

# CMN 4920: Case Studies in Public Relations

## Fall 2013

Instructor: Matthew Gill, Ph.D.  
Time: M, W, F 9:00-9:50  
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Office hours: M 10:00-12:00  
                  F 12:00-2:00  
                  or by appointment

### **Text**

Hansen-Horn, T. L. & Neff, B. D. (2008). *Public relations from theory to practice*.  
Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

### **Course Description**

At this point in your academic career you have been exposed to a number of public relations tactics and approaches and have written at least a few public relations documents. This course is designed to deepen your understanding of public relations by providing a more sophisticated presentation of public relations theory and discussing real world examples in which that theory is applied.

### **Course Objectives**

- You will be able to apply a theoretical lens to public relations practices.
- You will be able to understand what different theoretical approaches mean to the practice of public relations.
- You will be able to understand the ethical implications of public relations practice through real world examples.
- You will be able to critically assess a public relations tactic or campaign.

### **Student Expectations and Standards**

It's important that students in Communication Studies recognize what the faculty expects of you in your classes. A degree in Communication Studies encompasses a wide variety of skill sets having to do with communication. Expect to write papers, give presentations, learn new technologies, develop your argumentation skills, conduct sound and extensive research, and learn theories to support your assumptions about the world.

Please click on the following link for a more extensive explanation of student standards in the Department of Communication Studies, including the *Student Expectation and Standards Guide*. (<http://www.eiu.edu/~commstudies/standards.php>)

### Attendance

No attendance will be taken. You are expected, however, to attend each class meeting. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments *from another student*.

On the other hand, being late to class is disruptive and presents problems for your classmates and me. So there is a late policy. You will be considered late if you come into class more than five minutes after class has started (the clock in the classroom will be used as the official class time). You will be given two “free” late arrivals and for every time you are late after that you will lose 7 points (1%) off your final grade. Please do not make me enforce this. Show up on time.

### Late work policy

Deadlines are critical in public relations and therefore they will also be critical in this class. Late work **will not** be accepted. If an emergency or school function prevents you from being in class for an exam or when a major assignment is due, these are your options:

- 1) Turn in the assignment early (no penalty)
- 2) Bring me documentation of your absence in advance
- 3) Bring specific documentation of your absence within 1 week after the missed class if the absence was an unavoidable emergency
- 4) Receive a 0 for the assignment

### Plagiarism and Cheating

For information on Eastern’s policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty, please see [http://catalog.eiu.edu/content.php?catoid=14&navoid=307#acad\\_inte](http://catalog.eiu.edu/content.php?catoid=14&navoid=307#acad_inte)

You are responsible for knowing the university policy on what constitutes academic dishonesty. Here is the short version: **ALWAYS** give credit—I will assume that everything you turn in (unless otherwise noted) is your own personal work, not borrowed work or group-created work. **It is important to remember that plagiarism is not based upon intent.** Just because it wasn’t intentional or it was an accident does not mean that it was not plagiarism. It is!

If you turn in something without giving credit to others whose ideas or words you used, you will definitely receive a 0 for the assignment; additional consequences can include failure of the course and even expulsion from the university.

If you collaborate with someone else on an assignment and turn in substantially similar work, you are both guilty of plagiarism.

If you turn in something written by someone else, expect to fail the course and be reported to the Dean of Students. Do your own work. Give credit where credit is due.

### **Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 581-6583.

### **Cell Phones**

If you have a cell phone please turn it off or to vibrate before class. If there is some sort of situation in which you need to keep your phone on please consult with me before class. Otherwise there's no reason I should even see your phone. Please do not spend your class time text messaging or on your phone in any way.

### **Email**

You should use your university email account to contact me with any matters concerning class. Mail sent from other email addresses may be filtered out by the Eastern system. Therefore, I may not receive your message if you don't use your university account.

You are expected to check your official email address on a frequent and consistent basis in order to stay current with departmental and course communications. Students have the responsibility to recognize that certain communications may be time-critical. "I didn't check my email", error in foreign mail accounts, or email returned to the department/instructor with "mailbox full" or "user unknown" are not acceptable excuses for missing department/course communication sent via email. Students who have questions related to their university email account may consult the following URL <http://www.eiu.edu/~itshelp/email/student/password.php>

### **Assignments**

**SPELLING AND GRAMMAR ALWAYS COUNT, ESPECIALLY IN PR!!!**

*Exams* – There will be three exams throughout the semester. Each will cover the material presented during the unit prior to the test. The exams are not comprehensive.

*Mini-case paper* – There will be an opportunity early in the semester to write a mini-case analysis paper so that you can get a feel for how the analysis should go. The specifics of the assignment will be discussed when it is assigned.

*Case study projects* – There will be two written reports in which you will critically analyze a public relations case through one of the theoretical lenses we have discussed in class. The specifics of each assignment and case will be provided when assigned.

*Case analysis paper* – Everyone will be assigned a case on which they will write an analysis from the connected theoretical approach. This 2-page analysis paper will address what your theoretical approach to public relations would say about the case and demonstrate what a practitioner working from your perspective would highlight as key concerns/issues/opportunities. It will also help you understand how various theoretical approaches to public relations can see similar situations in very different ways and lead to different outcomes/decisions/understandings.

*Case presentation* - Everyone will also present to the class their analysis of the case they are assigned for their case analysis paper. Each student will have 25 minutes to guide a class discussion of his or her analysis from the given theoretical perspective. Presenters should prepare critical questions for the class to guide them through the analysis and ultimately lead a productive discussion of the case from a PR perspective. Students should make sure to highlight the same sorts of issues covered in the case analysis paper. There should be little to no review of the case, because everyone should have read the case for class.

### **Grading**

This class will be based on a system of 700 points.

Exam 1	150 points
Exam 2	150 points
Final exam	150 points
Mini-case paper	25 points
Case study 1	50 points
Case study 2	100 points
Case analysis paper	50 points
Case presentation/analysis	25 points

### **Grading Scale**

700-630 Points = A
629-560 Points = B
559-490 Points = C
489-420 Points = D
419-0 Points = F

### **Schedule**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
8/19	Class introduction	
8/21	Public relations practice and theory	
8/23	State of public relations theory	
8/26	Excellence model	
8/28	Excellence model	
8/30	Rhetorical theory	<b>Mini-case paper assigned</b>
9/2	<b>NO CLASS – LABOR DAY</b>	
9/4	Rhetorical theory and meaning in public relations	Hansen-Horn & Neff – pp. 208-224
9/6	Kansas - Rhetorical USS Midway to San Diego - Excellence	D2L: Kansas D2L: USS Midway to San Diego

9/9	Issues management	Hansen-Horn & Neff – pp. 31-43 <b>Mini-case paper due</b>
9/11	Issues management	
9/13	Exam Review and catch-up	
9/16	<b>Exam 1 (part 1)</b>	
9/18	<b>Exam 1 (part 2)</b>	
9/20	Power resource management	Hansen-Horn & Neff – pp. 2-16
9/23	Power resource management	
9/25	Coal Trains – Issue Management Tsunami – Power Resource	D2L: Coal trains D2L: Tsunami
9/27	Social construction and public relations	Hansen-Horn & Neff – pp. 104-117 <b>Case study 1 assigned</b>
9/30	Social construction and public relations	
10/2	Ethical questions in public relations	Hansen-Horn & Neff – pp. 160-176
10/4	Ethical questions in public relations	
10/7	Ethics – Kirkuk Ethics - Armstrong	D2L: Kirkuk D2L: Armstrong
10/9	Public relations and social intervention	Hansen-Horn & Neff – pp. 227-238
10/11	<b>NO CLASS – OCT BREAK</b>	
10/14	Public relations and social intervention	
10/16	Smartbelts – Social intervention Kick-ash – Social intervention	D2L: Smartbelts D2L: Kick-ash
10/18	Exam Review and catch-up	<b>Case study 1 due</b>
10/21	<b>Exam 2 (part 1)</b>	
10/23	<b>Exam 2 (part 2)</b>	
10/25	Weickian approach to PR	Hansen-Horn & Neff – pp. 20-29
10/28	Weickian approach to PR	
10/30	Utah transit – Weickian Fire ants - Weickian	D2L: Utah transit authority D2L: Fire ants
11/1	Feminism and public relations	Hansen-Horn & Neff – pp. 317-340 <b>Case study 2 assigned</b>
11/4	Feminism and public relations	D2L – Working girls
11/6	Invitational rhetoric	
11/8	Break the silence - Feminism The real thing - Feminsim	D2L: Silence D2L: Real thing
11/11	Contingency theory	Hansen-Horn & Neff – pp. 134-147
11/13	Contingency theory	

11/15	CDC – Contingency theory Sago mine – Contingency theory	D2L: CDC D2L: Sago
11/18	Image repair	Hansen-Horn & Neff – pp. 244-255
11/20	Image repair	
11/22	Image repair – Conectiv Image repair – Post 9-11	D2L: Conectiv D2L: Post 9-11 <b>Case study 2 due</b>
11/25	<b>NO CLASS – Thanksgiving</b>	
11/27	<b>NO CLASS – Thanksgiving</b>	
11/29	<b>NO CLASS – Thanksgiving</b>	
12/2	Situational crisis theory	Hansen-Horn & Neff – pp. 262-272
12/4	Situational crisis theory	
12/6	KFC chicken abuse – SCCT “Crazy for you” bear - SCCT	D2L: KFC D2L: Crazy for you bear
Exam Week	<b>Final Exam: Tuesday Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> 8:00am-10:00am</b>	