

**WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY
BUSINESS DIVISION/MARKETING**

COURSE TITLE: Public Relations
COURSE NUMBER BMK222...B1N01 **TERM:** Spring 2013 [**Room:** DAC-203]

PREREQUISITE: None

TEXTS TO BE USED: **TITLE** *The Public Relations Practitioner's Playbook for (all) Strategic Communicators (4th Ed.)*
AUTHOR: Litwin (AuthorHouse – 2013)
TITLE: *The ABCs of Strategic Communication (2nd Ed.)*
AUTHOR: Litwin (AuthorHouse – 2008)

If you would like more precise information about these textbooks, please visit
www.larrylitwin.com

FACULTY MEMBER: M. Larry Litwin, APR, Fellow PRSA

OFFICE HOURS/METHOD OF CONTACT: larry@larrylitwin.com
856-767-7730

TOTAL HOURS OF INSTRUCTION:

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces students to the basic principles of public relations, including the importance of becoming excellent communicators. Upon completion, the student will understand how to develop a strategic public relations plan including a goal, objectives, strategies and tactics, and how to evaluate its results. The course also introduces students to many technologies and approaches used by today's successful public relations and strategic communication professionals.

II. RATIONALE:

According to The Public Relations Society of America, public relations professionals "help our complex, pluralistic society to reach decisions and function more effectively by contributing to mutual understanding among groups and institutions, and by bringing the public and public policies into harmony." Given the global reach of digital communications, public relations practitioners must use various forms of technology. They must assume responsibility for building and maintaining an organization's image and reputation. They must also nurture relationships with the media.

III. MAJOR INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS:

GOAL A:

Defining public relations

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

- A-1 Identify the activities that make up the day-to-day life of public relations practitioners
- A-2 Develop knowledge of systems theory, situational theory and approaches to conflict resolution
- A-3 Understand how the First Amendment applies to public relations
- A-4 Learn why research is critical, what data should be collected, and what techniques—informal and formal—can be used.

GOAL B:

Planning and strategy

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

- B-1 Describe the fundamental elements of public relations/strategic planning
- B-2 Describe how to construct persuasive/strategic messages and communicate them properly
- B-3 Understand how to evaluate a public relations program
- B-4 Learn effective crisis communication strategies and tactics commonly used by the most successful strategic communicators.

GOAL C:

Technology and the media

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

- C-1 Understand such emerging (social) media, as blogs, tweets, multi-screening and the Internet's impact.
- C-2 Learn how to foster positive relationships with media professionals.
- C-3 Describe the elements of a basic media relations plan
- C-4 Understand how a crisis situation should be handled in the media.

GOAL D:

Understand the role of public relations in the marketing mix

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

- D-1 Understand the nature of guerilla tactics
- D-2 Identify the nature of public affairs within non-profit and business

organizations.

D-3 Differentiate between a for-profit and non-profit organization, and understand the factors for becoming a successful representative of both.

IV. METHODOLOGY:

A. Teaching Methods: Lecture, guest speakers, and group work

B. Evaluation: POINT (percentage) SCALE of 100

Class participation and attitude Percentage: 10

Mid-Term Project-Due Week 4 (2/7/14) Percentage: 25

Field Interview: Each student will be required to identify a *public relations practitioner/strategic counselor*, interview that person and write a three to four page report of the experience. You may choose an advertising, promotions, sales or marketing person. **This assignment is absolutely due on Friday, Feb. 7.** Suggested questions and other information are available at www.larrylitwin.com > student resources > handouts > No. 23.

Type, (12-point font, double-space) and correctly label all assignments and reports. Since writing is a key skill in the public relations profession, make certain that grammar, syntax, spelling, punctuation and style are perfect. For each written assignment, content and writing will count separately and equally. Just to make it clear, **FIVE** points will be deducted for every spelling, grammatical and typographical error. **Review No. 23 handout and bring you questions and comments to FIRST class.**

Mid-Term Test-Due Week 5 (2/14/14) – online (BlackBoard) Percentage: 15

Final Project-Due in class Week 7 (2/28/14) Percentage: 25

You will be a part a team that crafts a strategic plan from a real-life crisis. Your personal case study will evaluate the case using the criteria set forth in *The Public Relations Practitioner's Playbook for (all) Strategic Communicators* – Chapter 14 – Crisis Communication. You may use visuals and props to support your presentation. Presentation should run about 20 minutes. The class is encouraged to ask questions and will be graded accordingly.

The full plan will be submitted: It will include a Goal, at least three objectives, at least three strategies for each objective (some may be

repeated) and at least three objectives for each strategy. We will discuss a current case during our first meeting **on Jan. 17.**

Final Project- Week 7-Exam
Comprehensive final exam

Percentage: 25

C. Grading Scale:

| | | | |
|--------|------|------------------------|------|
| 95-100 | = A | 74-76 | = C- |
| 92-94 | = A- | 71-73 | = D+ |
| 89-91 | = B+ | 68-70 | = D |
| 86-88 | = B | 65-67 | = D- |
| 83-85 | = B- | Below 65 | = F |
| 80-82 | = C+ | Failure due to absence | = |
| 77-79 | = C | FA | |

V. ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Regular and prompt class attendance is an essential part of the educational experience. Wilmington University expects students to exercise good judgment regarding attendance. Students accept full responsibility for ensuring that work does not suffer from absences. All students are expected to attend every scheduled meeting of each class on time. Exceptions may be made for Wilmington University sponsored or work related activities, illness or valid emergency situations.

VI. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

Wilmington University actively supports the rights of students with disabilities to have equal access to education. Such students need to self identify by contacting the Office of Student Affairs and furnish documentation verifying the need for special services and/or accommodations. For additional information, please call (302) 356-6940 or go to:

<http://www.wilmu.edu/studentlife/disabilityservices/index.html>

VII. COURSE OUTLINE:

Week Dates Readings & Assignments

Week #1 [1/17/14] Read Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 [*The Public Relations Practitioner's Playbook for (all) Strategic Communicators*]
Answer Blackboard questions and bring to class. Book and PowerPoint will be discussed in their entirety.

Week #2 [1/24/14] Read Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. Critique of real-world news releases and other discussion.

Week #3 [1/31/14] Read Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12,

Week #4 [2/7/13] **Interview papers due. (Please email to larry@larrylitwin.com)**

We do **NOT** meet face to face. This week will be used to work on final project/presentation. This week will also be used to **complete mid-term test**, which will be posted on BlackBoard and returned via email to larry@larrylitwin.com.

Week #5 [2/14/14] Read Chapters 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17

Week #6 [2/21/14] Catch and – students will work on **group strategic plans**.

Week #7 [2/22/13] **Student Presentations**

Discussion
Final Exams

*I reserve the right to amend these assignments to enhance the learning experience.
Please check BlackBoard for updated weekly assignments.*

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