

CMN 4920: Case Studies in Public Relations

3 credit hours – Spring 2018

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Text

Swann, P. (2014). *Cases in public relations management* (2nd 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

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

Mini-analysis 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 - providing you different ways to examine and respond to PR issues. For your mini-analysis paper the assignment is simple: **take the approach/theory we are looking at during the week and determine how to respond to a current PR problem.** There's no trick to this. Just find an organization in the news dealing with a PR issue and there's your case.

Requirements:

- Pick any current issue for an organization that has a PR element
- Identify the heart of the problem
- **Determine what advice you'd give if you were asked your opinion as a PR expert** (essentially when I am done reading your paper I should know exactly what you would do and why)
- **Support your advice with the weekly theory** (what does the theory say about PR that makes you think this is the right way to go?)
- Please follow the format outlined on D2L. It can be found in the document called "Mini-analysis Paper Format" found in the same folder as the syllabus.

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 (within the last month). I want your analysis, not some author of a journal or newspaper article.
- Do NOT review the theory or provide 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?** Should that be connected to the theory? Of course. And you need to point out those connections as support for your point but your paper is about the case, not the theory.

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.

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
Mini-analysis papers (50 pts each)	250 points
Case discussion leader	20 points
Case discussion participation	80 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>
1/8	Class introduction	
1/10	Public relations practice and theory	
1/12	Public relations practice and theory	
1/15	MLK Day – NO CLASS	
1/17	State of the art	
1/19	Excellence Theory	
1/22	Excellence Theory	

1/24	Excellence Theory	
1/26	Excellence Theory	
1/29	Excellence Theory	
1/31	Case Day 1	Ch. 7, Case 18, pg. 280 Ch. 4, Case 7, pg. 101 Ch. 11, Case 33, pg. 521
2/2	Exam 1	
2/5	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	
2/7	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	Excellence - Mini-Analysis Paper 1 Due
2/9	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	
2/12	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	
2/14	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	
2/16	Lincoln's Bday – NO CLASS	
2/19	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	
2/21	Rhetorical Approaches to PR	
2/23	Case Day 2	Ch. 7, Case 19, pg. 294 Ch. 10, Case 31, pg. 489 Ch. 7, Case 20, pg. 313
2/26	Legitimacy and reputation	Rhetorical - Mini-Analysis Paper 2 Due
2/28	Legitimacy and reputation	
3/2	Legitimacy and reputation	
3/5	Case Day 3	Ch. 3, Case 4, pg. 43 Ch. 3, Case 5, pg. 66 Ch. 3, Case 6, pg. 81
3/7	Case Day 4	Ch. 7, Case 21, pg. 331 Ch. 6, Case 14, pg. 231 Ch. 6, Case 16, pg. 256
3/9	Social media	
3/12	Spring Break – NO CLASS	
3/14	Spring Break – NO CLASS	
3/16	Spring Break – NO CLASS	
3/19	Social media	Legitimacy or reputation - Mini-Analysis Paper 3 Due
3/21	Case Day 5	Ch. 6, Case 15, pg. 248 Ch. 4, Case 10, pg. 144 Ch. 7, Case 22, pg. 348
3/23	Exam 2	
3/26	Crisis Communication	
3/28	Communication Day	
3/30	Crisis Communication	
4/2	Crisis Communication	Social Media - Mini-Analysis Paper 4 Due
4/4	Case Day 6	Ch. 2, Case 2, pg. 22 Ch. 9, Case 28, pg. 445 Ch. 5, Case 11, pg. 162
4/6	Image Repair Discourse	

4/9	Image Repair Discourse	
4/11	Image Repair Discourse	
4/13	Image Repair Discourse	
4/16	Case Day 7	Ch. 5, Case 12, pg. 183 Ch. 8, Case 25, pg. 403 Ch. 11, Case 36, pg. 545
4/18	Situational crisis theory	Image repair - Mini-Analysis Paper 5 Due
4/20	Situational crisis theory	
4/23	Situational crisis theory	
4/25	Situational crisis theory	
4/27	Case Day 8	Ch. 5, Case 13, pg. 202 Ch. 8, Case 24, pg. 390 Ch. 10, Case 32, pg. 510
Finals Week	Final Exam: Thursday, May 3, 8:00am-10:00am	