

MCOM 5060: Public Relations Practices

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Office Hours:

Course Description: This course is a study of the professional practice of public relations, including the public relations function and process, publics, tools, media, and professional ethics. Special emphasis is placed on developing a critical perspective on public relations, its abuses and potentially beneficial uses in society.

Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students should:

- Be knowledgeable about the context and practice of public relations, from research through planning, implementing and evaluating.
- Be familiar with theory and research in the field.
- Be a critical observer of the practice of public relations in contemporary society.

Required Texts:

Banks, Stephen P. 2000. *Multicultural Public Relations: A Social-Interpretive Approach*. Blackwell.

Dozier, David M., with Larissa A. Grunig & James E. Grunig. *Manager's Guide to Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc., 1995.

Stauber, John & Sheldon Rampton. *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You! Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1995.

Yet to be chosen: A text for the new field of social media PR.

Course Format: Lecture, discussion, application and critique.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Class meetings will include lecture, discussion, and a variety of exercises and activities. Attendance, preparation, and participation are required.

Final grades will be computed as follows:

Individual Work	50%
Group Project	50%

Individual work will consist of two exams and two assignments. The exams will be a mid-term and a final, the exact format yet to be decided.

The first assignment will be to do a critical review of a Website of your choosing, looking at how the site serves PR objectives and reflects PR strategies.

The second assignment will be to choose a chapter from Stauber & Rampton, research the issue further, present it to the class and lead the class in a discussion of it.

The group project will consist of an analysis of the communication function of a client of your group's choosing using communication excellence theory as presented by Dozier, Grunig & Grunig. In addition, although social media use is not covered by Dozier et al, you must include in your analysis and report a special section on social media—how your client is using it and recommendations as to how they might improve their use of it.

Policies:

Academic dishonesty of any kind is grounds for a grade of "F." Ignorance of correct citation procedures will not suffice as an explanation for plagiarism. A guide is provided with this syllabus. See also Sections 5.03:51 and 5.03:52 in *University of Louisiana at Monroe Student Policy 1998-99*.

Course Topics/Schedule:

Week 1: Intros; class time & place; expectations for the course; APA style.
Thinking about teams and clients.

Week 2: What is “public relations”?
Reading: Dozier, et al., Preface
Banks, Ch. 1. “Culture, Diversity and Public Relations”
Stauber & Rampton, “Introduction: Torches of Liberty”
Group Work: Potential Clients

Week 3: Why public relations?
Reading: Allen, entire (pp. 1-41)
TBA

Week 4: Defining quality.
Reading: Dozier, et al, Ch. 1 “What is communication excellence?”
TBA

Week 5: **DUE: Critical Review of a Web site** with informal presentation in class.
What does a top communicator need to know?
Reading: Dozier, et al, Part I. Communicator Knowledge Base

Week 6: An Alternative Theory of Public Relations
Reading: Banks, Ch. 2 “A Theory of Multicultural Public Relations”

Week 7: The Management Role of Excellent Communications
Reading: Dozier, et al, Part II. Shared Expectations About Communication

- Week 8: Organizational Cultures
Reading: Dozier, et al, Part III. The Character of Organizations (pp. 131-192).
- Week 9: Excellent Practices
Reading: Dozier, et al, Part IV. Putting Excellence to Work (pp. 193-249).
DUE: Interim Report on Term Project
- Week 10: Theory into Practice: The General Public
Reading: Social Media text
- Week 11: Theory into Practice: External Publics
Reading: Banks, "Multicultural Community Relations" (pp. 65-80)
Social Media text
Class Presentation/s:
- Week 12: Reading: Banks, "Communicating with Multicultural Activists" (pp. 81-99)
Social Media text
Class Presentation/s:
- Week 13: Theory into Practice: Internal Publics
Reading: Banks, "Communicating with Multicultural Internal Publics" (pp. 45-64).
Social Media text
DUE: Interim Report on Term Project
- Week 14: Theory into Practice: Going Global
Reading: Banks, "Cultural Diversity in International PR" (pp. 101-114)
Social Media text
Class Presentation/s:
- Week 15: Looking Ahead
Reading: Banks, "The Future of Multicultural PR" (pp. 115-124)
Social Media text
Due: Final Project