

**CMN 4921D- Communicating for Cause: Public relations in  
non-profit organizations  
Spring 2024  
SYLLABUS**

Instructor: Rashmi Thapaliya, Ph.D.

Time: TR 1-1:50 p.m.

Credit Hours: 2

Office: 2542 Buzzard Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays: 10-10:50 a.m.

Wednesdays: 10 a.m.-12:20 p.m., other times by appointment

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**Course Materials:**

Readings will be posted on D2L.

**Course Overview:** This course will help students learn the fundamentals of the role of public relations in non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations range from small local non-profits to international non-government organizations (INGOs). This course will help students understand the role such organizations play in our society. Students will explore the mission, strategies and tactics, and understand key constituents and target audiences of different types of non-profit organizations. They will also explore different message strategies that are used to develop effective messages by non-profit organizations.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

- Understand the role that non-profit organizations play in our society and the role of public relations in such organizations.
- Understand the culture of non-profit organizations such that students will be able to use a traditional PR plan model within a non-profit setting.
- Think more creatively because of a stronger appreciation for the role of innovation in the non-profit setting.

**Class Format:** This is a seminar class. Therefore, the class will be based on discussions, student presentations, and class activities. **This is not a lecture-based class.** I will post readings and materials on D2L. Students are required to go through the materials and be prepared to discuss on the topic in the class. I want the class to be student-centric where they learn through active participation in the class. I will be here to provide guidance and answer any questions.

**Class Policies**

Communication with the Professor

Please use your university email to communicate with the professor. Please talk to me at any time if you have questions or concerns. I am here to help, but if you don't ask me, I can't help you.

All electronic communication should be professional. If you decide to communicate with the professor via email, you should:

- use only professional email (nothing like [donotcallme@yahoo.com](mailto:donotcallme@yahoo.com)),
- always use the following subject line: CMN 4921: MAIN REASON YOU ARE WRITING,
- have a professional greeting,
- include your full name, class (CMN 4921) in your email,
- write email as you were to write an actual letter (use a standard greeting, clearly state the purpose of your email in the lead, choose words carefully, etc.), and
- be SHORT, professional, and respectful.

A grammatically correct, organized short email is a simple and effective way to show your respect and professionalism. **I reserve the right NOT to answer any emails that do not meet these requirements.** Any emails on weekdays will be answered within 24 hours. Weekend emails will be answered on the next weekday of classes (i.e., if there is a school holiday on Monday, the email will be answered on Tuesday).

**Attendance:** Attendance is the KEY to pass this class, you are expected to be in the class every day. That said, I understand that life happens. Family issues, health issues, and other concerns may, and do, occur. So, everyone will get **THREE** absences with no penalty. They can be excused or unexcused. Use them wisely as anything beyond these absences, will result in point deductions. So, don't use up your three excused absences just because... something may come up later in the semester when you really do need to miss class.

For each absence after that you will lose 10 points (until 5 absences including the 3 with no penalty). After your sixth absence you will lose 100 points. You will get 0 for the attendance. If you are absent seven times or more, your final grade will be deducted by a letter grade in addition to getting 0 for the attendance.

Please do not arrive late to the class or leave early. If you arrive to class more than 5 minutes late then that will be considered as ½ absence. If you arrive late more than 2 times, then each tardiness will be considered absence.

If you miss a class, you are responsible for accessing the information we covered in class and for completing all readings and assignments that are due that class (by the current deadline) and the next class. **Do not contact the professor asking what you missed or if you missed anything important.** You are responsible for figuring out yourself what you missed and how best to prepare for the next class. Missing a class does not excuse you from completing assignments.

**Make-up Policy:** If you miss a class, you **will not be able to make-up any quizzes** and/or any in-class activities. However, if you have an excused, documented absence such as illness or family emergencies, you will have one opportunity to make-up

missed quizzes. Please note that this option will be available **one time only** for missed quizzes. Please contact me ahead of time, or as soon as possible (in case of emergency), to take advantage of this option. Please note that **scheduled routine appointments with a doctor, dentist, etc. will not qualify you for this make-up option.**

### **Late work policy**

Deadlines are critical in public relations and therefore they will also be critical in this class. Late work, which is every assignment submitted after deadline, will be dropped by one letter grade (10%) per day it is late and only accepted until two days after the initial due date. Any work handed in after that will receive 0 points.

### **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 Accessibility & Accommodations (OAA). All accommodations must be approved through OAA. Please stop by McAfee Gym, Room 1272, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

### **Academic Support Center**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Academic Support Center for assistance with time management, test 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 McAfee Gym, Room 2230.

### **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.

### **Assignments**

*Discussion Questions, Artifacts, and In-Class Activities*-Students are required to bring and submit discussion questions and artifacts (videos, images, articles, examples etc.) for the day they are assigned to facilitate the discussion in the class. Students will also take part in class activities throughout the semester.

*Quizzes*: There will be 5 quizzes in the class. The quizzes will be based on the topic that we covered in the class.

*Communication Audit*- Students will prepare and present communication audit for two non-profit organizations. Details will be provided in the class.

*Non-Profit Interview*: Find a non-profit of your choice and do some research on the background, mission, and values of the nonprofit. You are required to interview a representative of the non-profit. You need to have at least 10 questions. The questions must be based on what we have discussed about non-profits in the class so far. You then need to reflect on your takeaways from the interview. You will present the findings from your interview in the class. Detailed instructions will be provided in the class.

*Final Project*-At the end of the term, students will submit a PR plan for a non-profit organization of their choice. Students will take part in the professional presentation of the plan. Details will be provided in the class.

### **Point Distribution**

#### **Grading**

This class will be based on a system of 800 points.

Discussion Questions, Artifacts, and In-Class Activities	200 points
Communication Audit and presentation	100 points
Non-Profit Interview and presentation	100 points
Final Project	100 points
Attendance	100 points
Final Project Presentation	50 points
Quizzes	50 points
Mid-term Exam	50 points
Final Exam	50 points

#### **Grading Scale**

A (100-90%)

B (89-80%)

C (79-70%)

D (69-60%)  
F (59-0%)

### Tentative Class Schedule

Week	Topic	To Dos
1(January 9 &11)	Class Introduction Introduction to Nonprofit Organizations	Review readings on D2L. Bring one discussion question and one artifact (video, image, article etc.) for class discussion.
2(January 16 &18)	The Role of Public Relations in Nonprofit Organizations	Review readings on D2L. Bring one discussion and one artifact for class discussion.
3 (January 23 &25)	The Role of Public Relations in Nonprofit Organizations	Find articles on the role of public relations in nonprofit organizations. Bring two article to share and discuss with the class. Assigned: Communication audit of two (2) non-profit organizations.
4 (January 30 & February 1)	Digital and Social Media in the Nonprofit World	Review readings on D2L. Bring one discussion question and one artifact for class discussions.
5 (February 6 &8)	Digital and Social Media in the Nonprofit World Continued	Bring an example of a non-profit that is using digital and social media well. Class discussions and in-class activities
6 (February 13 &18)	Present your communication audit in the class.	<b>Due: Communication audit of two non-profits before the class on February 13.</b>
7 (February 20&22)	Branding and Nonprofits	Review readings on D2L. Bring one discussion question and an artifact for class discussions. Assigned: Non-profit Interview
8 (February 27&29)	Branding and Nonprofits continued	Find a non-profit with a strong brand identity. Come to the class prepared to talk about the non-profit.
9 (March 5 &7)	Mobilizing Stakeholders (Celebrities, Influencers	Review readings on D2L. Bring a discussion question and an

	Volunteers & Strategic Partnerships)	artifact for class discussion
10 (March 12 &14)	Review what we have learned so far <b>Mid-Term Exam</b>	
<b>11 (March 19&amp;21)</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>
12 (March 26&28)	Present nonprofit interview in the class  Media Relations, Tools & non-profit resources (social media, data/research) and pitching media	<b>Due: Nonprofit Interview before class on March 26</b> <b>Assigned: Final Project</b>
13(April 2&4)	Media Relations, Tools & non-profit resources Contd...	Bring an example of media kit of a non-profit organization. Discussions and Class Activities
14(April 9 &11)	Media Relations, Tools & non-profit resources Contd...	In-Class Activities
15(April 16&18))	Work on Final Project	
16 (April 23&25)	Present the final project in the class Wrap-Up	<b>Final Project Due: April 25</b>
17 (Finals Week)	<b>May 1 @ 2:45 p.m.</b>	

