

Eastern Illinois University  
New Course Proposal  
CMN 2920, Introduction to Public Relations

Please check one:       New course       Revised course

**PART I: CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

1. **Course prefix and number, such as ART 1000:** CMN 2920
2. **Title (may not exceed 30 characters, including spaces):** Intro to Public Relations
3. **Long title, if any (may not exceed 100 characters, including spaces):** Introduction to Public Relations
4. **Class hours per week, lab hours per week, and credit [e.g., (3-0-3)]:** 3-0-3
5. **Term(s) to be offered:**  Fall       Spring       Summer       On demand
6. **Initial term of offering:**  Fall       Spring       Summer      **Year:** 2009
7. **Course description (not to exceed four lines):**

This course surveys the history, growth, and practice of the public relations field while addressing the major issues public relations practitioners face today. It is designed to provide students with the necessary background of the public relations field a practitioner needs to be successful in the profession and competitive in the job market. It addresses public relations' dominant paradigm and major approaches while illuminating important issues faced by the field and the industry.

**8. Registration restrictions:**

**a. Identify any equivalent courses** (e.g., cross-listed course, non-honors version of an honors course).

There are no equivalent courses

**b. Prerequisite(s)**, including required test scores, courses, grades in courses, and technical skills. Indicate whether any prerequisite course(s) MAY be taken concurrently with the proposed/revised course.

Credit will not be given for both CMN 2920 and **CMN/JOU** 3920.

**c. Who can waive the prerequisite(s)?**

No one       Chair       Instructor       Advisor       Other (Please specify)

**d. Co-requisites** (course(s) which MUST be taken concurrently with this one):

None

**e. Repeat status:**       Course may not be repeated.

Course may be repeated to a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ hours or \_\_\_\_\_ times.

**f. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class** to which registration in the course is restricted, if any:

None

**g. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class** to be excluded from the course, if any:

None

**9. Special course attributes** [cultural diversity, general education (indicate component), honors, remedial, writing centered or writing intensive]

None

**10. Grading methods** (check all that apply):  Standard letter  C/NC  Audit  ABC/NC (“Standard letter”—i.e., ABCDF—is assumed to be the default grading method unless the course description indicates otherwise.)

**11. Instructional delivery method:**  lecture  lab  lecture/lab combined  independent study/research  
 internship  performance  practicum or clinical  study abroad  other

## **PART II: ASSURANCE OF STUDENT LEARNING**

**1. List the student learning objectives of this course:**

- a. If this is a general education course, indicate which objectives are designed to help students achieve one or more of the following goals of general education and university-wide assessment:**
- **EIU graduates will write and speak effectively.**
  - **EIU graduates will think critically.**
  - **EIU graduates will function as responsible citizens.**

At the end of this class students will:

1. Be able to identify the historical development of public relations
2. Be able to identify public relations practice in the world around them
3. Be able to critique public relations practice
4. Be able to analyze and assess a public relations campaign/message
5. Be able to understand the ethical implications of public relations practice

- b. If this is a graduate-level course, indicate which objectives are designed to help students achieve established goals for learning at the graduate level:**
- **Depth of content knowledge**
  - **Effective critical thinking and problem solving**
  - **Effective oral and written communication**
  - **Advanced scholarship through research or creative activity**

N/A

**2. Identify the assignments/activities the instructor will use to determine how well students attained the learning objectives:**

- 1) Students will write two case analyses (4-6 pages) focused on critically assessing a public relations message or campaign of their choice.
- 2) Students will take three tests across the semester in which they will demonstrate their understanding and retention of the material covered in class.
- 3) Students will give short presentations at the start of each class in which they show a public relations piece they have found and critique it for class.

**3. Explain how the instructor will determine students' grades for the course:**

Tests: 60%; Case Analyses: 30%; Mini-Presentations 10%

**4. For technology-delivered and other nontraditional-delivered courses/sections, address the following:**

- a. Describe how the format/technology will be used to support and assess students' achievement of the specified learning objectives:
- b. Describe how the integrity of student work will be assured:
- c. Describe provisions for and requirements of instructor-student and student-student interaction, including the kinds of technologies that will be used to support the interaction (e.g., e-mail, web-based discussions, computer conferences, etc.):

N/A

**5. For courses numbered 4750-4999, specify additional or more stringent requirements for students enrolling for graduate credit. These include:**

- a. course objectives;
- b. projects that require application and analysis of the course content; and
- c. separate methods of evaluation for undergraduate and graduate students.

N/A

**6. If applicable, indicate whether this course is writing-active, writing-intensive, or writing-centered, and describe how the course satisfies the criteria for the type of writing course identified. (See Appendix \*.)**

N/A

**PART III: SAMPLE OUTLINE OF THE COURSE**

**Provide a week-by-week outline of the course's content. Specify units of time (e.g., for a 3-0-3 course, 45 fifty-minute class periods over 15 weeks) for each major topic in the outline. Provide clear and sufficient details about content and procedures so that possible questions of overlap with other courses can be addressed. For technology-delivered or other nontraditional-delivered courses/sections, explain how the course content "units" are sufficiently equivalent to the traditional on-campus semester hour units of time described above.**

Week 1

Class Introduction

What is public relations

Week 2

History of public relations

Public relations throughout history

Week 3

Growth of corporate public relations

The public relations industry today

Week 4

Functionalism and public relations  
Systems theory and the excellence model of public relations

Week 5

Other approaches to public relations

Week 6

Understanding the organizational/public relationship  
Basic public relations documents

Week 7

Public relations research  
Planning

Week 8

Public relations implementation

Week 9

The role of the media  
Dealing with the media

Week 10

Publicity and public relations

Week 11

Evaluating public relations  
Legal issues in public relations

Week 12

Ethical issues in public relations

Week 13

Globalization and public relations  
International public relations

Week 14

Careers in public relations  
Building your public relations career

Week 15

Public relations and the Internet  
Future directions of public relations

## **PART IV: PURPOSE AND NEED**

### **1. Explain the department's rationale for developing and proposing the course.**

In 1997 the leading public relations practitioner professional association in America, the Public Relations Society of America called for a commission to be created and develop curricular recommendations for public relations programs (VanSlyke, Botan, & Morreale, 1999). The resulting Commission on Public Relations Education included the

National Communication Association, the International Communication Association, the International Public Relations Association, and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication as equal participants in the creation of curricular recommendations (Kruckeberg & Paluszek, 1999). The Commission responded with a report on public relations curriculum in 1999. The Commission then released an updated and revised report in 2006 entitled *The Professional Bond – Public Relations Education and the Practice (The Professional Bond, 2006)*.

The Commission's report indicates that undergraduate public relations students should be expected to take five classes: Introduction to public relations; Public relations research, measurement and evaluation; Public relations writing and production; An additional public relations class in law and ethics, planning and management, case studies or campaigns; and an internship/supervised work experience in public relations. While the Commission recognizes that every academic program cannot offer all these classes, it notes that these topics could be combined and integrated into a curriculum in a number of ways.

The current course proposal for CMN 2920 creates an Introduction to public relations class that will focus on theory, history, and public relations principles which is one of the classes recommended by the Commission. By replacing CMN 4919 (Public Relations Techniques) with the introductory course we move closer to the Commission's ideal undergraduate curriculum for public relations. The addition of CMN 2920 would create a public relations curriculum in the Department of Communication Studies that would address all five topic areas suggested by the Commission. In addition to the Introductory class, public relations students would continue to take CMN 3960 (Advocacy and Messages Design) and CMN 3500 (Electronic Media Relations) which address public relations writing and production and CMN 4920 (Public Relations Case Studies) which provides advanced theory and case studies. All Communication Studies majors take a core class in research methods and evaluation which is used as a basis for further discussion in all the public relations classes. Further, the department provides internship opportunities for all interested students. The public relations curriculum would ultimately provide a path of connected courses that allows students to gain an adequate background and foundation in public relations and will prepare them for a life in the profession.

Kruckeberg, D., & Paluszek, J. L. (1999). Significance of the NCA's "Dialogue on Public Relations Education" conference. *Public Relations Review*, 25(1), 5-8.

*The professional bond - Public relations education and the practice.* (2006). The Commission on Public Relations Education.

VanSlyke, J., Botna, C., & Morreale, S. P. (1999). Meeting education challenges in the information age. *Public Relations Review*, 25(1), 1-4.

- a. If this is a general education course, you also must indicate the segment of the general education program into which it will be placed, and describe how the course meets the requirements of that segment.**

N/A

- b. If the course or some sections of the course may be technology delivered, explain why.**

N/A

**2. Justify the level of the course and any course prerequisites, co-requisites, or registration restrictions.**

The course is designed as an introduction course that will provide a broad overview to the public relations field and give students the background necessary to be successful in their pursuit of a public relations degree.

**3. If the course is similar to an existing course or courses, justify its development and offering.**

- a. If the contents substantially duplicate those of an existing course, the new proposal should be discussed with the appropriate chairpersons, deans, or curriculum committees and their responses noted in the proposal.**

To claim that CMN 2920 and JOU 3920 are the same would be similar to claiming that an English literature course and a theater course are duplicates because they both study the plays of Shakespeare or that courses in Art and English are duplicates because they both study the films of Hitchcock. In these examples the texts are the same but the audience, discussions, lessons, learning objectives, and focus are different.

James Tidwell, Chair of the Journalism Department describes JOU 3920 as both an introduction to public relations and as a course of general interest as one of Journalism's courses in media and society. In fact, in the Journalism curriculum, JOU 3920 is included in the Media and Society block and is referenced as such under their Concentration in Public Relations. It is clear from its placement in the Journalism curriculum that it is not a course reserved solely for future public relations practitioners but is rather a more general course.

CMN 2920 is targeted to future public relations practitioners as recommended to meet the needs of students in the public relations option (as described in the course rationale). This course has an audience and focus that is different from either CMN 3920 or JOU 3920.

A comparison to the situation between CMN 2920 and JOU 3920 is reflected in the relationship between BIO 1001G and BIO 1100. BIO 1001G is open to any major and it is an introduction to the study of living organisms. Bio 1100 is an introduction to biology for Biological Science majors. The courses would seem to cover similar areas but from different perspectives and audience.

James Tidwell, in a conversation with the Chair of Communication Studies, made it clear that after discussion with the Journalism faculty that there were no objections to this proposal. The only request was that the department includes the language that "Credit will not be given for both CMN 2920 and JOU 3920." Communication Studies has no problem with this request and has added it to the statement of prerequisites for this course. The department notes however, that it is not making a judgment of the similarity of these courses or the merit of this request in adding this language. Clearly from what is described here, the department feels that CMN 2920 as proposed is different from CMN 3920 or JOU 3920.

- b. Cite course(s) to be deleted if the new course is approved. If no deletions are planned, note the exceptional need to be met or the curricular gap to be filled.**

CMN 4919 will be removed from the required public relations curriculum and eventually removed from the curriculum entirely. An executive action will be processed when students under old catalogs will no longer need this course.

**4. Impact on Program(s):**

- a. For undergraduate programs, specify whether this course will be required for a major or minor or used as an approved elective.**

This course will be required for public relations majors.

- b. For graduate programs, specify whether this course will be a core requirement for all candidates in a degree or certificate program or an approved elective.**

N/A

**If the proposed course changes a major, minor, or certificate program in or outside of the department, you must submit a separate proposal requesting that change along with the course proposal. Provide a copy of the existing program in the current catalog with the requested changes noted.**

**PART V: IMPLEMENTATION**

**1. Faculty member(s) to whom the course may be assigned:**

W. Timothy Coombs, Brian Sowa, Matthew Gill

**2. Additional costs to students:**

**Include those for supplemental packets, hardware/software, or any other additional instructional, technical, or technological requirements. (Course fees must be approved by the President's Council.)**

No additional costs.

**3. Text and supplementary materials to be used (Include publication dates):**

Heath, R. L., & Coombs, W. T. (2006). *Today's public relations: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## PART VI: COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER

If the proposed course is a 1000- or 2000-level course, state either, "A community college course may be judged equivalent to this course" OR "A community college course will not be judged equivalent to this course." A community college course will not be judged equivalent to a 3000- or 4000-level course but may be accepted as a substitute; however, upper-division credit will not be awarded.

A community college course may be judged equivalent to this course

## PART VII: APPROVALS

Date approved by the department or school: 10/3/2008

Date approved by the college curriculum committee: 10/29/2008

Date approved by the Honors Council (*if this is an honors course*):

Date approved by CAA: 4/30/2009

\*In **writing-active courses**, frequent, brief writing activities and assignments are required. Such activities -- some of which are to be graded -- might include five-minute in-class writing assignments, journal keeping, lab reports, essay examinations, short papers, longer papers, or a variety of other writing-to-learn activities of the instructor's invention. Writing assignments and activities in writing-active courses are designed primarily to assist students in mastering course content, secondarily to strengthen students' writing skills. In **writing-intensive courses**, several writing assignments and writing activities are required. These assignments and activities, which are to be spread over the course of the semester, serve the dual purpose of strengthening writing skills and deepening understanding of course content. At least one writing assignment is to be revised by the student after it has been read and commented on by the instructor. In writing-intensive courses, students' writing should constitute no less than 35% of the final course grade. In **writing-centered courses** (English 1001G, English 1002G, and their honors equivalents), students learn the principles and the process of writing in all of its stages, from inception to completion. The quality of students' writing is the principal determinant of the course grade. The minimum writing requirement is 20 pages (5,000 words).

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