

COM 377 Public Relations Campaigns
School of Communication
Illinois State University
Spring 2024

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11am-12pm; Thursdays 2:30-4:30 and by appointment, just ask! Zoom is always an option on request.

Catalog Course Description

Theory and research related to professional experience in strategizing and executing public relations. Prerequisites: COM 111, 161, 268, 297.

Additional Description

This course is one of two capstone courses in the public relations major, and students will be challenged to do their very best work and will be held accountable for it. This course blends lecture, in-class discussion, and out-of-class work to extend the principles of public relations and integrated marketing communication. Advanced academic readings, industry publications, and case studies will also reveal how effective public relations tactics, strategies, and campaigns are conceived, developed, implemented and measured. The culmination of the course is a complete public relations campaign plan for a client that students develop during the semester. Students will compete in agency teams.

Course Objectives

I will expect the most perfect (textbook) and compelling (creative) work you can possibly produce. You are now seniors and will soon be released into the wilds of PR and the integrated marketing communication industries.

More specifically, upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Define the basic process in agencies and organizations for developing integrated communication campaigns and designing messages for clients and/or the organization.
2. Demonstrate understanding of PESO and its underlying processes and strategy
3. Demonstrate knowledge of relevant campaign design theories and concepts.
4. Effectively understand, design, and articulate the goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics needed for assigned client campaign.
5. Design and conduct research (on behalf of a specific client) appropriate to a public relations campaign.
6. Create a PR campaign plan specifically addressing the goal/desired outcome and target audiences of a client.
7. Develop and produce public relations strategies and tactics in support of such a campaign.
8. Present the campaign persuasively in a competitive pitch.
9. Know how to perform in a professional setting (including your agency team) and how you will be expected to think and act when given communication challenges.
10. Understand the awesomeness of the PR industry you are about to enter.
 - a. FYI: I seriously love what I do. I get seriously ticked off when PR is misrepresented or misunderstood (as it often is). Thus, we spend a lot of time at the beginning of the class understanding the field and giving you all the knowledge and skills to defend the field.

Texts & Readings

- *The PR Campaigns Worktext* by Maria Elles Scott. E-book or print, both are fine!
- *The Associated Press stylebook and briefing on media law*, Associated Press (2022), which you had to get for 268. Earlier editions will cause you problems, especially with technology-related stuff. There is also a tablet/mobile version available, www.apstylebook.com/mobile/. All work is expected to apply AP Style, just as you will be expected to do when you enter industry. **NOTE:** I expect all in-text citations, references, and format of assignments (exceptions noted on assignments) to be in APA Style. Please see this as reference, some online bib creators are unreliable: The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- Hootsuite and/or Muck Rack training materials: Social Marketing Certification & Platform Training Certification. **Free** through their educational resources, follow course resources to access – if it is asking you to pay, you’re following the wrong links!
- Readings available through the course page on Canvas. In addition to book chapters (see scheduled), every week has its own module on Canvas. There will be more industry readings and podcasts than are listed here in the syllabus, and if it is in the tab for the listed week, it is an assigned/required reading.

Assignments & Assessments (Subject to change*)

All assignments are expected to be to the highest level of collegiate writing, written in AP Style with APA style in-text citations and references (thus, the pre-reqs of 268 and 297), except when noted. **I reserve the right to turn back highly flawed work ungraded.** Please see more details, below, in “Class Policies.”

*I will try really hard to keep everything, but if COVID or something else screws life up, we may drop something.

- **Current campaign/Current news assignment:** Throughout the semester, everyone is responsible for a well-researched five- to seven-minute presentation on a topic of importance to the industry. You may do this in pairs or individually, your choice. We will sign up for presentation days the second week of class.
- **Google Analytics and Social Media Certifications:** We are completing the online training for Google Analytics and a couple of social media & media relations certifications.
- **Quizzes:** Instead of one big exam, will be having 3 quizzes/tests throughout the semester. They will be online Thursday-Fridays to be completed within 24 hours. They are to be completed individually. *Missed/forgotten quizzes cannot be made up and you will receive a zero unless you have a documented emergency. If you are completing them with others, your score will be halved.*
- **In-class assignments:** There will be some in-class assignments during the semester that will require close attention to the assigned readings and the videos linked in Canvas.
- **Participation and attendance:** Participation is more than just showing up; it is being engaged in class discussions, contributing answers, being a good class citizen, not being on your phone/laptop, etc. Readings are to be completed before class, and I expect informed participation from all students. I realize off-days happen, but please come prepared to class and ready to discuss our readings. Please see attendance and lateness policy, below. *There may be pop quizzes, if I get the impression that readings aren’t being done, or if there is a particularly bad attendance day.*
- **The Campaign:** The purpose of the campaign is to give you hands-on experience with “the stuff” of public relations covered during the first half of the semester. As a team, you’ll act as an agency, planning for a client (either real or “faux”), analyze problems and opportunities, and propose a public relations campaign to address the client’s needs. You will prepare your campaign proposal piecemeal, and you may submit your work in progress for “no-stakes” feedback on your content and its quality as you develop the sections. The final product will be the “high-stakes” graded work. Toward the end of the course you will also pitch, framing your

work persuasively. The presentation will be backed-up with a campaign plan book that explains your team's campaign and includes materials that can immediately put into use. Your presentation and book will also explain how the campaign is to be implemented and evaluated. *If we work with an external client, the campaign plan book, presentation, and all ideas and material developed for the client will become the property of the client to be used as the client sees fit without remuneration to you and your team. You are encouraged to keep a copy of your team's final campaign material for yourself to use in your portfolio. I also reserve the right to not allow a team to pitch, if their work is not client-ready.* **NOTE: Team members not contributing to the team's work may be fired, in consultation with me (and only with my approval), just as you would be in the real world.**

- **Peer evaluation:** There will be two peer evals for the campaign. The first is for points and the second will adjust the total points awarded on the campaign. So, top effort? 100% of graded points. Peer eval scores low, indicating less effort? A sliding scale of points awarded.

Teamwork

Much public relations work takes place in a team environment; consequently, much of the work for this course will be done in self-selected teams. A small amount of in-class time will be provided for team activity and team consultations with me. You will be given a chance to evaluate your teammates campaign at the end of the course. *Note: This means I will know if you are "that" group member. Don't be that group member – you will be "fired" by your group.*

Grading

Final grades are assigned on the basis of accumulation of points compared to the total possible points that may be earned for the semester (see the scale below). I do not "curve" grades on any assignment or exam, nor do I "curve" final course grades. I evaluate the end products of your work, not effort. To calculate your grade, keep track of your points and then divide by the number possible.

Assignments	Available Points	Earned Points
In-class assignments (point total approximate, may vary)	60	
Quizzes/Tests (3 at ~50 points each, may vary)	150	
Certifications	100	
Current campaign assignment	100	
Participation	100	
Campaign Plan Points:		
Pitch	100	
Campaign Book	300	
Peer Evaluation 1	50	
Peer Evaluation 2	*	
Total campaign points awarded will be adjusted with effort		
TOTAL	960	
Extra Credit Available:		
Winning Team <i>Bonus</i>	15	
Research Pool (see end of syllabus)	15	
Random in class stuff	TBA	

Assignment grades will be posted on Canvas's gradebook, please keep track of them there. If you disagree with my evaluation of your work, or it is clear that I have misgraded something, please see me during office hours or after class *within one week* after I have returned your work. I will not discuss grades at any other time. I follow conventional rounding-up procedures (see scale below)

**see late policy under Course Policies*

Rounding

I use conventional rounding procedures, e.g. 71.75% would be rounded to a C, and those rounding procedures are actually reflected in the grading scale below. **No** exceptions. Don't ask.

Grading scale

Please note this might be different than your other classes:

A=91.51%-100%	B=81.51%-91.5%	C=71.51%-81.5%	D=60%-71.5%	F=0-60%
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Incompletes

Incompletes will be granted only when a documented emergency prevents you from completing the class, you contacted the Dean of Students Office, *and* you have completed at least approximately two-thirds (66%) of the course.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic & Assignments	Reading/Assignment Due <i>Note: The readings are expected to be completed BEFORE class on the day they are listed. Industry readings/podcasts are available on the module for the week – they are required.</i>
Tue., Jan 16	Welcome! Syllabus and all that jazz. What is PR today? School Cancelled!	Visit Canvas site, read syllabus.
Thu., Jan 18	Intro to class; Review of PR and its role in marketing	Intro readings for first week in Canvas module Industry readings
Tue., Jan 23	Campaigns Overview Assign Current Campaign/News Assignment	Scott Chapter 1 Johnston Chapter 1 <i>Read Current Campaign Assignment file</i>
Thu., Jan 25	Campaigns Overview Continued	Chapter 2 Podcasts, industry readings Barbie!
Tue., Jan 30	PESO Model & Tactics Overall Muck Rack & Other certifications assigned	Chapter 10 Industry readings
Thu., Feb 1	PESO Model continued, media relations Possible short in-class assignment	Chapter 3 continued Industry readings and podcasts
Tue., Feb 6	In-class assignment on campaigns	
Thu., Feb 8	Finish in-class assignment	Quiz 1 Online
Tue., Feb 13	AI in PR	Industry readings
Thu., Feb 15	Defining the Client Problem – Objectives, Goals etc	Chapter 3 Industry readings
Tue., Feb 20	Target audiences	Industry readings/online readings

Thu., Feb 22	In-class assignment on objectives & goals	Chapter 4 Industry readings
Tue., Feb 27	Campaign Launch – do not miss this day!	Read assignment online
Thu., Feb 29	Creating research plans	Chapter 5 Industry readings
Tue., Mar 5	Research continued	Chapter 6-7
Thu., Mar 7	Campaign work day	Quiz 2 Online
Tue., Mar 12	Spring Break	
Thu., Mar 14	Spring Break	
Tue., Mar 19	Situation analysis	Chapter 8 Industry readings
Thu., Mar 21	Using research to design tactics	Chapter 10 (again)
Tue., Mar 26	Social media strategies	TBD
Thu., Mar 28	The BOOK	Chapter 8
Tue., Apr 2	The BOOK	Chapter 9 Industry Resources
Thu., Apr 4	Work Day – Becky at CSCA	
Tue., Apr 9	TBD, let's see where we are	
Thu., Apr 11	Implementation	Industry resources
Tue., Apr 16	Evaluation	Chapter 11
Thu., Apr 18	Work Day	Quiz 3 Online
Tue., Apr 23	Pitching!	Chapter 13 Industry resources
Thu., Apr 25	Work day	

Tue., Apr 30	Dress rehearsals	Schedule TBD
Thu., May 2	Pitches	Campaign Books and Pitch Due at start of class
Finals Week	Feedback Day during our scheduled final exam time (tbd, set by Registrar)	

NOTE: The content of this syllabus is subject to change as the course progresses. You are responsible for noting any such changes, which will be announced in class and/or posted on Canvas.

Course Policies

You also are expected to be familiar with [ISU's Code of Student Conduct](#).

Cell Phones, Laptops, Voice Recording, Texting, etc.

I encourage you to bring and use a laptop or tablet but please use it only to help you in your learning this class's content and watch YouTube macramé tutorials or do any other nonclass-related stuff. If you find something useful, please share it with the class. Turn off the volume, and no earbuds are allowed. If I see you smiling/laughing at your screen, I know you are watching cat videos on YouTube or TikTok.

If you know you are going to be watching videos, just don't come to class. It is distracting to everyone and you aren't getting anything from class anyway. *I can see them reflected in the Mac screens behind you, btw.*

I do not give you permission to video record me. If you need to audio record for note taking purposes, please talk to me about it. See full statement at the end of this.

Attendance

I don't take attendance, but I can usually tell when you aren't in class. Since a big part of your grade is participation, and nearly 50% of our content is presented in-class only, attendance is really important. Please let me know if you have an interview or big event for your internship, missing for reasons like that is fine (but missing for normal internship work is not). If an assignment is due, however, you are accountable to the due date and method of submission unless prior arrangements have been made with me.

If you miss class or are late, you are responsible for obtaining all assignments, notes and any other information that is given in class. I will not "reteach" material for you, although I'd be glad to answer specific questions. Don't send me an e-mail asking if anything important was covered. It was. Ask someone for their notes.

Illness

Get the Dean of Students notification sent my way, let me know, and we will figure it out. Do not come to class sick! Let me know and I'll record or try to Zoom.

Online Communication

I use e-mail and Canvas course announcements to communicate directly to you as an individual and as a class (and sometimes text if you have texted me first). Clean out and check your ISU e-mail account frequently for notes or announcements from me, your fellow students, the department, and the college. *Not checking your e-mail or Canvas is not grounds for any excuse for not doing or not doing well on*

any assignment. It's your responsibility to (1) keep your e-mail accounts open and up-to-date and (2) monitor your e-mail and Canvas class news frequently.

Online Course Material

I use Canvas extensively to organize the material for this course and make announcements about our class. If you have problems with Canvas, let me know *and* call the Help Desk at 309-438-4357.

The Canvas site for this class contains additional, required reading material for this course. This material used in connection with the course may be subject to copyright protection. Your viewing of the material posted on Canvas does not imply any right to reproduce, to retransmit or to redisplay it other than for your own personal or educational use. Links to other sites are provided for the convenience of the site user (staff or student) or visitor and do not imply any affiliation or endorsement of the other site owner nor a guarantee of the quality or veracity of information contained on the linked site.

Many files are PDFs and should open easily with Adobe Acrobat Reader to view and print them. If you don't have this free software, go to <http://www.adobe.com> to download that software.

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism and any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating (taking quizzes together) and plagiarism (presenting someone else's work as your own or without proper acknowledgment) or any other type of academic dishonesty will be considered justification for failure for that particular assignment or the entire course, depending on severity..) Although you may discuss with each other any assignment and course material, bounce ideas off each other, and share the university's resources available to you (e.g., media guides), you cannot share actual work you do with others. All work must be that of the student (or students involved in a group assignment) and developed during the current semester for *this* course. Sources must receive credit using APA style. For information regarding academic integrity and procedures for academic misconduct, see ISU's [Code of Student Conduct, Section V.B.1](#). You will be reported for academic misconduct if you engage in it.

TL;DR: TAKE QUIZZES ON YOUR OWN AND DO NOT REPURPOSE (i.e., copy and paste) other's words as your own! Doing so will result in failure of the assignment, and maybe the class, depending on severity. When in doubt, quote per APA style (totally cool as long as there isn't too much of it), reword and cite per APA style, or ask me, I'm always happy to help!

Anytime you use someone else's exact words, without APA quote style, is plagiarism. Really the only reason to use exact words is when the person's words/phrasing have significant impact, or there really is no way to effectively reword. Please see this:

Reminder, in-text citations look like this (Hayes, 2015), not "According to the article written by Hayes..."

AI/Chat GPT/Bard

By all means, go ahead and use it as you start work or to check things! I do. BUT – you need to reword and check your facts and citations/sources. Significant use of AI output will result in reduction of points – I use a pretty powerful detector. *Always save drafts.*

Please note that we are having a problem with Grammarly-checked work showing up as AI sometimes. Please keep your drafts before you check them within Grammarly in case you have issues (do this in all classes!)

Assignment Feedback

I give pretty direct feedback and edits – the goal is to fix problems before they are bigger problems in your campaign or for you professionally. Please don't take criticism personally, I am just trying to help you learn how to be the best PR person/writer.

On longer papers, I will give my focused comments on the first couple pages because after that the errors/problems are repetitive. I may note other things in later pages, but a lack of comments is not necessarily an indication of correctness or effectiveness. I also won't find absolutely everything because I am trying to get work back to you quickly. Of course, if you want more detailed help, visit with me.

Assignment Expectations

You are seniors now, and you'll be in the workforce soon, paid to figure stuff out without a lot of direction. Assignments in the "real world" (I hate that phrase) are rarely clear-cut. The assignments here (except for the quizzes) are designed with ambiguity built in, which should inspire you to think analytically about what you know and what you're learning and not just regurgitate a concept. So, please ask questions if something doesn't make sense, but feel free to be creative on assignments (meeting the basic requirements, of course).

The writing assignments in this course are meant to (1) apply principles and concepts covered in this course to realistic problems and (2) build upon and challenge you to improve your current skill level—to be more consistent with "real world" demands. All written work is expected to fulfill assignments' contexts, purposes and audiences just as they would if they were to be written to meet actual client needs. If the writing in any assignment does not meet this expectation, I reserve the right to withhold any or all points, and/or turn it back ungraded, depending on the severity of the writing's inappropriateness/ineffectiveness.

Good writing is both strong in content and technically correct in its presentation (i.e., grammar, style, discourse conventions, layout, and printing). All written work must fulfill the content requirements given in the assignments, conform to American Psychological Association (APA) and (where applicable) Associated Press (AP) styles, and be free of grammar, spelling, style and English usage errors. **Half a point will be deducted from your final score for each APA and AP error. Yes, it is that important.**

Assignments will be posted on Canvas and discussed in class. See the course schedule for details about all coursework. Please visit with me if you have any questions about any assignment or if you'd like some feedback about your work in progress.

Late work and missed work

All assignments are due no later than the time stated on the assignment. If in class, that means within the first five minutes of class. Anything received after the due time will be penalized 30% for each 24 hours it is late, starting after submission (so 30% off for an hour late, 60% off for 25 hours late). Many assignments will be collected electronically (via Canvas Assignments) and you will be given the specific due-time for those. You can totally turn work in early—especially if you are going to be absent the day something is due.

If a quiz or your presentation date is missed for the current campaign assignment, it cannot be made up/done late without documentation of an emergency.

If an assignment is missed for a reason deemed satisfactory by me, the same or a make-up assignment of observably greater difficulty may be required. Documentation for absences or late arrivals on days when assignments are due will also be required.

For your own protection, you are expected to keep digital copies of all assignments submitted to me. As you work on any computer remember to save your work frequently, always backup your work on another disk or other medium, and always protect your files and computer from viruses. I will not accept work turned in late because you had technology problems – including corrupted files submitted to Canvas. Open them again after submission to make sure they are readable. Tech problems wouldn't fly in PR and they won't fly here.

Accommodations

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu. Please let me know ASAP if you have accommodations!

Outside Preparation

Plan on spending between six (6) and nine (9) hours each week outside of class on your work for this course. You will need this time to complete assigned readings, write papers, develop team projects, and study for the quizzes. This load will be heavier toward the end of the semester, so work ahead if you can.

Teams

Teams can “fire” a non-performing or disruptive group member on the campaign. There is a process that must be followed, however, and it will be available in the Campaign Resources folder. I must be told of problems long before you get to that point, however, so I can step in and attempt to mediate.

Continued Enrollment

Your enrollment in this class constitutes agreement with all aspects of this syllabus and any additions or alterations that may be made to it during the course of the semester. Additions and alterations include announcements I post for the class in Canvas or make in class, and additions and alternations include e-mail sent to class members. Such additions and alterations include information about the course, assignments, and so on. It is your job to keep track of what is going on.

Extra Credit Opportunities

There may be the occasional extra credit pop quiz in class. These cannot be made up if you are not present unless you have an excused absence.

Research Participation - Extra Credit

There will be a few extra credit opportunities for research participation. The extra credit points will be added to your final grade, and **will not appear in the gradebook immediately upon your completion of the opportunity** – I don't get the lists until after a study ends. There are no guarantees for extra credit, and it is each student's responsibility to be aware of and take advantage of such opportunities. You may receive extra credit for participating in any of the studies posted to the School of Communication's Research Announcement Board. The Research Announcement Board is updated as research studies are opened/closed, and it is your responsibility to access the Board and be aware of available opportunities. The Research Announcement Board can be accessed via: <https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies>

In general, each 30 minutes of participation in an extra credit study will earn you .5 Research Credits, which translates into 2.5 points in this class. You may earn a total of 10 points participating in research (so, that means roughly four online surveys, or two bigger things like in-person focus groups or experiments). Please see the call for participants for the Research Credits associated with each study. Each Research Each project listed on the Research Announcement Board will indicate the

specific number of Research Credits associated with the project. The course instructor will get evidence of participation and the time of participation from the researcher(s) who administer the research studies at the conclusion of the semester; however, it is your responsibility to make sure that the researchers have the necessary evidence of your participation at the time of the study. Before participating in a study, please be sure to have your name, ULID (i.e., the part of your email before @ilstu.edu), instructor name, and course and section number ready, as you will need to provide these to receive credit. Research Credit can only be applied to one course for each study, unless specified otherwise on the Research Announcement Board. A maximum of 10 points can be earned from extra credit opportunities via the Research Announcement Board unless some special exception is given by Dr. Hayes. After the last day of class there will be no more opportunities for extra credit, don't ask ;)

Non-Research Extra Credit Opportunities (Instructor Determined)

There may be some studies for which you are not eligible (e.g., recruiting based on gender or family structure) or in which you do not wish to take part. Reasonable alternatives are available for those not able or wanting to take part in specific studies, to ensure equitable non-research based opportunities. Throughout the semester, the instructor will announce non-research opportunities for extra credit, which may include attending a colloquium, reading a recent article or research paper, or attending an on-campus event and writing a summary of the connection of the event to course content. The instructor will make these opportunities and specific details available as they arise.

Non-Research Extra Credit Opportunities (SoC Alternative)

There may be some studies for which you are not eligible (e.g., recruiting based on gender or family structure) or in which you do not wish to take part. Reasonable alternatives are available for those not able or wanting to take part in specific studies, to ensure equitable non-research based opportunities. For each available study in which you would like to complete an alternate assignment, please contact the instructor, who will assign a journal from which to identify and provide an annotated bibliography to the researcher consistent with the description on the Alternate Opportunities page (<https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies/home/students/alternates>) of the Board. You must complete and submit the research report to the researcher before the date the study closes--late submissions are not accepted. Alternate opportunities will be scaled by the course instructor to ensure commensurate time commitment and course credit with the research-based opportunity.

*I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus after it is posted, but I will always tell you if something major has changed. If it is something minor, like an extra reading or something, refer to the folder for that week.

Full ISU statement on recording:

Permission required to record

Students must obtain written permission from the instructor if they wish either to photograph classroom lectures or discussions or to record them using audio or video devices. This restriction includes visual materials that accompany the lecture/discussion, such as lecture slides, whiteboard notes/equations, etc. Such recordings are to be used solely for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the class in that semester. They may not be reproduced, shared in any way (including electronically or posting in any web environment) with those not in the class in that semester. Students with disabilities who need to record classroom lectures or discussions must contact Student Access and Accommodation Services to register, request and be approved for an accommodation. Students who violate this policy may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University's Code of Student Conduct.