PBRL 3014

MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER, 2009

JUST THE FACTS...

Professor: Patricia Parsons APR, FCPRS
Office: Seton Annex #33
Telephone: MSVU 457-6481; Home Office 823-1112
Fax: 823-1688
Email: biomed@eastlink.ca or message via Moodle
Office Hours: TBA
Class Hours: MW 12:30-1:45 pm
Web Site: Moodle live

WHAT 3014 IS ABOUT...

This course is one of the most important ones that you’ll ever take in PR. The ability to think strategically and to develop and implement well-executed public relations plans are always identified as the most important knowledge and skill sets in our industry. In general, the following are the broad goals that I have for this course:
1. To apply the management concepts introduced in PBRL 2014 to the public relations function within organizations.

2. To explore the concept of organizational environments, both internal (organizational or corporate culture) and external, the analysis of which provides clues about the organization’s public relations problems and opportunities.

3. To help you develop the right attitude that will support a strategic approach to your public relations practice within a framework of social responsibility.

4. To help you to develop the knowledge and skills that you will need to plan, implement and evaluate overall public relations strategies as well as individual tactics.

5. To help you to utilize both traditional public relations tools and new social media tactics within a coordinated strategy designed to achieve specific objectives.

**WHAT YOU’LL BE EXPECTED TO ACCOMPLISH...**

The following are the course objectives. A careful examination of these objectives will provide you with guidance about exactly what you will be expected to have accomplished by the end of the term and what you will be graded on. Upon successful completion of PBRL 3014, you should be able to:

1. Use your knowledge of the management & other theories as rationales for public relations and communications campaign planning.

2. Use your knowledge of corporate culture to analyze the internal environment of an organization, subsequently identifying internal public relations & communications problems and opportunities.

3. Analyze the external environment of an organization to determine PR & communications problems and opportunities facing an organization.

4. Develop a creative public relations/communications plan for an organization using the public relations process.

5. Advise a client on the implementation of the PR plan.

6. Create both traditional and new media materials for your client to support the plan you have created.

7. Identify & justify the selection of appropriate evaluation strategies to complete the public relations planning process.
8. Critique public relations and communication campaigns.

**YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS COURSE...**

Professors have responsibilities and so do students. These are yours.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

You are responsible for completion of all assignments (if you fail to submit one, regardless of how much it is worth, you will fail the course). You are responsible to complete all assignments on time. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Late assignments lose 20% per day including the day they are due if they aren’t on the desk when class starts. After 5 days the assignment will receive an F. If you are going to have difficulty meeting a deadline, discuss it with me before the deadline and we may be able to make some mutually acceptable, fair arrangements. (For example, if you are in a coma and send someone to negotiate, I’ll consider your request).

**TEAM WORK**

Like it or not, there is team work involved in this course – that is distinct from “group work.” Public relations involves a lot of team work (not group work) and you might as well get used to being a part of a management team. We’ll talk more about that in class. You are responsible for being a solid team player in this course. If any team has human resource problems, it is up to the team leader (you have to pick one) to come to me for advice. Each team member will submit with team assignments a statement of his or her role and this will be signed by all other team members.¹

**QUALITY OF ASSIGNMENT PRESENTATION**

It’s time for you to think about being a Public Relations professional and behave as one. All assignments should reflect the highest level of professional presentation that you can muster. That means the following:

► All written assignments are to be submitted online through the course Moodle site. If there are additional materials that need to accompany these, they will be submitted in class on the date indicated in the syllabus.

¹ A form for this purpose is being provided to you in a separate document.
► There will be absolutely no plagiarism tolerated. If you forget what this means, I suggest you look it up. It is your responsibility to review the university regulations regarding plagiarism and cheating.

► The correct use of language is one of the criteria included in the evaluation of all written assignments.

CLASSE DECORUM

You have a responsibility to yourself, your classmates and to your professor to actually show up for class. It will be impossible to pass this course without attending class since the reading materials are only value-added aspects of the course: most of what you need to succeed as a PR practitioner will be conveyed in class through lectures, class discussions, videos and clients. You are expected to participate to the best of your ability. Please no hats with peaks or brims, or gum chewing in class. No cell phone calls or texting. I promise to afford you the same courtesy.

MY RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS COURSE...

The main responsibility that I have is to show up so that the university will pay me my salary. However, I believe that my responsibilities to you and to the PR profession go a bit further than that. Here is what I am committed to.

► Presenting useful material to you in a way that makes you want to come to class and not see it as a responsibility so much as a delight.

► Being fair and equitable in how I treat students and apply policies and grading criteria. Keep in mind that this is not a science.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING COMPETENCE REQUIREMENT

BASIC WRITING COMPETENCE IS A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR PASSING THIS COURSE

Because writing is an important part of our field’s professional practice, the Department of Public Relations cannot allow its students to graduate or intern if they do not have the ability to write correct English. Consequently, writing competence is a requirement in all department courses, and it must be demonstrated in all classes. This means that students who fail more than one assignment in this course due to a lack of writing competence will not pass, regardless the accumulation of points they achieve through team work, class participation, and the like.
The department plays a significant role in developing student writing; however, it does not offer instruction in basic writing skills because these skills are *beneath* the academic level at which PR courses occur. The faculty presumes that every student’s general education included twelve years of writing-skills training, and therefore expects an English language competence in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and semantics. **The responsibility to achieve that minimal standard lies with the student.**

The professor will not suspend this requirement by virtue of a student’s willingness to obtain **remedial writing instruction.** The public relations profession is writing intensive, and employers expect PR students to excel as writers, in comparison with the general public. Consequently the department requires the actual existence of writing skills, rather than the hope or the promise of these skills, as a condition for advancing students.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD READ...**

**COURSE TEXTS**

Please note that I have not designated anything as “required.” Indeed, not even assignments are required – unless you plan to pass the course, in that case they are required for you. However, if you plan to get a good grade or even simply pass this course, you will do all the suggested reading, attend all classes (barring comas and natural disasters), participate to the best of your ability and submit all assignments by the deadline. Then you won’t have to worry: your grade will take care of itself.


**PERIODICALS**

The following articles should be scanned carefully – they will be especially important to kick-start your background reading as you complete your client-based assignment.


**COURSE PREREQUISITES**

The prerequisite for this course is Public Relations 2014. Students who have not successfully completed PBRL 2014 will be dropped from the course.
MARKING SCHEME

Please note that failure to submit any one assignment will result in a failing grade for the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social media case presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Written submissions due:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>November 1 (upload to Moodle site)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Presentations as scheduled in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client-Based Written PR/</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Written submissions due:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Plan &amp; presentation</td>
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<td>December 4</td>
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<td>Presentation as scheduled in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final in-class examination</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>December 7</td>
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ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

SOCIAL MEDIA CASE PRESENTATION

The purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to learn more about specific social media tools & tactics by researching the tool itself and how it has been used by a single organization. Worth 25% of your final grade for PBRL 3014, this is an assignment that requires you to find an organization whose Internet presence clearly indicates the application of social media tools & techniques to its public communication strategy. This is to be presented as a written case study which is due to be uploaded to the class Moodle site by November 1. You will then present this case study to your classmates on November 4, 9 or 16.

Your case may focus on one or more of the following social media tools:

- Social networking
- Business networking
- Podcasting
- Viral video
- Virtual community
- Wikis
- Blogging
- Social bookmarking
- Microblogging
- Content communities
- Virtual product placement

Using the web as your initial source, you are required to find an organization that is using this social media tool. This case study will be the illustration of your in-depth analysis of this tool, its development, its uses, its inherent benefits and its pitfalls. You must also extrapolate from this case to discuss how you believe this tool might be used by other organizations in other venues of practice. (You will need to do background research on the organization and its industry, what its competitors are doing, what the future of the industry holds, what the business and academic literature says about this particular tool).

This will be a tightly edited paper/case study of between 1000-1200 words. It is a business case study.

Paul R. Lawrence, defines the case study as follows:

> A good case is the vehicle by which a chunk of reality is brought into the classroom to be worked over by the class and the instructor. A good case keeps the class discussion grounded upon some of the stubborn facts that must be faced in real life situations. It is the anchor on academic flights of speculation. It is the record of complex situations that must be literally pulled apart and put together again before the situations can be understood. It is the target for the expression of attitudes or ways of thinking brought into the classroom.²

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The case will consist of the following:

1. **Presentation of the Situation**: A description of the organization, its industry (including competition and external challenges), its publics and the specific public targeted by this communication tactic.

2. **Identification of the problem or opportunity** that this particular technique capitalizes on.

3. Description about this **social media tool** in general and this organization’s in particular.

4. **Evaluation** of the use of the tool(s) as part of a PR/communication strategy: Using the background information you have gleaned through your research, this is your chance to analyze how effective/ineffective, appropriate/inappropriate, high quality/low quality etc you believe this to be. You need to back up your conclusions.

5. Then, make some **recommendations** about how this tool could be used better, replaced by something else (be specific) etc.

Be sure to provide appropriate and complete documentation and write it well using a business style. You will upload the case to the Case Study Assignment Centre by 11:55 pm on the date due.

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**CLIENT-BASED PR/COMMUNICATION PLAN AND PRESENTATION**

The purpose of this assignment is to allow you to work with a real client, to understand their business and the environment within which they function, and to contribute to building a strategic plan to enhance their relationship with important publics, communicate their message and achieve their goals.

This team assignment is worth 30% of your final grade for PBRL 3014. Each team member will submit a signed statement of what he/she contributed to the case and will ensure that this statement is signed by all team members at the conclusion of the assignment. I reserve the right to assign different grades to team members if warranted.

Working as part of an assigned team, you will follow the assignment guide for your team’s assigned portion of the strategic and operational plan. Specific details of requirements and expectations are provided in a separate assignment document.
PARTICIPATION

You are expected to participate. This participation can come in two forms: participation in discussions that take place in class or contributing to the class forum on the Moodle site. Participating in both will result in a higher grade. Participation in neither will result in an ‘F’ for the course.

This means that you will be engaged in discussion especially as it relates to the development of your plans for the client. Participation is worth 15% of your final grade. Missing classes will result in a lower grade for participation. Initiating discussion will result in a higher grade. It is a reasonable expectation that your contributions to the class discussion will be informed by the course reading.

FINAL IN-CLASS EXAMINATION

The capstone assignment is a 1.5 hour in-class written examination that will take place on the last day of class. The purpose of this assignment is to enable you to demonstrate a synthesis of the course content. This exam is worth 35% of your final grade. Please bring only your pens to class that day.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CLASS TOPIC</th>
<th>READING &amp; ASSIGNMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 9</td>
<td>Course Intro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 14 &amp; 16</td>
<td>Management concepts applied to PR &amp; communication planning</td>
<td>Parsons, Chapter 1</td>
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<td>Sept. 21</td>
<td>Teamwork in PR &amp; Communication: Client Assignment</td>
<td>Solis &amp; Breakenridge, Chapter 1 &amp; 2</td>
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<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>Writing &amp; Presenting PR Plans/Reports/Proposals</td>
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<td>Sept. 28</td>
<td>The “New PR”</td>
<td>Solis &amp; Breakenridge, Chapter 3-6</td>
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<td>Sept. 30</td>
<td>The “New PR (cont’d)”</td>
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<td>Oct. 5 &amp; 7</td>
<td><strong>Research</strong>: Internal (Corporate culture redux)</td>
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<td><strong>Research</strong>: External (Reputation &amp; Image)</td>
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<td>Oct. 12</td>
<td><strong>Thanksgiving</strong>: No Classes</td>
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<td>Oct. 14</td>
<td>Social Media: Strategy &amp; Tools</td>
<td>Solis &amp; Breakenridge, Chapters 7, 8, 9</td>
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<td>Oct. 19</td>
<td>Social Media (cont’d)</td>
<td>S &amp; B, Chapter 10, 12, 13,14</td>
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<td>Oct. 21</td>
<td>Rationales: Why do it that way?</td>
<td>S &amp; B, Chapter 11</td>
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<td>Oct. 26</td>
<td><strong>Plan</strong>: Objectives &amp; Messages</td>
<td>Parsons, Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Plan: Formulating a Creative Strategy</td>
<td>Written Case Studies Due to be uploaded Nov 1, 11:55 pm</td>
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<td>Plan: Public Relations Tactics:</td>
<td>S &amp; B, Chapter 16, 17</td>
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<td>Convergence of old &amp; new</td>
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<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>Social Media Cases</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 4</td>
<td>Social Media Cases</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 9</td>
<td>Remembrance Day: No Classes</td>
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<td>Nov. 11</td>
<td>Social Media Cases</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>Our Client: Background &amp; Situational</td>
<td>Team Presentation #1</td>
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<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Parsons, Chapter 4</td>
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<td>Implement: Managing the Resources</td>
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<td>Evaluate: Developing the Evaluation</td>
<td>S &amp; B, Chapter 18, Parsons, Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Strategy</td>
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<td>Nov. 23</td>
<td>Our Client: Reputation &amp; Image</td>
<td>Team Presentation #2</td>
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<td>Team Presentations #3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Client Presentations</td>
<td>Team Presentations #5 &amp; 6, Written plans due Dec 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>Client Presentations</td>
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