



University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

College of Fine Arts and Communication
Division of Communication

Stevens Point WI 54481-3897
715-346-3409; Fax 715-346-4769
www.uwsp.edu/comm/

Communication 230: Introduction to Public Relations

Lynn Kordus

Online

lkordus@uwsp.edu

715.212.9615

Via email or telephone by appointment

: Instructor

: Office

: Email

: Phone

: Office Hours

Required Materials:

- Tom Kelleher, *Public Relations: Engagement, Conversion, Influence, Trust*. Oxford University Press, 2017. Available: UWSP Text Rental.
- Chapter Outlines and PowerPoint presentations posted to our Canvas site.
- AP Stylebook link to be used as the basis for the AP Style Quiz:
Can be found on our Canvas website

Course Description

This is an introductory public relations class that will examine principles and strategies used in the field of public relations. The focus of this class will primarily be on understanding what public relations is. We will examine the nature and role of public relations, activities of public relations professionals, the major influences that affect organizational behavior, the ethics of public relations, and professional development of public relations professionals. This course is an overview of the functions, practices, and growing applications of public relations in private industry and the public sector. Emphasis is placed on the planning, writing, and management functions, working with the media, and developing effective public relations strategies.

At the end of this course you should be capable of performing the following public relations activities: analyzing public relations problems and opportunities; understanding and developing concise and targeted public relations messages; understanding the terminology and theoretical concepts associated with public relations; tracking a complex issue and developing a strategy for managing it; conducting secondary research on corporate and agency activities.

Course Objectives:

- Define public relations and explain how PR programs and campaigns are developed.
- Understand role and functions of public relations in an industrialized society.
- Compare how public relations functions in a variety of for-profit and nonprofit settings.
- Comprehend how objectives, strategies, and tactics are developed by public relations' professionals.

- Enhance professional verbal and written communication capabilities.

You will be introduced to the multifaceted world of public relations practice in the 21st century, and by semester's end you should also be able to:

- Define public relations and distinguish it from other communication practices
- Discuss and distinguish public relations development in the United States and abroad
- Define and analyze how public relations is affected by integrated communication
- Evaluate relationships in public relations practice
- Describe the core tenets of public relations research
- Identify public relations plans and strategy
- Explain and describe public relations evaluation
- Identify and describe components of public relations writing
- Analyze sources of multimedia and how they are used in public relations practice
- Explain how laws affect public relations practice
- Analyze crisis response strategies in public relations practice
- Explain global and cultural issues that affect public relations practice
- Identify public relations careers in a variety of sectors

Course Requirements/Points

Professionalism/Participation	50 points
Group Discussions (2 at 125 points each)	250 points
Research Paper on a current PR issue (3-4 pages)	300 points
AP Style Quiz	100 points
Exams (Mid-term and Final at 150 points each)	<u>300 points</u>
Total points:	1,000 points

Course Policies Agreement **20 extra credit points**

Course Policies Agreement

At the start of the semester students will electronically sign a course policies agreement and upload it to Canvas. The course policy agreement lists documents that must be reviewed. To receive the 20 extra credit points, students must read the appropriate documents, indicate that the materials have been read, and then upload the agreement to Canvas.

Professionalism

Class discussions and activities are vital to your understanding of key course concepts. Just like in the public relations world, many of the assignments in this course are collaborative. That said, it is vital for you to participate on a regular basis in our online class, and constructively collaborate with your colleagues. This will help you better understand the course concepts, and prepare you for collaborating on various assignments. As such, aside from submitting assignments by their deadlines, you should plan on signing in to our class daily so you can keep up to date with any news and your classmates' postings.

A total of **50 points for the semester** will be allocated toward your Professionalism/Participation grade. **Please note that simply being enrolled in our online class and checking in regularly does not constitute full professionalism.** Students are expected to be active in class (i.e., engaged regularly in discussion/activities and making substantive connections to the course material/textbook that are demonstrated in Canvas Discussion Forum postings and other written assignments).

Students who follow all four of these Professionalism Principles will receive full points for professionalism:

- **Participation:** Participation includes making helpful comments via our CANVAS Discussion Forums, grounded in key course concepts. These comments should help others in the class better understand the material. Remember that active reading/listening is another key communication component.
- **Preparation:** Everyone is expected to have their book and read the assigned chapter(s) and any additional posted readings by the beginning of each week.
- **Punctuality:** Students are expected to complete assignments (Discussion postings and other written assignments) on time. While there are unavoidable circumstances that may cause you to be unable to meet a deadline, you must make every effort to budget time wisely so you can meet assignment deadlines. If you have a circumstance where you are unable to meet a deadline, you must contact me as soon as possible, ideally before the deadline.
- **Politeness:** Our online classroom is an inclusive and professional environment. Everyone is to be treated with respect. Do not engage in side conversations, or be disruptive when posting work in our Discussion Forums. All types of communication in this course should be formal and professional. For example, when emailing the instructor or your colleagues, remember to include a proper subject line, greeting, and proper grammar. When posting work in a Discussion Forum, be respectful, courteous, and diplomatic.

As individuals with diverse experiences and backgrounds, we will not always agree on issues, and our interpretation of the subject matter being discussed will sometimes differ. I expect you to respect the opinions of others while asserting your own.

Exams

There will be two exams this semester (a mid-term and a final exam [the final will not be comprehensive]). These are to test key ideas from the textbook, online PowerPoint presentations, and discussion assignments.

There will also be a quiz on Associated Press (AP) style.

Group Discussions

There will be two group discussions. Students will be divided into groups and will be expected to work with the assigned group to complete and post the group discussion. This will entail good communication among group members as well as flexibility, compromise, and diplomacy. Groups will work to create the final post, and the grade assigned to that post will be the grade each group member of that post

receives. Groups and their members are posted on Canvas as an Announcement. Using Google docs is strongly encouraged for group work.

Research Paper on a Current Public Relations issue

This 3-4 page paper will require you to examine and research an issue that current public relations practitioners are facing today. I am not assigning topics, but once you decide the topic you wish to explore, please let me know so I can keep track of who is doing what and so we don't get too many people doing the same topic.

GENERAL GRADING POLICIES

Submission of Assignments

All assignments and Discussion Forum posts should be submitted in **Canvas** by the specified date. You do not need to print off hard copies (unless otherwise specified).

Grading Policy

All course work is due by the date and time listed in the schedule unless otherwise noted. Requests to extend a due date for an assignment will be handled on a case-by-case basis, and the instructor has final say about any such arrangement. Requests should be made before an assignment is due—except in extenuating circumstances with documentation.

Late work automatically will be docked 10% for each 24 hours after an assignment is due. *Please note: **Even if an assignment is turned in 1-minute past the deadline it will be considered late and subject to the 10% penalty.*** Plan accordingly and budget your time!

Discussion of grades on assignments must take place before two weeks have elapsed from the receipt of the grade. After this, students are free to contact the instructor for clarification about a grade, but all numeric scores for assignments are final and will not be modified, regardless of the result of the discussion. In other words, don't wait until the last week of the class to ask about a possible grading error on an assignment that was completed more than two weeks prior. Grade disputes must be submitted in a written format (printed document or via email). In the document, provide concrete and defensible reasons for disputing a grade. Following receipt of the document, the instructor will review it and either reply with an explanation and/or may request a meeting with the student.

Grading Criteria for All Written Assignments

Written assignments for this class should follow the assignment guidelines. In any written work, please remember to provide arguments with ample evidence. This course is graded with the idea that an "A" is reserved for outstanding work. This means that the assignment demonstrates strong critical-thinking skills, makes an argument, supports it with ample evidence, and is virtually error-free. In contrast, a "C" is reserved for average work. This means that the assignment follows the minimum requirements, but may be unclear or not contain enough support.

Here are a few guidelines to follow before submitting written documents:

- Assignments should follow ALL the guidelines posted to Canvas.
- Ideas are clearly expressed and supported with ample evidence from the course readings and/or outside sources.

- Assignments contain proper grammar and spelling (i.e., the paper has been thoroughly proofread). Some ways to ensure a paper is error free and easy to read are to read the paper out loud prior to submitting, have an objective friend review it, complete it a few days before it is due then return to it for final review after it has become “cold” and errors are more likely to be noticed.
- Any assignment should follow AP style guidelines.

All writing should reflect an awareness of the public Relations Society of America Code of Ethics (found in the back of or text).

Warning: This is not Freshman or Sophomore English, and it certainly is not Remedial English. It is right and proper for the instructor to assume that you are literate. Basic writing errors will be severely penalized. If these occur, it is the student’s responsibility to seek remedial help outside of this class.

Final Grade Scale

Grading Scale	Letter Grade
1000-925	A
924-895	A-
894-875	B+
874-825	B
824-795	B-
794-775	C+
774-725	C
724-695	C-
694-675	D+
674-625	D
624-595	D-
594-0	F

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

Read the following policies carefully. Enrollment in the class constitutes agreement with and understanding of these policies. Ignorance of these policies does not excuse their violation.

Excuses for Missed Work

Your instructor, on a case-by-case basis, will evaluate excuses for missed work. Permission to make up missed work will be granted only in the most unusual of circumstances, and only for excused absences. Any work missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up. These requirements are necessarily strict and enforced in order to provide fairness to all class participants.

To be eligible for permission to make up an assignment due to a verified absence, you must provide:

- Scanned, written evidence of the absolute need for you to be absent (emails alone are not acceptable)
- This evidence must be from an appropriate, verifiable source^[L]_[SEP]

Evidence must be presented to your instructor no later than one week after the missed assignment. Except in the cases of extreme emergency, however, students unable to meet an assignment deadline should contact their Instructor at least one week *prior* to the deadline date. The primary requirement of the evidence for the absence is that it must demonstrate that a circumstance beyond your control required you to miss the particular deadline. On the other hand, if you have a note from a doctor verifying that you had an illness that prevented you from meeting an assignment deadline, that would count as a circumstance beyond your control, as would being called up for military service or jury duty, as long as you provide the appropriate documentation.

When it comes to being online and prepared on the days an exam is given or a class assignment is due, it is presumed that most things are under your control. You will only be permitted to make up a quiz or assignment due to extraordinary crises. Carelessness and unpreparedness, and all the things that result from them, will not be considered valid reasons for making up a speech or exam.

Technology Requirements

Written assignments (not Discussion Board postings) must be posted to Canvas in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF formats only. No other formats will be accepted. If the instructor cannot open your document, it will not count as being turned in, and you must reformat and repost. Late penalties will apply. Be sure to keep copies of your work and feedback for the entire duration of the class.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your computer and Internet access are working properly.

When necessary, the instructor will communicate with the class and/or individual students via Canvas. It is your responsibility to make sure you do not miss any communications.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

From the UWSP 14.01 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES – Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Students who violate these standards must be confronted and must accept the consequences of their actions. For more info: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Academic-Misconduct.aspx>

Note: Submissions via Canvas will be automatically screened for plagiarism.

Students with Special Needs/Disabilities

If you have a disability and require accommodation, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center (6th floor of the Learning Resource Center – that is, the Library) and contact me at the beginning of the course. More information is available here: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, this course complies with UWSP's outline for various situations. A full list of these emergency plans is available here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures/default.aspx>

A Note on Achieving Academic Success in this Course

I look forward to working with each and every one of you throughout the semester. I want everyone in this course to achieve their academic goals. To reach this end, I am happy to be here for you as much as you'd like. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Course Schedule

This schedule reflects major readings and writing assignments. Additional assignments may be required throughout the semester. I may make changes to this schedule as I see fit to meet the needs of the class and take advantage of opportunities on your behalf.

Week Beginning	Topic	Readings	Tasks/Graded Assignments
Week 1 Sept. 3	Introduction to the Course Principled Public Relations	Syllabus Kelleher Chapter 1	Course Policies Agreement Due Student introductions via a video message Due
Week 2 Sept. 9	Public Relations Models Through the Ages	Kelleher Chapter 2	
Week 3 Sept. 16	Convergence and Integrated Communication	Kelleher Chapter 3	
Week 4 Sept. 23	Relationship Management	Kelleher Chapter 4	AP Style Quiz
Week 5 Sept. 30	Research	Kelleher Chapter 9	
Week 6 Oct. 7	Planning	Kelleher Chapter 6	Discussion 1
Week 7 Oct. 14	Implementation	Kelleher Chapter 7	
Week 8 Oct. 21	Mid-term Exam	Kelleher Chapters 1-7	Mid-term Exam
Week 9 Oct. 28	Evaluation	Kelleher Chapter 8	
Week 10 Nov. 4	Writing	Kelleher Chapter 5	Discussion 2
Week 11 Nov. 11	Multimedia and Mobile	Kelleher Chapter 12	
Week 12 Nov. 18	Legal	Kelleher Chapter 11	
Week 13	Issues and Crisis	Kelleher Chapter 10	

Nov. 25			
Week 14 Dec. 2	Global	Kelleher Chapter 13	Research Paper Due
Week 15 Dec. 9	Careers Last day of class: Dec. 13	Kelleher Chapter 14	
Dec. 16- Finals Week	Final Exam Dec. 18	Kelleher Chapters 8-14	Final Exam