

CMN 3965: Advanced Public Relations Writing and Production

3 credit hours – Fall 2017

Instructor: Matthew Gill, Ph.D.
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 or by appointment

Text

Readings will be posted to D2L

Course Description

This class focuses on the strategic management of multiple organizational communication channels and the production of written content across different platforms. Students learn how to manage, produce, and coordinate written content and how to engage internal and external stakeholders using a variety of communication channels (off- and online) available to non- and for-profit organizations. WI.

Class is very hands-on and active. Therefore most of your work will take the form of projects and result in the production of some PR. This course is a learning ground. I do not expect you to be great at everything. However, I do expect you to get better at everything throughout the semester and I will push you accordingly. As always, you are welcome to seek help from each other or me whenever you need it.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- a) Explain and critique the use of media/communication channels by for- and non-profit organizations
- b) Generate and interpret strategic goals and objectives for the management and coordination of an organization's internal and external communication channels and publications
- c) Produce and critique engaging content for internal and external stakeholders across multiple communication channels
- d) Facilitate and critique mediated stakeholder dialogue and discussions

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 check EIU’s current Academic Regulations in the undergraduate catalogue.

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) 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 two exams throughout the semester. Each will cover the material presented during class prior to the test. The exams are not comprehensive.

Canva projects – Twice during the semester you will be given the opportunity to work on your creativity and PR design skills via Canva. The specifics on the assignments will be discussed during class and posted on D2L.

Spark project – You will be given the opportunity to test your visual storytelling abilities. The specifics on the assignment will be discussed during class and posted on D2L.

Blog post – You will be asked to write a blog post for the PR blog. The specifics on the assignments will be discussed during class and posted on D2L.

Community relations project – You will be asked to complete a project specifically aimed at reaching community stakeholders. The specifics on the assignment will be discussed during class and posted on D2L.

Weebly project – Your final project of the year will bring together a lot of the skills you have worked on throughout the semester. The specifics on the assignment will be discussed during class and posted on D2L.

Grading

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

Canva project 1	25 points
Canva project 2	50 points
Spark project	50 points
Community relations project	50 points
PR Blog post	75 points
Weebly Project	250 points
Midterm Exam	100 points
Final Exam	100 points

Grading Scale

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

Grading Guidelines

Please use the following descriptions to help you understand the grading expectation for this course:

- A = Outstanding work: strong in every category and area of the assignment. Written copy is usually publishable with little or no editing. Visuals are well chosen and work with the purpose of the assignment.
- B = Good work. Many strong points. Copy is usually publishable with minor editing and revision. Visuals are good and mostly work with the purpose of the assignment.
- C = Satisfactory work. Some strong points. Copy needs additional research/rewriting. Visuals are ok, but have clear shortcomings.
- D = Serious problems with writing or achieving the objectives of the assignment. Weak. Copy contains major factual, structural, writing, or usage flaws. Visuals are poor choices and have several flaws.
- F. Unacceptable work. Copy fails to meet even minimum standards for the assignment. Visuals do not work at all or are missing.

Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
8/21	Course introduction	
8/23	Content creation	
8/25	Content creation	
8/28	Creativity	
8/30	Creativity	
9/1	PR writing challenges	
9/4	Labor Day – NO CLASS	
9/6	Identity/ Voice	
9/8	Blogging	
9/11	Blogging	PR Blog Post Assigned
9/13	Blogging and pictures/links	
9/15	Storytelling in PR	
9/18	Storytelling in PR	PR Blog Post Draft Due
9/20	Storytelling in PR	
9/22	Storytelling in PR	
9/25	Visually compelling content	PR Blog Post Final Due
9/27	Visually compelling content	
9/29	Canva	Canva Project Assigned
10/2	Visual storytelling	
10/4	Visual storytelling	Canva Project Due
10/6	Visual storytelling	
10/9	Midterm Exam	

10/11	Spark	Spark Project Assigned
10/13	Fall break – NO CLASS	
10/16	Color theory	Reading: Follow link on D2L
10/18	Design Elements & Principles	Reading: Follow link on D2L
10/20	Content creation for Spark project	
10/23	Spark presentations	Spark Project Due
10/25	Spark presentations	
10/27	Compelling stories	
10/30	Weebly/Microsites	Weebly Project Assigned
11/1	Compelling stories	
11/3	Community relations	Community Relations Project Assigned
11/6	Community relations	Read: Kruvand & Silver
11/8	Employee relations	Read: Bush Read: Oviatt
11/10	Employee relations	Canva Project #2 Assigned Read: Kinsky et al.
11/13	Weapons of influence	Community Relations Project Due
11/15	PR publics	
11/17	PR publics	Canva Project #2 Due
11/20	Thanksgiving – NO CLASS	
11/22	Thanksgiving – NO CLASS	
11/24	Thanksgiving – NO CLASS	
11/27	Bringing it all together	Read: Flowers & Sterbenk
11/29	Content optimization	
12/1	Content optimization	
12/4	Metaphor	Weebly Project Due
12/6	Metaphor	
12/8	Metaphor/Wrap up	
Finals Week	Final Exam: Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2:45pm-4:45pm	