Fall 2016  
Course Syllabus  
COMM-2330_001 – Introduction to Public Relations  
Tuesdays/Thursdays 12:30-1:45pm, BH 103

Dr. Michelle M. Maresh-Fuehrer  
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Hours: TBA  
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Course Description  
An exploration of the history and development of public relations including the theory and process of public relations, and the various publics and careers associated with the public relations industry.

Student Learning Objectives  
Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:  
✓ Understand the history and current state of the public relations profession  
✓ Discuss the PRSA Code of Ethics  
✓ Implement AP Style in their writing  
✓ Demonstrate competency in public relations writing  
✓ Analyze public relations strategy across a variety of contexts

Required or Recommended Readings  

Major Course Requirements  
*Assignment descriptions appear on the 4th page of this syllabus*  
News Release  
Pitch Letter  
Radio Spot  
Public Service Announcement  
Social Media Engagement Analysis  
Interview Assignment  
Applied Project  
Participation (28 days at 5 points)  

Total Points: 390

Grade Calculation:  
A  90% of the total points: 351 points – 390 points  
B  80% of the total points: 312 points – 349 points  
C  70% of the total points: 273 points – 311 points  
D  60% of the total points: 234 points – 272 points  
F  50% of the total points: 000 points – 233 points

A Successful Course Experience  
A successful experience in this course will depend on your individual commitment and work ethic, as well as your ability to be an “active participant observer.” I encourage all students to visit with me regularly 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 for doing good work, contributing to class discussion, pursuing your professional interests outside of the classroom, and sharing your goals, successes, and challenges with us.
Am I required to attend this course?
- Prompt arrival, attendance, and participation are all vital to your success in this course. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and contribute to the classroom experience by actively listening, asking questions, sharing examples, 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.

What are your expectations for my assignments?
- It should go without saying that quality work is an expectation. As a Communication student, it is expected that you will have effective writing and speaking skills and that you will seek my help if you need assistance in these areas. It is also expected that your work will be free from plagiarism and will show that you are thinking “beyond the textbook.”
- 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. If an assignment is late or missed, the student will not receive credit for the assignment.
- Assignments should be turned in as a hard copy unless otherwise noted. If an assignment is turned in using a means other than hard copy, the student will not receive credit for the assignment. Students should complete assignments on time to reduce the risk of emergencies, such as running out of ink, paper, losing their work, or not having access to a printer or computer.

What should I do if I am going to be absent?
- Students should send me a direct e-mail prior to the time that class starts on the day that they will be absent, informing me of their absence. Regardless of the students’ excuse, as long as this step is followed, the student will receive an excused absence and will not lose their attendance/participation points. If students do not follow this step, they will be considered unexcused unless they can supply documentation of a traditional excused absence (i.e., athletics, family emergencies, health issues). In this situation, I reserve the right to decide whether an absence is considered excused.
- Late work will only be accepted for excused absences and must be completed and turned in within 7 days of the absence. In the event of an unexcused absence, students will not receive credit for their attendance or missed assignments.
- Regardless of the status of an absence, when a student they are responsible for obtaining the information that was missed during class. Students may wish to select a classmate(s) at the beginning of the semester that will agree to help with this task.

I have a question about one of my grades, what should I do?
- Should a student have a question about their grade on a particular assignment, I follow the 24/7 rule: students must approach me no sooner than 24 hours and no later than 7 days after the assignment has been returned. Once 7 days have passed, the topic will be closed for discussion.

What type of citations should I use in my writing and speaking assignments?
- All assignments that require scholarly citations should adhere to the 6th edition of the APA style manual.

I need help with my work, what should I do?
- Come talk to me!
- 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 48 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., you do not have a printer), please come talk to me.

What are the rules for classroom 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.
What are the rules for classroom conduct? (Continued)

- 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.

### 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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

### Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity, or plagiarism (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work). In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade (0) on the 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 document of such offenses for at least 5 years.

### Disabilities Accommodations

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 Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

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) 825-5816.

### 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. The last day to drop a course this semester is Friday, November 11.

### Grade Appeals

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details in the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.
Statement of Academic Continuity

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e. emails, websites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

Assignment Descriptions

**Please do not use these guidelines to begin your work early, as they are incomplete. Full descriptions and grading rubrics will be provided to you in advance of the respective due dates.**

News Release (20 points)
Students will write a news release and submit it for feedback. Once students have completed the required revisions, they will have a product that can be placed in their job portfolios.

Pitch Letter (20 points)
Students will write a pitch letter and submit it for feedback. Once students have completed the required revisions, they will have a product that can be placed in their job portfolios.

Radio Spot (20 points)
Students will write a pitch letter and submit it for feedback. Once students have completed the required revisions, they will have a product that can be placed in their job portfolios.

TV PSA (20 points)
Students will write a pitch letter and submit it for feedback. Once students have completed the required revisions, they will have a product that can be placed in their job portfolios.

Social Media Engagement Analysis (20 points)
Students will analyze an organization’s social media engagement. Once students have completed the required revisions, they will have a product that can be placed in their job portfolios.

Interview Assignment (50 points)
Students will be required to conduct an interview with a public relations professional of their choice. Students will be given a list of required questions to ask during the interview and will compose a blog discussing what they learned.

Applied Project (100 points)
Students will have 3 options for completing the final project. Class time will be designated toward allowing students to work on these assignments prior to the due date:

1) **Mini Internship:** Students will be required to partner with a local organization (non-profit or for-profit) that may need help with public relations. Students should provide a minimum of 20 hours of free public relations services for the organization. Students will be required to submit signed documentation from the organization’s management, along with a portfolio of their work and an explanation of how they utilized course concepts.

2) **Social Media Plan:** Students will be required to develop a social media plan for a local non-profit or for-profit organization.

3) **Case Analysis:** Students will be required to conduct an analysis of a recent public relations case. Students will be required to write a paper describing the background of the case, strategies used, a critique of the strategies, and recommendations for improvement.

Participation (28 days at 5 points per day = 140 points)
Attendance and 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, August 25</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 1 (pp. 2-10) DISCUSS: Introduction to Public Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, August 30</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 1 (pp. 10-17), Chapter 2 DISCUSS: Types of Public Relations &amp; PR Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 1</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 1 (pp. 18-22) DISCUSS: PR Careers</td>
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<td>Tuesday, September 6</td>
<td>READ: Supplement DISCUSS: Employee, Consumer, &amp; Investor Relations</td>
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<td>Thursday, September 8</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 12 (pp. 356-360; 362-364; 367-373) DISCUSS: Employee, Consumer, &amp; Investor Relations</td>
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<td>Thursday, September 15</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 12 (pp. 365-366) DISCUSS: Community Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 20</td>
<td>READ: Supplement &amp; Chapter 11 DISCUSS: Public Affairs (Government)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 22</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 6 (pp. 169-182) DISCUSS: PR Writing: AP Style &amp; News Releases</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 27</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 6 (pp. 183-190) DISCUSS: PR Writing: Pitch Letter</td>
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<td>Thursday, September 29</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 6 (pp. 195-197) DISCUSS: PR Writing: Radio Spot</td>
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<td>Tuesday, October 4</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 6 (pp. 190-194) DISCUSS: PR Writing: Television PSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 6</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 6 (pp. 197-202) DISCUSS: PR Writing: Social Media Content</td>
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<td>Tuesday, October 11</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 6 (pp. 202-203) DISCUSS: PR Writing: Analyzing Social Media Metrics</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 13</td>
<td>READ: Supplement DISCUSS: PR Writing: Developing a Social Media Plan</td>
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<td>Tuesday, October 18</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5 (pp. 131-143); Chapter 4 DISCUSS: Planning: Campaign &amp; PR Research</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 20</td>
<td>READ: N/A DISCUSS: Planning: Campaign</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 25</td>
<td>READ: Supplement &amp; Chapter 5 (pp. 144-151) DISCUSS: Planning: Crisis Communication</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 27</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 3 (pp. 68-77) &amp; Chapter 8 DISCUSS: Planning: Crisis Communication</td>
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<td>Tuesday, November 1</td>
<td>READ: N/A DISCUSS: Planning: Crisis Communication</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 3</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5 (pp. 151-163) DISCUSS: Planning: Event Coordination</td>
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<td>Tuesday, November 8</td>
<td>READ: N/A DISCUSS: Planning: Event Coordination</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 10</td>
<td>(No Class – Professor at National Communication Association Conference)</td>
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<td>Tuesday, November 15</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 13 &amp; Chapter 14 DISCUSS: Nonprofit &amp; Health Care Organizations</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 17</td>
<td>(No Class – Reading Day) READ: N/A DISCUSS: Interview Highlights</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 24</td>
<td>(No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday) READ: N/A DISCUSS: N/A</td>
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<td>Tuesday, November 29</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 10, DISCUSS: PR Law</td>
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<td>Thursday, December 1</td>
<td>READ: N/A, DISCUSS: Applied Project Workshop</td>
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<td>Tuesday, December 6</td>
<td>READ: N/A, DISCUSS: Applied Project Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, December 13 (11:00am-1:30pm)</td>
<td>Applied Project Due</td>
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