

# COM 620 – Public Relations Management

Spring 2007 - #2617  
Thursday 6:00 – 8:40 p.m.  
Bacon 225

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With guest appearances by:

**Professor Ronald D. Smith**, APR, Professor of Communication

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Office Hours: by appointment

## Class Web Site

Available through ANGEL course management system at <http://angel.buffalostate.edu>

## Prerequisites

Admission into the Public Relations Management track of the Multidisciplinary Studies master's program as well as completion of COM 610.

## Required Textbook

Center, A.H. & P. Jackson (2003). *Public Relations Practices: Managerial Case Studies and Problems* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) Prentice-Hall.

## Course Description

This course will take a case study approach, focusing on the management of public relations in various specialized situations.

## Course Objectives

Upon completion, students will be able:

- To demonstrate a graduate level understanding of various genres of public relations, including employee relations, community relations, consumer relations, media relations, and crisis communications.
- To effectively discuss the public relations implications of organizational situations prevalent in the workplace and discernible through the media.
- To apply the strategic planning process as the foundation for analyzing and discussing public relations cases.
- To draw upon cases to create planned responses to various public relations situations.

## Course Grading

The final grade for COM 620 will be calculated on the following:

Journals of professional observations	60%
Campaign proposal	30%
<u>Attendance and participation</u>	<u>10%</u>
 TOTAL	 100%

Your final grade will be based on your composite average.

A	94-100	C	74-77
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	88-89	D+	68-69
B	84-87	D	64-67
B-	80-83	D-	55-63
C+	78-79	E	Less than 55 (fail)

## Journals of Professional Observations

This semester, your journal entries will focus on actual public relations cases. Your journal entries should take a three-fold approach.

- 1 – Identify a public relations problem or opportunity
- 2 – Locate and present the facts of a real case addressing such a problem or opportunity.
- 3 – Discuss your personal observations related to this case.

Each journal is expected to be 3-5 pages. Your writing will be evaluated on the following criteria:

### 30% - Facts of the case

Formative research: discussion of research, including key publics

Strategy: discussion of objectives and strategy, including public relations action/response and communication effectiveness

Tactics: discussion of communication tactics and implementation

Evaluation: discussion of program/campaign evaluation techniques

### 50% - Personal observations

Discussion of the case's strengths and weaknesses; what you learned from this case; how what you learned might apply in other situations; in what other applications it might be useful; how it is related to other cases with which you are familiar

### 20% - Presentation

Logic, clarity, effective writing

## Campaign Proposal

Students will be presented with a real-life public relations problem that will serve as the focus of a semester-long project ending in a written campaign proposal. Then write a

proposal presenting your ideas and recommendations for resolving this problem, using the process described in class (see Nine Steps for Strategic Communication). Your proposal will be evaluated on the following criteria:

25% - Formative research

25% - Strategy

25% - Tactics

10% - Evaluative research

15% - Presentation (logic, clarity, effective writing)

## **Professional Expectations and Academic Requirements**

### **Special Needs**

Students with disabilities or special needs should make these known to the instructors. More importantly, they should contact the Office of Disability Services (120 Twin Rise South Wing, 878-4500). Based on recommendations from that office, students may receive needed assistance, such as additional time or a quiet space to take exams, a reader for exams, and so on.

### **Academic Integrity**

Each student is expected to make an honest effort in this class and to be scrupulous in maintaining academic integrity. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated, and college guidelines on academic misconduct will be enforced. Guidelines on avoiding plagiarism are available at the department Web site: [www.buffalostate.edu/communication](http://www.buffalostate.edu/communication).

# COM 620 – Public Relations Management

## Course Schedule – Spring 2007

- Jan. 25      **Introduction**  
Course overview (DS)  
Case study approach (RS)  
Case 9.3 Exxon Valdez (RS)  
Case suitable for journal (DS)  
Read chapters 1 & 2
- Feb. 1        **Classic Cases**  
Discuss chapters 1 & 2  
Case 6.3 Johnson & Johnson Tylenol Crisis  
Case 9.1 Pepsi Syringe Hoax  
Case 10.4 Dow-Corning Breast Implants  
and read “When scientific controversies land in court” on Ron Smith’s  
website at <http://www.junkscience.com/news2/kolasbi.htm>
- Feb. 8        **Employee Relations**  
**Project introduction by community clients**  
Discuss chapter 3  
Case 3.1 Employees & Crisis  
Case 3.2 Southwest Airlines  
Case 3.3 Motorola Quality  
Case 3.4 Kodak  
**Journal #1 due**
- Feb. 15      **Community Relations**  
Discuss chapter 4  
Case 4.2 Hospital  
Case 4.3 Nuclear Power  
Case 4.4 Nuclear Waste  
Case 4.6 A Civil Action  
**Journal #2 due**
- Feb. 22      **Investor/Donor Relations**  
Discuss chapter 5  
Case 5.1 Wall Street  
Case 5.2 Nader vs. GM  
Case 5.6 Corporate Mergers  
**Journal #3 due**
- Mar. 1        **Consumer Relations**  
Discuss chapter 6  
Case 6.1 Coors  
Case 6.2 Oprah & Cattlemen

- Case 6.5 Customer Satisfaction  
*Journal #4 due*
- Mar. 8      **Media Relations**  
Discuss chapter 7  
Case 7.1 School Principals  
Case 7.2 Alar Apples  
Case 7.3 GM vs. NBC  
Case 7.4 Chrysler  
*Journal #5 due*
- Mar. 15      **Community Opposition**  
Discuss chapter 8  
Case 8.1 Environment  
Case 8.2 Abortion  
Case 8.3 Tobacco  
Case 8.4 Gun Control  
*Journal #6 due*
- Mar. 22      **Emergency/Crisis Public Relations**  
Discuss chapter 9  
Case 9.2 Union Carbide  
Case 9.4 Hostage  
Case 9.5 Dayton Hudson  
Case 9.6 SwissAir  
*Journal #7 due*
- Mar. 29      **Public Affairs**  
Discuss chapter 10  
Case 10.1 Fundraising  
Case 10.2 Nestle  
Case 10.3 Nike  
Case 4.5 Historic Land  
*Journal #8 due*
- Apr. 5      **Spring Break – No Class**
- Apr. 12      **Special Publics (Ethnic Populations)**  
Final discussion of client project
- Apr. 19      **Special Publics (Women & Seniors)**  
Final draft of project due
- Apr. 26      **Social Campaigns**  
Case 8.7 Drunk Driving  
Return of draft for revision

May 3

**Client Report**

**Presentation of final campaign proposals to clients**

\* Grades will be submitted by May 14<sup>th</sup>.