

MC 4005

Public Relations Campaigns

Fall 2008

*Thursday 8:30 – noon
216 Hodges*

Course Description

Public Relations Campaigns is the capstone course in the public relations sequence; in this course you will develop a campaign proposal and partially implement a campaign for a real community client. In other words, this class is designed to be a “real world” experience. This course requires you to use your previous training in principles, techniques, writing, design, and research. To gain this real work experience you will be engaging in Service-Learning. In addition, this course is certified as a Communication-Intensive Course.

This course will be a great deal of work, but if you dedicate your time, energy, and talent, it will be greatly rewarding. This course assumes that you have assimilated a body of knowledge in public relations, that you are familiar with all standard public relations references and that anything you do not know you will learn on your own or ask me about. In this course, my primary role is as adviser.

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Office hours:
Mon 3 – 4 p.m., Wed 1 – 4 p.m., & by appointment

Community Client



Volunteer! Baton Rouge (www.volunteerbatonrouge.org)
A nonprofit agency dedicated to mobilizing people and resources to deliver creative solutions to community needs.

Monique Marino, President & CEO
460 N. 11th Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802-4607
Phone: 343-8270 ext. 222; Fax: 343-3070
mmarino@volunteerbatonrouge.org

Campaign Project

We will be working with Volunteer! Baton Rouge on two projects:

First, we will help implement the annual “A Visit From Saint Nicholas” program. In this program, approximately 3,000 area children receive a new backpack filled with books and toys. On Saint Nicholas Eve (Dec 4), volunteers deliver the backpacks to area schools and decorate classrooms with a holiday theme. On Saint Nicholas Day (Dec 5), local celebrities visit the schools, read The Legend of Saint Nicholas, and share in the children’s joy. We will assist with this project in several ways: administrative duties (stuffing envelopes and backpacks), media promotion (writing news releases and making morning news show appearances), and event implementation (delivering backpacks and assisting with the event on Saint Nicholas Day).

In the second project, we will be working with Volunteer! Baton Rouge to develop a complete public relations campaign for their two awards programs. The first award program honors an area resident each month who exemplifies public service. In January, an annual banquet is held that celebrates all 12 winners from the previous year. The second award program honors excellence in corporate volunteerism. The program holds an annual May banquet to honor the winner. Our public relations campaign will focus on raising awareness of these two programs with the goal of attracting more nominees for each of these award programs.

Course Learning Goals

- ❖ To reinforce previous education in public relations, journalism, advertising, marketing, writing, public speaking, research, and design.
- ❖ To understand the importance of corporate responsibility within the public relations field and to gain experience practicing corporate responsibility.
- ❖ To demonstrate an understanding of social issues in our community through reflective essays, class discussion, and client immersion.
- ❖ To demonstrate proficiency in researching, planning, implementing, and evaluating a public relations campaign.
- ❖ To work as part of a public relations management team.
- ❖ To develop skills in meeting with public relations clients and making formal client presentations.
- ❖ To develop a resume, cover letter, and portfolio.

Text

- *Strategic Planning for Public Relations*, by Ronald D. Smith

Academic Pursuit

One of the goals of your college pursuit should be not only to obtain a career but an *education*. Based on that premise, I expect you to leave your preconceived stereotypes at the door. This is an inclusive classroom in which you are open to express your thoughts, ideas and feelings in a *respectful* manner in a *relevant* situation. Conversely, I expect you to be a *respectful* listener and a *thoughtful* colleague. Our democracy is based on a free and open exchange of ideas – I expect that democracy to extend to this classroom.

LSU Statement on Diversity

Diversity is fundamental to Louisiana State University's (LSU) mission. LSU is committed to creating and maintaining a living and learning environment that embraces individual difference. Cultural inclusion is of highest priority.

LSU recognizes that achieving national prominence depends on the human spirit, participation, and dedicated work of the entire University community. It further recognizes that the National Flagship Agenda: LSU 2010 will be realized by bringing together diverse ideas, perspectives, skills, and talents of the nation's pre-eminent scholars, brightest students, and leading higher education professionals.

Through its Commitment to Community, LSU strives to create an inclusive, respectful, intellectually challenging climate that embraces individual difference in race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age, spirituality, socioeconomic status, disability, family status, experiences, opinions, and ideas.

LSU proactively cultivates and sustains a campus environment that values open dialogue, cooperation, shared responsibility, mutual respect, and cultural competence– the driving forces that enrich and enhance cutting edge research, first-rate teaching, and engaging community outreach activities. LSU reflects on its past and looks toward the future. Welcome to the Now, a time and place where diversity is on the move.

Academic Honesty

Students must adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. ***Unless otherwise noted***, you are expected to complete all homework, assignments, projects, and exams by yourself. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses punishable under the academic dishonesty provisions of the Code of Student Conduct. Plagiarism means taking (either word for word or in substance) the words, ideas, or works of another person without giving proper credit to that person. Professors who suspect students of cheating or plagiarism are ***required*** to report such indiscretions to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students then determines the appropriate course of action, which may include failure on an exam, a paper, or a project; failure in the course; and/or expulsion from the university.

Service-Learning Course

This course is a designated service-learning course. Service-learning is a credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

Bringle, R., & Hatcher, J. (Fall 1995). "A service-learning curriculum for faculty," Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, p. 112-122.

Communication-Intensive Course

This course is certified as a Communication-Intensive Course and meets all of the requirements explained on the CxC Web site: <http://cxc.lsu.edu>, including the following: Emphases on formal and informal assignments in **written and oral communication**, class time spent on communication, 40% of the final grade based on communication projects, revisions after faculty feedback on two formal projects (one for each emphasis), and a student/faculty ratio of 35:1. Because it meets these requirements, students may count it toward "Distinguished Communicator" certification on LSU transcripts.

Classroom Policies

- Please respect your classmates and your professor by being on-time and prepared.
- Please make sure that your cell phone is turned off.
- Please do not play computer games while in class. If you are found to be playing a computer game, you will be asked to leave for the day.
- Please refrain from checking e-mail and surfing the Web during class. If you are found to be checking your e-mail or surfing the Web during class, you will be asked to leave for the day. Exceptions will be made when conducting online research for an assignment.

Class Absences

Attending class is essential to be successful in this course. You must notify me prior to the start of class if you are going to be absent. If you are absent from class, you may make-up, missed work **ONLY** if you provide a valid excuse, in writing, prior to the day you will miss. In the case of illness, you may provide your written excuse the day of your return to class. I will determine validity of excuses. As a general rule, valid excuses are limited to the following: serious illness accompanied by a doctor's excuse, extreme circumstances beyond your control, and university-sanctioned activities (a written excuse is required for all cases).

Special Needs

If you know of any type of disability or barrier to your success in this class, please let me know as soon as possible. You should also provide any related documentation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities.

Writing

All courses in the Manship School of Mass Communication focus on the importance of writing. **To be successful in today's world, it is critical that you write well.** As such, your grade for each aspect of this course will be based on the quality of your thinking and writing. All assignments should be free of inaccuracies, weak thinking, typos, spelling errors and grammatical problems. All work for this course should be done in AP style. Never turn in a first draft. Pay special attention to the attached Manship School Writing Essentials.

Personal Presentation

The reality of this field is that people judge you by how you look and by how you speak. Your use of language, the clarity of your speaking and your general appearance and professional bearing will shape the opinions of those who are listening to you. If you make a poor presentation, your grade will suffer. Of course, I will also grade you on the basis of the facts you assemble, the astuteness of your analysis of the problem, and the soundness of your recommendations.

Deadlines

Deadlines will be given for all work; **these deadlines will not be extended**. Meeting deadlines is essential to be successful in this course. Your work must be completed and handed in by the specified date and time. Incomplete work turned in by the deadline will receive partial credit. If you miss a deadline without having a valid excuse, you will receive zero points on the late work.

Group Work

A large portion of your grade this semester will be based on group work. This brings both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that you are part of a team working together to meet a client's needs. In public relations, people who do not contribute to the group are fired. The same will be true for this course. On occasion some groups experience difficulties with a person who does not pull his/her weight on a project. If that happens in your group, you must:

- 1) Try to work it out as a group. Document the problem, how you tried to work it out and the outcome of that effort. Give this to me in a written statement.
- 2) If the outcome of your internal meetings and efforts is less than satisfactory, you may schedule a time to meet with me as a group to discuss and resolve the problem.
- 3) If this meeting still does not resolve the problem, then the group may ask permission from me to fire the individual who is not contributing to the group work.

I hold the sole authority to authorize a group to fire a member. No authority to fire a member will be given without first attempting to work out problems within the group and subsequently with my help in a second meeting. Firing can be a lengthy process, so you must identify problems quickly. If you wait until a week before an assignment is due to raise a concern, you are likely too late.

Any person fired from a group will be required to complete the assignment on his/her own. The individual assignment must include all of the elements of the group project and will be due at a date and time determined by me, most likely the same date and time as the original assignment.

Course Requirements

This course is the capstone course in the public relations major. Success in this course is fundamental to success in the public relations field. **The course will be quite time consuming and difficult; and, although attainable, A grades will be reserved for outstanding work only. Although you may spend a large amount of time and effort on an assignment, your assignment will be evaluated on what you actually submit.** Your final grade will be determined by the following components:

Component	Percentage
Reading Quizzes/ Reflection	10%
Job Application Package	10%
Public Relations Situation Presentations	5%
Client Immersion	10%
Research Report*	15%
Peer Evaluation	5%
Campaign Book/Presentation*	35%
Portfolio	10%
TOTAL	100%

*All members of the team will be given the same grade for these components.

Unless otherwise noted, every component will be evaluated on 100 points. Your final grade for the course will be calculated on the previous percentages, which will then lead to your final letter grade as based on the following scale:

93 to 100 (A) 85 to 92.9 (B) 75 to 84.9 (C)
65 to 74.9 (D) 64.9 and below (F)

Please note: Under no circumstances will final grades be rounded. A 92.9 is a B. Please do not come to me at the end of the semester to negotiate your grade. If you need an A in this course, begin working toward that today. If you do not make a C or better in this course, you will be required to repeat the course.

Course Component Descriptions

What follows is a brief description of each graded component of the course. Detailed guidelines on the major course components will be distributed in class at a later time.

Quizzes: On most class days, you will have a reading quiz. These will always be given at the beginning of class. If you are late, you will not be allowed to take the quiz. If you have done the reading, the quizzes should be quite simple.

Reflection: Reflection is an important part of the service-learning experience: Reflection is the "intentional consideration of an experience in light of particular learning objectives."

The presumption is that community service does not necessarily, in and of itself, produce learning. Reflection activities provide the bridge between the community service activities and the educational content of the course. Reflection activities direct the student's attention to new interpretations of events and provide a means through which the community service can be studied and interpreted, much as a text is read and studied for deeper understanding (Bingle & Hatcher, 1999).

In this class formal reflection will take place three different ways:

- 1) **Reflective essays:** After each major portion of the project you will be required to submit a 1-2 page essay in which you reflect on your experience in regard to civic involvement and ethical considerations. You should connect your experiences with the goals of the course, analyzing how these fit together. Probing questions will be provided for you to address in each essay.
- 2) **In-class discussions:** These sessions will allow students an opportunity to share experiences with other students and learn from one another.
- 3) **Presentation of experience:** Students will present their ideas and work to the client and Manship faculty/staff at the end of the semester.

Job Application Package: Each student will have to apply for a position on the campaign team. Students will prepare and submit a cover letter, resume, and relevant samples.

Public Relations Situation Presentations: To be a successful public relations practitioner, you must become an avid news consumer. Throughout the course of the semester, you must scan the news and identify public relations situations. You will present two of these situations to the class, summarizing the situation and preparing questions for class discussion.

Client Immersion: Each student will spend 15-20 hours volunteering with our client organization. This is an important part of researching your client. This experience will help you understand your client more fully, and you will present your reflections from the experience to the class.

Research Report: Each group will conduct research specific to its campaign. You are required to conduct secondary research and primary research. You will analyze your research and write a formal research report of about 10 pages in length. The initial research report will be revised based on professor feedback and included in the final campaign book.

Peer Evaluation: As part of this course, we are mirroring the periodic evaluation you would receive in a real agency. Most organizations provide a complete assessment on a six-month or annual basis. Peers, supervisors, and subordinates weigh in during these evaluations. These evaluations provide you with a hard look at your skills, your areas for growth, and your contributions to the task at hand. You will evaluate each member of your team on two separate occasions.

Campaign Book/Presentation: Each team will prepare a campaign plans book, which is a permanent record of the analyses and proposed/developed solutions to the assigned client and situation. There is no prescribed length for the campaign book. However, by the time research results, situational analysis, objectives, tactics, calendar, timetable, budget and other areas are addressed, it is not uncommon for the campaign plans book to be 50-75 pages in length. Groups will present their projects in a preliminary presentation to me during which time I will provide formal feedback. You will then present your campaign to the client in a revised formal presentation.

Portfolio: A portfolio is a collection of work that demonstrates skills needed to excel in a specific position. As you know, the job market is quite competitive. A highly-polished portfolio will help you stand out among the crowd. In addition, on a job interview a portfolio provides a framework for discussing what you have learned in classes and in internships/related jobs.

Grading Policy

All assignments will be evaluated on a 100-point scale, unless otherwise indicated. Your writing will be evaluated on the quality of the finished product, with the criteria being organization; accuracy; completeness; fairness; clarity; conciseness; precision of the language; and correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, and AP style. In addition, the style and content will be evaluated based on the target publics and the designated medium.

The following scale will be used:

A +	(100)	Outstanding. Strong in every category. Copy is ready for publication.
A	(96)	
A -	(93)	
B +	(91)	Good. Many strong points. With some editing, copy is ready for publication.
B	(88)	
B -	(85)	
C +	(83)	Satisfactory. Copy needs additional rewriting and editing.
C	(80)	
C -	(77)	
D	(65)	Poor. Copy contains serious factual, structural, writing or usage flaws.
F	(55)	Unacceptable. Copy fails to meet even minimum standards.

****Final Thought****

I want you to be successful in this class, and I will do my best to help you succeed.

Schedule (course schedule is subject to change)

Date	Topic	Readings / Due
Week 1: Aug 28	Course Introduction / PR Ethics	Appendix B (pgs. 302-315)
Week 2: Sept 4	Formative Research Step 1: Analyzing the Situation Client Project Presentation	Phase I Intro (pgs. 15-16) Step 1 (pgs. 17-28)
Week 3: Sept 11	Formative Research Step 2: Analyzing the Organization Step 3: Analyzing the Publics	Job Applications Due Steps 2 & 3 (pgs. 29-66)
Week 4: Sept 18	Team Assignment & Initial Team Meetings	Appendix A (pgs. 259-301) Appendix C (pgs. 316-336)
Week 5: Sept 25	Strategy Step 4: Establishing Goals & Objectives	Phase II Intro (pg. 67) Step 4 (pgs. 69-81)
Week 6: Oct 2	Data Collection & Evaluation	
Week 7: Oct 9	FALL HOLIDAY	
Week 8: Oct 16	Strategy Step 5: Formulating Action & Response Strategies Step 6: Using Effective Communication	Peer Eval I Due Step 5 (pgs. 82-116) Step 6 (pgs. 117-154)
Week 9: Oct 23	Tactics Step 7: Choosing Communication Tactics Step 8: Campaign Implementation	Research Report Due Monday, Oct 20 by noon Phase III Intro (pgs. 155-156) Steps 7 & 8 (pgs. 157-233)
Week 10: Oct 30	Evaluative Research Step 9: Evaluating the Strategic Plan	Phase IV Intro (pgs. 235-236) Step 9 (pgs. 237-258)
Week 11: Nov 6	Group Work Time	
Week 12: Nov 13	Group Work Time	
Week 13: Nov 20	Group Meetings with Dr. Dahmen Backpack Packing Party! Friday, Nov 21 at Coca-Cola (time TBA)	Peer Eval II Due
Week 14: Nov 27	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY	
Week 15: Dec 4 & 5	A Visit From Saint Nicholas	
FINAL EXAM WEEK	Portfolio Due Monday, Dec 8 by noon Client Presentation Wednesday, Dec 10, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.	Portfolio Campaign Book Due