Models/PR Problems & Opportunities      |
| **Wednesday, September 12**| READ: Chapter 3
DISCUSS: Employee Relations                          |
| **Wednesday, September 19**| READ: Chapter 4
DISCUSS: Community Relations                         |
| **Wednesday, September 26**| READ: Chapter 5
DISCUSS: Investor Relations                           |
| **Wednesday, October 3**  | READ: Chapter 6
DISCUSS: Consumer Relations                           |
| **Wednesday, October 10** | READ: Chapter 7
DISCUSS: Media Relations                               |
| **Wednesday, October 17** | READ: Chapter 8
DISCUSS: Public Issues Campaigns & Debates            |
| **Wednesday, October 24** | READ: Chapter 9
DISCUSS: Crisis Management                             |
| **Wednesday, October 31** | READ: N/A
DISCUSS: N/A                                          |
| **Wednesday, November 7** | READ: Supplemental Material
DISCUSS: Other Types of PR (Sports, Health, etc.)      |
| **Wednesday, November 14 (No Class—Professor at NCA Conference)** | |
| **Wednesday, November 21**| READ: N/A
DISCUSS: N/A                                          |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read/Quiz/Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 21</td>
<td>(No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday)</td>
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</table>
| Wednesday, November 28 | Read: Chapter 10  
DISCUSS: Standards, Ethics, & Values  
Quiz 9  
Case Report Discussion |
| Wednesday, December 5 | Read: N/A  
DISCUSS: Group Workshop  
Quiz 10 |
| Wednesday, December 12 | Read: N/A  
DISCUSS: Course Wrap-Up  
Final Group Project Due |