

**1198-COM 370-03 – Topics in Communication Studies**

**(INTRODUCTION TO Public Relations) – Credit Hours 3**

TCNJ – Spring 2020 SYLLABUS\*

**Instructor: M. Larry Litwin, APR, Fellow PRSA**

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**Office Hours on Campus: By appointment.**

**Class Day and Time: Tuesday 9:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.**

**Location: Kendall Hall 047**

**REQUIRED MATERIALS [If you purchase digital versions, I suggest you buy it from [www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com) – where it is formatted perfectly.]**

***The Public Relations Practitioner's Playbook***

Fourth Edition [White Cover], AuthorHouse, 2013

Author – M. Larry Litwin, APR, Fellow PRSA

***The ABCs of Strategic Communication***

Second Edition [Green Cover], AuthorHouse, 2008

Author – M. Larry Litwin, APR, Fellow PRSA

***More ABCs of Strategic Communication***

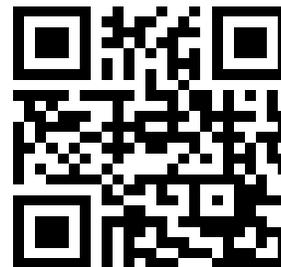
First Edition [Orange Cover], AuthorHouse, 2015

Author – M. Larry Litwin, APR, Fellow PRSA

**\*The instructor reserves the right to change this syllabus at any time and for any reason at his discretion.**

**Scan for contact Info:**

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## Course Description

This course follows the course description for a Strategic Communication or Public Relations Overview course. It is designed to provide an understanding of the public relations/strategic communication function within an organization, the role of the public relations professional and the range of issues handled by a public relations staff. Organizations, companies, institutions and governments understand it is critical to communicate with the publics they serve. The public relations/strategic communication professional is the liaison and key communicator between these publics and the organization. **This course** introduces students to the basic principles of public relations/strategic communication. Upon completion, students will understand research, how to develop a public relations plan and how to evaluate its results. The course also introduces students to myriad technologies used by today's public relations professionals and strategic counselors: Professor Litwin's class explores the history and role public relations and the entire strategic communication profession play in society. We will cover how the following affect us as professionals: mass and *non-mass* 1-2-1 media, persuasion, publicity, radio, television, special events, crisis management, communication techniques, research and evaluation, and other electronic media, and communication law and ethics. Introductory courses are usually primarily theory. However, your instructor will attempt to make his class as practical as possible. This semester, we will focus on the Presidential Election. **The strategic approaches and outcomes will be discussed where appropriate.** Your professor's personal objective is to prepare students for **their future** rather than **his past**. He is here to **HELP – Hear** what he says so you can be *Educated* to *Learn*, which will *Prepare* you for your future. You've come to The College of New Jersey to learn. You leave here to serve. . It is going to be an exciting time.

## Course Requirements

Students are expected to read assigned chapters before class and be well prepared before coming to class. Students are encouraged to take initiative to broaden their knowledge by reading additional materials.

In addition, your participation is instrumental for moving the class discussion forward and also contributing to your final grade. Though attendance is required, just being present does not mean participation. Here are some tips to improve your participation:

- Read the contents of this link. If we practice this approach – “Teaching Naked” and the “flipped classroom” – this will be an enjoyable class. It leads to more engagement and a more **edutaining** class.  
[http://www.larrylitwin.com/documents/TeachingNaked\\_NationalSchoolPublicRelationsAssociation.pdf](http://www.larrylitwin.com/documents/TeachingNaked_NationalSchoolPublicRelationsAssociation.pdf)
- Bring your book(s) to every class, as it (they) will be referenced during class. (If they are too heavy, be certain to bring **The PR Playbook** and **More ABCs**.)
- If you need clarification or want additional explanation, feel free to ask a question. In fact, I encourage it.

## Course Purpose and Learning Goals

- Students will understand the basic body of knowledge underlying the public relations/strategic communication profession.

- Students will understand how public relations functions in society and makes its contributions.
- Students will apply PR/Strategic Communication theories to actual public relations problems and challenges.
- Students will visit and interview a practicing public relations professional.
- Students will interact with professor/practitioners and share their experiences.

In summary: This class will:

- Introduce students to the basic principles of public relations
- Introduce students to the basic strategies, tactics and other tools used for public relations/strategic communication

### Assignments and Grading

The course combines theory with practical application to current “real life” through assignments and discussion. With your (student) help, this will be an interactive, engaging and enjoyable class. Students are encouraged to participate. **This is a special semester in that campaigning for the 2020 Presidential Election has been underway for more than two years, already. Much of this course’s theory will tie into that election.** Please note: this course is listed as a lecture. That said: if you as a student – and your classmates – stay current on political and other public relations issues, the “flipped classroom” will encourage spirited discussion and debate rather than a lecture with only Professor Litwin talking.

**Examinations: (50% of grade)** There will be two comprehensive examinations plus quizzes (grades will be included under assignments). **Questions may be taken from any class lectures or discussion.** Big Test **ONE** will be a **mid-term**. The **final examination** will be all inclusive from day one. Students may be asked questions that public relations practitioners and strategic counselors are expected to answer.

**Assignments: (50% of grade)** Assignments correspond to the practical aspects of the curriculum (subject to change).

- Define Public Relations – **See below** for two related assignments
- Applicant Statement/Elevator Speech
- Field Interview (**20%** of [total] final grade – see below)
- Public Relations department-generated news stories. (Each student will be expected to identify two print [online] articles and explain why he/she [student] believes each article originated from either a public relations practitioner or office, or was enterprised by a reporter.)
- Craft a cover letter
- Ad evaluation – Is your ad effective? Can it achieve its goal?
- **Four** quizzes

**Field Interview:** Each student will be required to identify a **public relations practitioner/strategic communicator**, interview that person and write a three- to four-page (750-1,000 words) report of the experience. You may interview a public relations/strategic counselor or an advertising, promotions, sales or marketing practitioner. **This assignment is absolutely due on Tuesday, April 14.** (It may be

**turned in early.)** Students must fill in the attached form (last page of this syllabus) identifying the person to be interviewed (**for approval**). Upon approval, they (you) may conduct the interview. **When the final paper is turned in, student (you) must attach to the approval sheet, the interviewee's business card and a copy of your (student's) thank you note to the interviewee.**

**Type, (double-space) and correctly label** all assignments and reports. Since writing is a key skill in the public relations profession, make certain that your grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, syntax and accuracy 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.

**Welcome** to public relations. Participate as fully as you can in all discussions. The more you – as students engage and participate – the less lecturing Professor Litwin will do. Even if you do not expect to pursue the public relations profession, the knowledge and skills you acquire will definitely help you in your career. Best wishes for an enjoyable and successful semester!

**For FIRST class on Tuesday, Jan. 28, bring (typed) YOUR personal definition of public relations. For our SECOND class on Tuesday, Feb. 4, ask five people of varying demographics to define public relations. On a sheet of paper, type their definition, gender, age and occupation.**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Class attendance is **MANDATORY**. Communication is learned by communicating and observing others. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to be in class for the entire class. Absences are limited to two without penalty. Each additional class session missed after two will reduce the student's final grade by half a grade. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Arriving late or leaving early will result in a partial absence. If a student arrives after the roll has been called they are considered late and it is their (your) responsibility to tell the instructor after class that they (you) were present. The penalty guidelines are described below.

### **EXCUSED ABSENCE POLICY**

**No make-up exams or other assignments** will be scheduled unless arrangements are made with the instructor in advance or in emergencies where advance arrangement is not possible. In either case, **a documented valid excuse** will be required within one week of the occurrence. Approved make-up work is due the first class meeting after the student returns.

**Repeat: I do not accept late work unless students have a documented valid excuse. I must receive this excuse and the late work within one week of the due date or the work will not be accepted and the student will be given a zero for the assignment.**

### **CELL PHONE POLICY**

**Use of cell phones, laptops, devices [tablets] etc.:**

In this class, we will maintain a professional level. Use the same courtesy in class as you would in the workplace concerning the use of these devices (ringers on silent, vibrate, no calls, etc.). If you must take a call, please go out into the hallway. Alert Professor Litwin if you are expecting a call. You may take electronic notes. If your laptop is open, it must relate to this class. Once again, mention it to Professor Litwin – who will enforce this policy.

### **ACADEMIC (Integrity Policy) OFFENSES: PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING**

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the words and ideas of others as if they were the ideas of the student and without acknowledging their origin. Students are encouraged to use supporting materials in their papers and speeches, but students should make sure credit is given to the author. Academic dishonesty is any attempt by the student to gain academic advantage through dishonest means, to submit, as his or her own, work which has not been done by him/her or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment. Such dishonesty would include, but is not limited to: submitting as his/her own a project, paper, report, test, or speech copied from, partially copied, or paraphrased from the work of another (whether the source is printed, under copyright, or in manuscript form). Credit must be given for words quoted or paraphrased. The rules apply to any academic dishonesty, whether the work is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written or oral.

TCNJ's academic integrity policy is available on the web:

<http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/integrity.html>.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy**

Any student who has a documented disability and is in need of academic accommodations should notify the professor of this course and contact the Office of Differing Abilities Services (609-771-2571). Accommodations are individualized and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992. *TCNJ's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy is available on the web:* <http://www.tcnj.edu/~affirm/ada.html>.

### **Grading Scale**

**Final Grades will be based on this grading scale:**

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
70-76	C
60-69	D
59-Below	F

Please see next page for WEEKLY SCHEDULE (subject to change)

**Weekly Schedule – Page 6 of 7**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
1	Jan. 28	History/Anatomy of Strat. Comm.	YOUR definition of Public Relations
2	Feb. 4	Overview of Strat Comm. - Chapters 1-3/Super Bowl Commercials Discussion	PR Definitions and Readings
3	Feb.11	Speeches Ch. 13/Research - Chapter 4	Quiz #1/Discussion Applicant Statement
4	Feb. 18	Strategic Writing Chapters 5 and 6**	Due-Applicant Statement/Elevator Speech**
5	Feb. 25	Strategic Writing Chapters 5 and 6**	Quiz #2 (Online?)
6	March 3	Strategic Planning (GOST) - Chapter 8	Cover Letter due (via email)
7	March 10	Catch up (1-7, 14)/ <b>M-T Review</b>	<b>Mid-Term - Online today</b>
8	March 17	<b>Spring Break - NO Class</b>	Will catch up on March 24th
9	March 24	Crisis Communication - Chapter 14	
10	March 31	Ethics and the Law/Skills Checklist Ch. 16-18	Quiz #3
11	April 7	Campaigns/Media Relations - Ch. 8-9	PR Generated Stories/ <b>May be emailed</b>
12	April 14	MORE Campaigns/Media Relations - Ch. 8-9	<b>Interviews DUE</b>
13	April 21	Collaborative Media/Advertising/Publications	Type, Technique, Target Aud./Due
14	April 28	PR Potpourri Ch. 15/Catch Up	Quiz #4/Each student selects Tip-Tech.
15	May 5	Final Exam Review	Tip/Technique to discuss
16	May 12	Final Exam Week	
			<b>** Cover Letter lecture</b>

Weekly Schedule – Page 7 of 8

Week	Date	Readings
1	Jan. 28	<i>Playbook</i> Chapters 1,2,3 ABCs 38, 188, 223, 253, 191)
2	Feb. 4	<i>Playbook</i> (1-6) ABCs (140, 141, 143, 144, 145)
3	Feb.11	<i>Playbook</i> (13, 4) ABCs (5,50, 20,125, 160, 180, 187, 191, 276)
4	Feb. 18	<i>Playbook</i> (5,6) ABCs (8, 79, 100, 114, 116, 133, 217, 221, 222, 239, 240, 241, 271, 272)
5	Feb. 25	<i>Playbook</i> (1-7, 13) ABCs (16, 20, 23, 147, 198, 203, 257)
6	March 3	<i>Playbook</i> (14) ABCs (81,85, 126, 198, 214, 235)
7	March 10	<i>Playbook</i> (16,17) ABCs (15, 151, 154,155,156, 159, 173, 193, 212, 213, 217)
8	March 17	<b>NO CLASS - Fall Break</b>
9	March 24	<i>Playbook</i> (8,9) ABCs (72, 127, 171)
10	March 31	<i>Playbook</i> (10) ABCs (13, 14, 19, 48, 62, 69, 77, 78, 81, 113, 117, 174, 206, 207, 261, 267, 280)
11	April 7	<i>Playbook</i> (11,12) ABCs (43, 200, 202, 203, 240, 274)
12	April 14	<i>Playbook</i> (15) ABCs (24, 44, 97, 128 162, 224, 231, 237, 246, 255)
13	April 21	<i>Playbook</i> (1-17) ABCs (45, 46, 47, 163, 185, 187, 223)
14	April 28	<i>Playbook</i> (1-17) ABCs (73, 177, 195, 210, 219, 220, 233, 234, 269, 281, 309)
15	May 5	<b>Final Class</b>
16	May 12	<b>Final Exam Week</b>

## Introduction to Public Relations Interview Record

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Firm \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

Who helped to arrange this interview? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any comments? What did you learn?