

University of North Carolina at Wilmington  
COM 322: Introduction to Public Relations  
Course Syllabus  
Fall 2009

Course Section: 002  
CRN: 14806  
9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. TR  
Leutze Hall 132

Final Exam Period: Tuesday, December 8, 2009  
8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

### Instructor Information

Jennifer Chin  
238 Leutze Hall  
962-7720  
chinj@uncw.edu  
<http://people.uncw.edu/chinj>

Office Hours: 11:00 a.m. - 11:50 a.m. M;  
11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. TR;  
11:00 a.m. - 1:45 p.m. W;  
and by appointment

### Course Description

This class is a *descriptive* (rather than a *how-to*) course, designed to introduce the student to the basics of public relations theory and practice in preparation for more advanced coursework in the field. In this course, the student will:

- examine the definition and history of public relations
- explore the role that public relations plays in society
- learn the basic concepts used in the contemporary practice of public relations
- consider the responsibilities of a public relations practitioner

The class is divided into three parts:

1. BACKGROUND  
Defining the profession; history of the field; theoretical models and real-world job descriptions; employment fields; application areas
2. THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROCESS  
Planning, implementation, and evaluation of public relations activities
3. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY  
Legal problems; ethical considerations; international and multicultural issues

## Course Materials

- Text: Wilcox, D. & Cameron, G. (2008). Public Relations Strategies and Tactics (9ed). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Additional readings will be obtained through online databases, accessible from e-Reserves on the UNCW library website.

## Grading and Evaluation

- Exams (3)                    60% total
- Participation                15%
- Final Exam                  25%

## Brief Description of Graded Assignments

→ Participation

Participation includes in-class activities/exercises, quality of contribution to class discussion, pop quizzes, brief out-of-class assignments, as well as the ability to arrive to class on time. Students should get in the habit of keeping up with current events, which will help to facilitate intelligent class discussions and in the selection of a case study.

Participation in this class means being actively involved in class discussions and presentations. Active involvement means being prepared for class, providing relevant insight into class discussions or presentations, asking respectful questions, and giving your undivided attention to your classmates, the instructor, and guest presenters. Active involvement does not mean doing work for other classes, eating, or carrying on side conversations during class.

## Grading Scale

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	below 60

## Course Policies and Procedures

→ Attendance Policy

- Attendance is required in order to do well in this course. Missing class will have a negative impact on your participation grade.
- An attendance sheet will be distributed each regular class meeting, with the exception of exam days. It is your responsibility to sign it. I reserve the right to count you as absent if you fail to sign the sheet.
- You are granted a maximum of 3 absences for whatever reason. I do not need to see a note, nor do I need to know why you missed class. Use your allotted absences wisely. Save them for emergencies

such as family emergencies or illnesses. For each absence exceeding 3, you will be deducted 5 percentage points from your final course grade.

- If you miss class, you are still responsible for the material covered during class. If an assignment is due on the day you miss, you will receive a zero unless you submit the assignment in a hard copy before the end of that class period.
- Please see me ASAP for University-documented extenuating circumstances that will force you to exceed 3 absences (i.e., athletes who will miss due to team travel; prolonged illnesses such as mono), and I will do my best to work with you.
- Please do not be late to class. It is distracting not only to myself, but also to other students. Tardies have a negative impact on your participation grade, which is 15% of your final grade in this class.
- There will be certain days (i.e., when we have a guest speaker) that students will not be permitted to enter class after we have begun. This means that if you do not arrive on time, you will be counted as absent.

#### → **Make-Up Work**

- If you fail to appear for an exam, assignment, or activity, you will receive a zero.
- I will not accept late work under any circumstances. I will, however, gladly accept early assignments.

#### → **Reading Assignments/Class Discussion**

- It is essential to keep up with the reading assignments in order to participate and perform effectively in this course. All assignments and readings are to be completed before arriving to class.
- All work to be handed in should be typed, unless otherwise indicated.

#### → **Academic Expectations**

- In keeping with the University's statement, by enrolling at UNCW, you acknowledge that "the UNCW learning experience is challenging and requires hard work. The University expects you to make academics your highest priority by dedicating your time and energy to training your mind and acquiring knowledge. Academic success in critical thinking and problem-solving prepares you for the changes and challenges you will encounter in the future. Our faculty and academic support resources are readily available as partners in this effort, but the primary responsibility for learning is yours."  
(<http://www.uncw.edu/uc/student/expectations.htm>)

#### → **Honor Policy**

- The UNCW Academic Honor Code will be strictly observed and enforced in this class.
- For further information, please refer to the current edition of the Student Handbook and the Code of Student Life.

#### → **UNCW Department of COM Studies Electronic Devices Statement**

- Faculty in the Department of Communication Studies highly value technology, including various technological devices such as cell phones, MP3 players, etc. We believe, however, that these devices should not be turned on during class time. The use of electronic communication devices in class distracts users and others around them, including the professor who is teaching the course. In short, these devices hinder the processes of learning and instruction. Using them in class also reveals a student to be deficient in one of the core skills promoted by our department: civility (defined as "Showing regard for the dignity of other people and the importance of social expectations.") Therefore, we ask that all students turn off all electronic devices prior to the start of class, with the exception of laptops, which may be used solely for taking notes and approved work explicitly allowed by the instructor. Laptops may not be used to log onto the internet during class time. If you are expecting an important call during class and believe you absolutely need to have your phone on, please let your professor know before class begins to avoid any problems.

→ **My Personal Cell Phone/Laptop/IM Policy**

- Cell phones should be silenced or turned off prior to the beginning of class.
- If your phone goes off during class, you will lose participation points for that day.
- Use of laptops for the purpose of taking notes only is permitted.
- Students who engage in distracting behavior during class (including but not limited to conversations or text messaging with their cell phone, or instant messaging or surfing the internet with their laptop) will forfeit participation and attendance points for that class period, and be asked to leave.

→ **Course Completion and Gateway Requirements**

- Classes typically coded "COM Majors ONLY" may occasionally be opened to PCOM majors or all students. This may most commonly occur during Summer terms. Please be aware, however, that to become a full-status COM major, you **MUST** complete the gateway courses (COM 105 and COM 200) **SUCCESSFULLY**, i.e., with a grade of "B" or higher in each. If you do **NOT** successfully complete those two courses, you cannot earn full COM major status, even if you complete one or more COM classes apart from the gateway courses.

→ **Portfolio Artifacts**

- One of the culminating experiences of a communication studies degree is the completion of COM 490: Discipline Capstone, a course that includes the preparation of a personal portfolio to organize and showcase your abilities. I encourage you to retain items from this class, whether produced independently or in groups, for inclusion as portfolio artifacts. Beyond the Discipline Capstone class, your portfolio may prove a valuable tool as you seek entry into a graduate program or employment in your area(s) of specialization.

→ **Miscellaneous**

- If you have a documented disability, please let me know how I can make the class more accessible for you.
- In accordance with University policy, alcohol, drugs, firearms, and/or nudity will not be permitted in the classroom.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This syllabus is a contract, binding you to the policies and procedures outlined here.</li><li>• The syllabus and course schedule are subject to reasonable change at the instructor's discretion. Changes will be announced in class. Absence from class is <b>NOT</b> an acceptable excuse for not adhering to announced changes.</li></ul> |
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