

# CMN 4920: Case Studies in Public Relations

3 credit hours – Fall 2016

Instructor: Matthew Gill, Ph.D.

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or by appointment

## **Text**

Swann, P. (2014). *Cases in public relations management* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). New York: Routledge.

## **Course Description**

This course enhances students' understanding of public relations by providing a sophisticated presentation of public relations theory and discussing real world examples in which that theory is applied. The course focuses on developing the analytical skills necessary to evaluate public relations programs, campaigns, and communication practices by building on the students' knowledge of public relations theories, strategies, goals, tactics and techniques.

## **Course Objectives**

- Explain contemporary theories of public relations and their application to public relations practices
- Analyze and critique public relations tactics, techniques, and campaigns
- Differentiate the effects of contemporary theories of public relations on understanding public relations practice
- Explain the ethical implications of public relations practice through real world examples

## **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 6.5 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.

### **Academic integrity**

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

### **Students with disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

### **The Student Success Center**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

### **Booth Library**

Located in the center of campus, Booth Library is the best place to do research, find expert help, or study in a calm, distraction-free environment. In addition to the many print resources, Booth provides access to high quality e-books, journals and scholarship not freely available on the Web. Stop by the Reference Desk or go to <http://library.eiu.edu> to explore library resources. Get expert help with your research by contacting the Booth Library reference librarians. Visit, call 581-6072, or go to <http://booth.eiu.edu/ask> to connect with a librarian.

### **Cell Phones**

Please turn off or silence your cell phone 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.

### **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.

*Case response paper* – In PR we often find ourselves in a state of uncertainty. The perfect path forward is never clear and in most cases there is no such thing. You will be constantly asked for your opinion (hopefully an educated one of course, but an opinion nonetheless) about the best way forward. Your ability to analyze, assess, and then determine the best course of action to a PR problem will be one of your most valuable skills. This is at the heart of what we are doing this semester. Class is providing you different ways to examine and respond to PR issues. For your case paper the assignment is simple: choose a theory and determine how to respond to a current PR problem.

However, there are some constraints:

- First, time is always of the essence in PR. Therefore your response cannot be longer than a page (one sided – one and a half or double spaced). This is not an academic essay. This is a pragmatic and thoughtful direction an organization/person should take based on sound PR theory.
- Second, I do not want your ideas to get muddled by others. Therefore you must choose a case that is currently going on. Any case that **BEGAN** more than **TWO** weeks prior to the due date of the assignment will not be graded. I want your analysis, not some author of a journal article.
- Your paper should not be a review of the theory or an explanation of the theoretical components. I know those. I want to see what **YOU** think should be done (based on sound reasoning and PR theory). It is **NOT** an explanation of what has been done or your evaluation of what has been done. **YOU** are in charge of the PR. What do **YOU** think should happen?
- Please follow the format outlined on D2L. It can be found in the document called “Case Response Paper Format” found in the same folder as the syllabus.
- **Your have to choose one of the theories (or key aspects of the theories) that we are discussing in class to guide your response.**

*Case discussion leader/participation* – The discussion of cases and their PR implications is at the heart of this class. Therefore we will have days devoted to doing exactly that.

Each case day will incorporate multiple case discussions lead by your classmates. You will sign-up for a case day of your choice and then lead discussion over one of the assigned cases for that day. You should plan to lead discussion for 15-minutes. Since everyone will have read the case you should focus your time leading the class in a thoughtful and insightful discussion about the PR issues and potential solutions involved in your case. You will be graded on your thoroughness and your ability to generate

thoughtful questions that lead to insightful discussion about your case. It is not your job to tell us your view of the case or to present on the case in any way. Instead you are to help the class discuss the PR issues. While this may include having you voice your own ideas at different points in the conversation please remember that you are not conducting a presentation. The vast majority of talking should come from your classmates.

Class participation is an absolute must or these can become very uncomfortable and boring. Therefore you will also be evaluated as an audience member for each case day. Your audience participation on each day is worth 10 points. To receive all ten points you must demonstrate significant engagement in the discussions for that day (at least three times you participated in an intelligent and productive manner). If you only make one or two comments throughout the class you will receive approximately half of the available points. No participation at all (or not attending class) will result in receiving zero points for that day. These points require you to be in class and therefore cannot be made up.

*Case discussion paper* – Everyone will write an analysis about the case they lead for discussion from the connected theoretical approach. This 2-page analysis paper will address what the theoretical approach to public relations would say about the case and demonstrate what a practitioner working from such a 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.

*Applied projects* – There will a number of applied projects throughout the semester. These assignments are only given in class and some of them will be completed in class. These assignments cannot be made up. Either you attend class and complete the assignment or you don't.

### **Grading**

This class will be based on a system of 650 points.

Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Exam 3 (Final Exam)	100 points
Case response papers (50 pts each)	150 points
Case discussion leader	20 points
Case discussion paper	30 points
Case discussion participation	80 points
Applied projects (pts based on project)	70 points

### **Grading Scale**

650-585 Points = A
584-520 Points = B
519-455 Points = C
454-390 Points = D
389-0 Points = F

## Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
8/22	Class introduction	
8/24	Public relations practice and theory	
8/26	Public relations practice and theory	
8/29	State of the art	
8/31	State of the art	
9/2	Excellence Theory	
9/5	<b>Labor Day – NO CLASS</b>	
9/7	Excellence Theory	
9/9	Excellence Theory	
9/12	Excellence Theory	
9/14	Excellence Theory	
9/16	<b>Case Day 1</b>	<b>Ch. 7, Case 18, pg. 280</b> <b>Ch. 4, Case 7, pg. 101</b> <b>Ch. 11, Case 33, pg. 521</b>
9/19	<b>Exam 1</b>	
9/21	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	
9/23	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	
9/26	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	<b>Case Response Paper 1 Due</b>
9/28	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	
9/30	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	
10/3	<b>Case Day 2</b>	<b>Ch. 7, Case 19, pg. 294</b> <b>Ch. 10, Case 31, pg. 489</b> <b>Ch. 7, Case 20, pg. 313</b>
10/5	Legitimacy and reputation	
10/7	Legitimacy and reputation	
10/10	Legitimacy and reputation	
10/12	<b>Case Day 3</b>	<b>Ch. 7, Case 21, pg. 331</b> <b>Ch. 6, Case 14, pg. 231</b> <b>Ch. 6, Case 16, pg. 256</b>
10/14	<b>Fall Break – NO CLASS</b>	
10/17	Social media	
10/19	Social media	
10/21	<b>Case Day 4</b>	<b>Ch. 6, Case 15, pg. 248</b> <b>Ch. 4, Case 10, pg. 144</b> <b>Ch. 7, Case 22, pg. 348</b>
10/24	CSR	
10/26	CSR	
10/28	CSR	<b>Case Response Paper 2 Due</b>

10/31	<b>Case Day 5</b>	<b>Ch. 3, Case 4, pg. 43</b> <b>Ch. 3, Case 5, pg. 66</b> <b>Ch. 3, Case 6, pg. 81</b>
11/2	<b>Exam 2</b>	
11/4	Crisis Communication	
11/7	Crisis Communication	
11/9	<b>Case Day 6</b>	<b>Ch. 2, Case 2, pg. 22</b> <b>Ch. 9, Case 28, pg. 445</b> <b>Ch. 5, Case 11, pg. 162</b>
11/11	Image Repair Discourse	
11/14	Image Repair Discourse	
11/16	Image Repair Discourse	
11/18	Image Repair Discourse	
11/21	<b>Thanksgiving – NO CLASS</b>	
11/23	<b>Thanksgiving – NO CLASS</b>	
11/25	<b>Thanksgiving – NO CLASS</b>	
11/28	<b>Case Day 7</b>	<b>Ch. 5, Case 12, pg. 183</b> <b>Ch. 8, Case 25, pg. 403</b> <b>Ch. 11, Case 36, pg. 545</b>
11/30	Situational crisis theory	
12/2	Situational crisis theory	
12/5	Situational crisis theory	<b>Case Response Paper 3 Due</b>
12/7	Situational crisis theory	
12/9	<b>Case Day 8</b>	<b>Ch. 5, Case 13, pg. 202</b> <b>Ch. 8, Case 24, pg. 390</b> <b>Ch. 10, Case 32, pg. 510</b>
Finals Week	Final Exam: Tuesday, December 13, 12:30-2:30	