

Georgetown University
Masters of Professional Studies – Public Relations/Corporate Communications
Fall 2009

Course: MPPR 605 – Public Relations Case Studies
Professor: Jessica Beauchemin
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Class Date/Time: Mondays, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Room: CLA 250B

Introduction

Just as history provides a framework for leaders on how to govern, the study of past and current public relations campaigns test public relations theories, illustrate the challenge of setting objectives, and offer valuable lessons on how to execute and evaluate PR campaigns.

This class will offer students the opportunity to review, discuss, and critically analyze multiple PR campaigns in a variety of disciplines. Using various models that will be discussed in the beginning of the semester, students will be able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of individual campaigns. In addition, students will gain a valuable body of knowledge of public relations tactics. While reviewing each case, students will be able to answer these types of questions:

- How exactly did a particular company generate so much media coverage for a product launch?
- How did that non-profit manage to bring so much awareness to their campaign?
- What exactly can a news release do for a campaign?
- How big of a budget do you need to execute a successful PR campaign?
- Or even though a particular event generated maximum media coverage, did it really meet its original objective?

Course Objectives

1. Understand the basic models that are used to develop, implement, and evaluate public relations campaigns.
2. Apply models while evaluating various PR campaigns in a multitude of PR disciplines as well as some of the classic PR campaigns in history.
3. Create a knowledge base of various PR tactics that can be used when planning a PR campaign.
4. Assess what constitutes a successful PR campaign.

Textbook

- **Required:** Center, A. et al. (2008). *Public Relations Practices: Managerial Case Studies and Problems*, 7th ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- **Recommended:** Hacker, D. (2009). *A Writer's Reference*, 6th ed. Bedford: St. Martin's Press.
- Any supplemental articles and case examples will be posted on the class Google Groups.

- Class members are expected to regularly read at least one daily newspaper and keep informed of news events from other media sources such as the Internet, weekly news magazines, or local/national TV. A subscription to *PR Week* is highly encouraged. *PR Week* and other reference materials are available in the school office.

General Criteria for Grading (360 points total)

Class Participation/Attendance 20% (60 points total)

- Active contribution to class and Google Group discussions
- Application/demonstration of concepts explored in class and in assignments
- Weekly class attendance

Individual Case Assignment (3) 30% (40 points each/120 points total)

- Clarity of writing
- Strength of argument/critical thinking/recommendations
- Completion of all questions assigned
- Sharing insights learned through brief in-class presentations or Google Group postings

Group Case Analyses (2) 20% (30 points each/60 points total)

- Deep understanding of communications challenge
- Comprehensiveness and depth of analysis, including incorporation of one PR model approach
- Insights gained from in-depth research
- Organization
- Clarity of writing
- Strength of argument/critical thinking/recommendations
- Citation of research
- Adherence to APA formatting requirements
- Team member assessment

Final Paper: Silver Anvil Case Assessment 30% (120 points total)

- Deep understanding of communications challenge
- Comprehensiveness and depth of analysis, including incorporation of one PR model approach
- Insights gained from in-depth research
- Organization
- Clarity of writing
- Strength of argument/critical thinking/recommendations
- Citation of research
- Adherence to APA formatting requirements

Contacting the Professor

Students may contact the professor via e-mail or by phone. The professor will also be available following class each week. Please note that during normal business hours the professor may not be able to immediately respond inquiries. All inquiries will receive a response within 24 hours.

Class Attendance/Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes throughout the semester. Your active participation in class discussions and exercises is a critical component of this course and your learning, as well as contributing to your overall grade. In order to contribute to the class discussion, students will need to read the assigned case studies **before** class. Three late

arrivals or early departures will equal one absence. More than two unexcused absences will result in the lowering of half a grade for **each** additional class that is missed. If you have to miss a class due to work or an emergency, please inform the professor in advance via e-mail.

Deadlines

Timely completion of all assignments is critical to student success in this graduate program. Students are expected to meet all deadlines outlined in this syllabus, should take assignment deadlines seriously, and plan in advance to allocate sufficient time to meet deadlines.

Assignments should be submitted to the professor via e-mail by midnight on Monday the week the assignment is due. As a rule, no late work will be accepted; however, we understand that extenuating circumstances may arise. Please inform the professor in advance via e-mail. Late submissions that have not been approved by the instructor (and for assignments submitted after an extension due date) will be penalized one full letter grade reduction for every week that assignments are late.

Professionalism/Grading

Students are expected to be professional in all dealings associated with this class. This includes treating any guest speakers with respect and providing them with your full attention.

In addition, all written assignments should be typed, proofread, grammatically correct, and follow APA style. Good writing is critical to success in public relations, therefore, excessive punctuation and grammatical errors will affect your grade.

Google Group

A Google Group has been created for this course, Georgetown MPRR – PR Case Studies (Fall 2009). Students are provided access to this site to not only access important course information, such as the syllabus and class assignments, but also as a way to interact with fellow classmates and respond to discussions from the class. The group e-mail address is: georgetown-mpr--pr-case-studies-fall-2009@googlegroups.com.

As part of the overall class participation grade, students are asked to post brief weekly reflections beginning in Week 3 by **Sunday at midnight**. The postings, which should be one to two paragraphs in length, should demonstrate an understanding of the models and concepts discussed in class and case study readings; this exercise will help students meet the overall course objectives. Feel free to comment on your classmates' postings or add personal examples to enhance your overall learning experience.

Georgetown University Honor Pledge

All students in enrolled in the Masters of Professional Studies abide by the Georgetown University Honor Pledge: In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: to be honest in any academic endeavor and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

PROJECTS

The projects for the semester are listed below. Students should incorporate public relations model approaches, such as ROPE, RACE, MBO and Grunig's models, into assignments noting potential positive or negative attributes.

Individual Case Assignments

There will be three individual case assignments during the semester. These assignments will be completed prior to class and students must be prepared to briefly present (5-10 minutes) key learnings with their peers. Due to limited class time, not all students will be able to present each week, but any key earnings can be incorporated into weekly reflections on Google Groups. Presentations will count toward class participation grade. *Assignment: Students will prepare analyses of the "Questions for Discussion" listed at the end of the cases due that assigned week.*

Group Case Analyses

There will be two group case analyses throughout the semester. Groups will not be assigned; therefore, students will be responsible for selecting three or four teammates during the first week of class and will share the group breakdown with the professor. The week before the group assignment is due, the professor will dedicate 20-30 minutes of class time for group meetings/discussion. It is important to note that groups are responsible for adhering to the same grading standards as individual assignments; keeping in mind that group submissions must be written in one clear voice. *Assignment: The group will select two cases in book that will not be used during the semester. Using a different PR model for each assignment, the group will prepare a formal case study and offer creative suggestions for how the company/organization could have improved the campaign.*

Final Paper – Silver Anvil Case Assessment

Select a Silver Anvil award winner from 2009 and provide a 10-15 page in-depth assessment of the case (<http://www.prsa.org/awards/silveranvil/>). This will involve extensive research into the campaign itself, networking with the agency/nonprofit/organization who conducted the campaign, and any additional information about the current status of the campaign. A list of detailed questions will be provided to help analyze the case. Students may not select any cases discussed in class or in the Google Group.

Session Date	Topics/Objectives	Readings/Assignments
Class #1 9/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Course Overview ▪ Introductions to Instructor/Course/Classmates ▪ Review Basic Policies/Grading and Expectations/Goals for the Course ▪ PRSA Code of Ethics ▪ Approach to Problem Solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Center et al., Chapters 1 and 2 ▪ Case 6-3: Tylenol Rides it Out and Gains a Legacy
NO CLASS 9/7 – Labor Day Holiday		
Class #2 9/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of different PR Models including RACE, ROPE, MBO & Grunig's Models ▪ Analyzing a Public Relations Campaign ▪ Case 6-3: Tylenol Rides it Out and Gains a Legacy 	Readings will be focused on Community Relations & Public Issues Campaigns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case 4-3: The Struggle for Nuclear Power ▪ Case 8-2: Take Your Choice—Tobacco or Health
Class #3 9/21	Guest Lecturer: Elaine Yin, Associate Director, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Community Relations & Public Issue Campaigns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case 4-3: The Struggle for Nuclear Power ▪ Case 8-2: Take Your Choice—Tobacco or Health 	Readings will be focused on Internal Communications & Employee Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case 3-1: Investing in Employees Pays Off ▪ Case 3-2: Southwest Airlines – Where Fun, Luv, and Profits Go Hand-in-Hand
Class #4 9/28	Internal Communications & Employee Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case 3-1: Investing in Employees Pays Off ▪ Case 3-2: Southwest Airlines – Where Fun, Luv, and Profits Go Hand-in-Hand ▪ Brief Presentations: Individual Problem Solving Cases 	Individual Case Assignment Due (1) Readings will be focused on Integrated Marketing Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case: Digital Trailblazing – Kodak Pops Up in Unexpected Places
Class #5 10/5	Integrated Marketing Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case: Digital Trailblazing – Kodak Pops Up in Unexpected Places ▪ Brief Presentations: Individual Problem Solving Cases 	Readings will be focused on Multicultural Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case: The Campaign to Rescue & Restore Victims of Human Trafficking ▪ Case: Fighting HIV with R&B
NO CLASS 10/12 – Columbus Day Holiday		
Class #6 10/19	Guest Lecturer: Fran Bernhards, Vice President, Ketchum Multicultural Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case: The Campaign to Rescue & Restore Victims of Human Trafficking ▪ Case: Fighting HIV with R&B 	Readings will be focused on Media Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case 7-1: There's a Syringe in My Pepsi Can! ▪ Case 7-3: GM verses NBC: A Corporate Crisis of Explosive Proportions
Class #7 10/26	Media Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current trends in media relations ▪ Case 7-1: There's a Syringe in My Pepsi Can! ▪ Case 7-3: GM verses NBC: A 	Individual Case Assignment Due (2) Readings will be focused on International Public Relations

	Corporate Crisis of Explosive Proportions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case: The Electronic Product Code: From Concept to Commercialization in One Year Case: Charlotte Beers, Karen Hughes & Public Diplomacy in the Middle East
Class #8 11/2	International Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case: The Electronic Product Code: From Concept to Commercialization in One Year Case: Charlotte Beers, Karen Hughes & Public Diplomacy in the Middle East 	Group Case Analysis Due (1) Readings will be focused on Investor & Financial Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case: Managing Corporate Mergers
Class #9 11/9	Investor & Financial Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case: Managing Corporate Mergers 	Readings will be focused on Public Service & Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case: The Marijuana Initiative Case: The Heart Truth
Class #10 11/16	Guest Lecturer: TBC, National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign Public Service & Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case: The Marijuana Initiative Case: The Heart Truth 	Readings will be focused on Standards, Ethics, and Values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case 10-3: Nike's Labor Practices Under Scrutiny Case 10-4: Dow Corning and Breast Implants: Dealing with Perception of Deception
Class #11 11/23	Standards, Ethics, and Values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case 10-3: Nike's Labor Practices Under Scrutiny Case 10-4: Dow Corning and Breast Implants: Dealing with Perception of Deception Class Time for Group Project 	Individual Case Assignment Due (3) Readings will be focused on Social Media and Internet Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case: Lego Builders of Tomorrow Campaign Case: Lenovo & The Olympics
Class #12 11/30	Guest Lecturer: TBD Social Media and Internet Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case: Lego Builders of Tomorrow Campaign Case: Lenovo & The Olympics 	Group Case Analysis Due (2) Readings will be focused on Crisis Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case 9-1: Hurricane Katrina: A Disaster from Beginning to End Case: Jet Blue: Inside a PR Crisis
Class #13 12/7	Crisis Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case 9-1: Hurricane Katrina: A Disaster from Beginning to End Case: Jet Blue: Inside a PR Crisis 	Final Paper: Silver Anvil Case Assessments Due

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus; students will be informed of any changes.