

Eastern Michigan University
Case Studies in Public Relations (JRNL 408)
Winter 2006

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Recommended Text

• Center, Allen and Patrick Jackson. *Public Relations Practices – Managerial Case Studies and Problems*, 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Prerequisites:

JRNL 312 (Introduction to Public Relations) and JRNL 314 (Public Relations Writing)

Course Objectives

JRNL 408 – Case Studies in Public Relations – is a General Education Writing Intensive course that helps students explore and understand the impact effective public relations communication has on businesses, organizations and peoples globally. This “capstone” course in the interdisciplinary program in Public Relations requires students to use the RACE and ROPE models to conduct in-depth studies of significant cases in the public and private sectors of public relations. Students then use this extensive, case-specific research to illustrate, through written texts and oral presentations, the role of public relations in management philosophies, public policy formation and successful promotional campaigns.

As a capstone course, this class is designed to assess the accumulated knowledge of public relations majors. Emphasis is placed on both written and oral presentation skills and the ability to create strategies and tactics, and to design and execute programs that will solve the immediate problem while contributing to the long-time advancement of the organization. Students will also learn how to work with management, attorneys and the media to manage controversy and

gain publicity, and will consider the duties and ethical responsibilities of a public relations counselor. Students should emerge from this course with improved public relations skills and more poise in performing under pressure of a discussion, interview and/or deadline.

Throughout the course of the semester, students must also demonstrate their understanding of public relations management by selecting and working with a local non-profit/human services agency. This major Academic Service-Learning project will require students to research and help the agency identify a public relations problem/opportunity and create a public relations program to address it. In doing so, students will study and practice problem-solving and issues management, study and research real-life public relations situations, and develop agility in applying effective public relations theories, principles and practices.

Method of Instruction

Case study, discussion, presentation, reflection, critique and hands-on experience are all a part of this course. However, the emphasis is on creative and integrative thought. Students are encouraged to introduce any subject that is relevant to the course that they feel will be of general interest to the class. Most work will be completed individually, some in scheduled or suddenly created groups. We will role-play to develop a better understanding of the characters in the cases. It is assumed that every student will know the case thoroughly **before** the start of each class. In public relations, you need to know the facts and be ready with possible solutions.

Attendance

Students enrolled in English Department classes are expected to participate in daily interactive assignments. You will, for example, routinely discuss reading assignments, write in class on impromptu topics, participate in collaborative activities, or engage in peer review of drafts. Students who miss these activities cannot reasonably make them up. As a result, students who do not participate regularly should expect to receive lower grades in the course, and students who miss more than the equivalent of two weeks of class should consider withdrawing and taking the class in a future semester. Students who know that other commitments will make it impossible to attend at certain times (early mornings, nights, Fridays) should enroll in classes that do not meet at these times.

Classroom Conduct

Students are expected to abide by the Student Conduct Code and assist in creating an environment that is conducive to learning and protects the rights of all members of the University community. Incivility and disruptive behavior will

not be tolerated and may result in a request to leave class and referral to the Office of Student Judicial Services (SJS) for discipline. Examples of inappropriate classroom conduct include repeatedly arriving late to class, using a cellular telephone, or talking while others are speaking. You may access the Code online at www.emich.edu/sjs.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, including all forms of cheating and/or plagiarism, will not be tolerated in this class. Penalties for an act of academic dishonesty may range from receiving a failing grade for a particular assignment to receiving a failing grade for the entire course. In addition, you may be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Services for discipline that can result in either a suspension or permanent dismissal. The Student Conduct Code contains detailed definitions of what constitutes academic dishonesty, but if you are not sure about whether something you're doing would be considered academic dishonesty, consult with me.

Work Assignments

To receive a passing grade, you must complete all assignments, both group and individual, and satisfy all requirements. *You must read cases before each class* and be able to conduct in-depth analyses and report your findings as part of a class, individually and in small groups. In addition, you will interview a local public relations professional and present your findings in an oral and written report. The written report will be organized in a question and answer format. **I do not accept late work – ever or for any reason.**

Grading

- Interview with local public relations professional - 20%
- Class participation - 20%
- Academic Service-Learning project with local non-profit agency - 50%
- Journal/Reflection – 10 %