



**Instructor:** Dr. Christina Granato Yoshimura

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 Thursdays, 3:00-5:00; and by appointment

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**Course Description:**

An individual interested in a public relations career must cultivate a great number of communication skills, a few of these being competence in interpersonal communication, mass communication, organizational communication, and small group communication. In many ways, this course will pull together theories, practices, and research from a number of communication courses you may have taken previously and will present them in light of managing internal and external communications for an organization. Our focus will be to understand the role of the public relations practitioner and to begin to practice the skills necessary for success in the field.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To understand the different models of public relations
2. To gain knowledge of the history of the practice of public relations
3. To understand the various communication responsibilities inherent in public relations
4. To understand the key theories that underlie the practice of public relations
5. To work with a group to present a proposal that addresses a public relations problem and/or opportunity for a client.

**Required Text:**

Guth, D. W., & Marsh, C. (2006). *Public Relations: A Value-Driven Approach* (4 edition). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Readings online under Course Materials

**Course Format:**

The course objectives are met entirely over the Internet. This is an exciting opportunity for you to interpret and internalize information on your own time, and in a space that is comfortable for you. By removing many of the constraints of time and location, this course has the potential to fit your unique needs in a way that many traditional courses are not equipped to do. Over the course of this class, students will read the text, interpret and analyze the text through discussion questions, visit websites, write papers, observe interactions, and much more.

The online format is probably new for many of you, and you should expect to take some time to get used to the format, above and beyond the time you might usually spend on a class.

**Personal Statement:**

I am committed to the endeavor of teaching, whether that is online or in a classroom atmosphere. I believe that I can meet my goals for teaching this course and you can meet your goals in taking this course, even though this will not occur in a traditional classroom setting. In my previous online teaching

experience, I have found that the more contact students make (both with their peers and with their instructors) the more successful they are in the course. Thus, it will be my goal throughout this course to encourage you to interact and to engage in this course as fully as possible.

### **Policies:**

**Deadlines:** Although many of the constraints of time have been released for you in this course, deadlines are still inevitable. To keep you caught up in the course there are deadlines by which each assignment must be completed. Assignments may always be completed earlier than the deadline, but any assignment that is not up-loaded to the website by 5 p.m. (Mountain Standard Time) on the date due will receive a 10% grade deduction PER DAY. I do not wish to debate our various time orientations; for this class 5:00 pm is a firm deadline, and 5:01 pm is considered late. After a week has passed, no late assignments will be graded. Do your very best to get assignments in as early as you complete them, and communicate with me immediately any difficulties you foresee in meeting a deadline.

**Academic Integrity:** All students taking this course must adhere to the University of Montana's academic dishonesty policy as presented in the Student Conduct Code (SCC). As noted in the code, students are expected to practice academic honesty. Any actions that include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors are reasons for pursuing academic and university sanctions: plagiarism, copying another student's exam, allowing another student to copy from your exam or work, sharing information with another student during testing sessions, acquiring or possessing an exam without the instructor's permission, tampering with course materials or resources (including library references) submitting false information (data, quotations, citations, etc.), representing someone else's work as your own, etc. Anyone caught in any act of academic dishonesty will, at the very least, receive 0 points for the assignment. In addition, steps will be taken to initiate University sanctions, as provided for in the SCC. You are responsible for reading and understanding this code – if you have any questions, please contact me or the department chair. The SCC can be viewed at [www.umt.edu/studentaffairs/sccAcademicConduct.htm#9](http://www.umt.edu/studentaffairs/sccAcademicConduct.htm#9)

**Original Work** – I expect all the work you do in this class to be completely original. No work that has been done by classmates (current or previous) may be used by you, in whole or in part, for your work in this class. No work that you have done (for any other course, or in this course if you have taken it previously) may be submitted to fulfill the assignments in this class. Finally, absolutely no plagiarism (from the web, from organizations, from any other source) will be tolerated – be sure that everything you write in this class is completely your own creation.

**Technology:** A known fact of technology is that it sometimes fails. Computers crash, printers run out of ink, Internet connections falter. In order to control for these failures, since the Internet is your **only** main link to the class, your guiding principles should be to think ahead and be prepared. Save your work often, and in several places. Leave yourself time before assignments are due to allow for connection errors, and familiarize yourself with communication resources in your area in case you need to use them as a back-up to complete your assignments.

The only acceptable technology-related excuse for not meeting the requirements of this course is a documented failure of the UM Blackboard system – if you find the system is not working, you'll need to e-mail me immediately to inform me of the time at which you believe the system (not your computer or connection) was at fault. You should then contact the help desk at CIS (Help Desk: 406.243.4357, [helpdesk@umontana.edu](mailto:helpdesk@umontana.edu)). You should also continue attempting to access the system – any failures in the system are usually resolved within an hour. If documented failures of the system occurred when an assignment was due, you will not be docked late points, but it is expected that you will try again to get an assignment in as soon as the system is up again.

Consideration: The overall atmosphere in the class should be that of respect – for yourself and everyone else in the class. Help foster an atmosphere where a priority for education and a respect for all students are valued by engaging in comments that relate to course content and show tolerance for opinions different from your own. Please understand that whether it is a face-to-face or online environment, harassment of any kind is both inappropriate and intolerable, and disciplinary action will be taken should it occur.

Contesting Grades: I am willing to go over any assignment or exam with you to discuss your concerns. This is more difficult in an online context than an in-person one, so we'll have to work with what we've got. Please wait 24 hours after receiving an assignment before you contact me. When you do contact me, please write down your specific concerns and your backing for these concerns, and I will research your situation. We'll take it from there should further discussion need to occur.

### Grading and Assignments:

Case Studies (2 @ 50)	100 pts
Interview and memo	50 pts
Final Proposal	150pts
Discussion Board	50 pts
Total Points	350 pts

This course will be graded with traditional letter grades of A, B, C, D, and F; no plus or minus grading will be in effect for this course.

- A = Exceptional work, far exceeds expectations
- B = Very good work, results better than average
- C = Average work, results on par with expectations
- D = Flawed work, results are less than average
- F = Poor work, results fall far short of expectations

All assignments must be typed in 12 point Times New Roman font with one inch margins on all sides of each page. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Students are expected to meet all deadlines. Unless there is an acceptable (to me, offered in advance of the deadline) explanation for a late assignment it will be graded in view of its extended deadline; that is, a penalty of 10% a day will be assessed and grading standards will be higher. Assignments will not be graded once a week has passed since the assignment deadline.

Discussion Comments/Questions: Each week you will have the opportunity to participate on the discussion section of the course website. Students learn most when they engage not only with the course content, but also with one another – thus, I take engaging in discussion very seriously. Your best 10 posts will be counted towards your grade at 5 points apiece.

I will be grading the quality as well as quantity of your contributions to discussion. Your contribution **must exhibit that you have read the material**. You should strive to express more than simply your opinion – instead, **integrate** material you have learned in this and other courses to **add something new and insightful** to the discussion after each chapter. You should respond to the discussion topic I have introduced for the week, but you will find yourself more engaged in the class, and you will give yourself more opportunities to gain points, if you also respond to the ideas your peers bring up on the board.

### **Overview of Remaining Assignments:**

Your other assignments in this class are connected to one another, and require that you establish a connection with a business of your choice. This could be a place where you work, a non-profit organization you admire or volunteer with, a family member's business, etc. The business is up to you – but you must have gotten a contact person in this business and have the opportunity set up an interview with a key official in that organization to occur no later than September 15th.

### **Interview and Memo**

You will conduct a mini-communication audit with this person. What does this mean? See Chapter 7 in your text for an idea of what usually happens in a communication audit. I don't expect you to spend the weeks that would traditionally go into a communication audit, but I do want you to interview the key official by focusing on the five questions I'll give you, and others you should generate on your own in response to what you're learning in this class. You will need to ask:

1. Who are the main publics/stakeholders that this organization is concerned with?
2. What are the organization's stated goals in relation to its stakeholder groups?
3. What communication activities has the organization used to fulfill those goals?
4. Which communication activities are working well and are consistent with those goals?
5. Which communication activities are not working well toward the achievement of those goals?

Again, keep questioning with your own follow-up to what the person you are interviewing is saying. Ask what seems important to you when thinking about this organization's public relations, but **be sure to ask them what kind of budget they have for public relations activities**. This interview should take a minimum of 20 minutes, but take as long as the interviewee has to really try to understand how communication is functioning between this organization and its key publics – be broad in your conceptualization of publics.

After the interview, I'd like you to write out a memo that summarizes your interview (who are the publics, what communication do they use, how it's working now) in about a page (single space). Then I'd like you to identify what revisions in communication activities you would recommend to this organization. You will address these to the person you interviewed, but for now you should turn them in to me, not to the person you interviewed, by the deadline.

### **PR Proposal**

The course will culminate with you creating a PR proposal for your organization, planning a special event that will help them build/maintain a relationship with one/some of the publics that you've identified and brainstormed about. In essence, it is a showcase for you to evidence your mastery of the topics we have addressed during the course, and is something tangible for you to put into your portfolio and to give to the person you interviewed.

### **Submitting Work:**

**Please save all work in a Microsoft Word file, if at all possible.** If you do not have access to Microsoft Word, you must save the file in "rich text format, or rtf" – although your formatting might not come through, this should guarantee that your content does make it to me through cyberspace.

Due to instances of academic dishonesty online, I must require from each of you that you be VERY CAREFUL in submitting your work to me. You are responsible for making sure that the assignment you send is correctly uploaded and readable to me, before the due date. This requires some double checking on your part, but is necessary. I cannot accept assignments which are unreadable; you will not receive credit and will not be able to re-submit such assignments.

All of your assignments will either be submitted to the discussion board or to me directly through your **digital dropbox**. The digital dropbox is listed under "Tools." You must click on "add file" to keep your assignments accessible to you throughout the course and to maintain a record of your postings (I recommend doing this). However, to actually turn your paper in to me you must then hit "send file" and select the appropriate assignment to send. **Please be very careful that you do actually send all assignments.** Your assignment files should be named exactly as I name them when I give you the assignment, so that it's clear to me what you are sending in. Also, please be sure that in the text of any assignment you include a header with your full name.

Once you have submitted an assignment on the dropbox, go back in the dropbox and make sure it shows that it has been submitted, not simply added. Similarly, once you have made a discussion posting, go back into the discussion board and make sure that it shows up as posted (not simply saved as a draft, which means that no one else can see it).

**Please do not turn assignments in to me through e-mail** – the digital dropbox and discussion board are the ONLY places I will accept assignments, and I will always clearly indicate in the assignment information which way I would like you to submit it.

# CLASS SCHEDULE

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings completed/ Assignments Due</b>
Aug 26-Sep 1	Introductions	Discussion Board posting (D)
Sep 2 -Sep 8	What is PR?	Watts Reading, Koc Reading, D
Sep 9-Sep 15	History of PR	Chapter 1, D
Sep 16-Sep 22	Jobs in PR	Chapter 2, D, Case study 1
Sep 23-Sep 29	Communication Theories	Chapter 5, D
Sep 30-Oct 6	Communication Research	Lindenmann Reading, Chapter 7, D
Oct 7-Oct 13	Publics	Chapter 4, D, Interview/Memo
Oct 14-Oct 20	Planning in PR	Chapter 8, D
Oct 21-Oct 27	Tactics of Public Relations	Chapter 9, D
Oct 28-Nov 10	Writing and Presentation Skills	Chapter 10, D, Case study 2
Nov 11-Nov 17	Communication Technology	Chapter 11, D
Nov 18-Nov 24	Crisis Communication	Chapter 12, D
Nov 25-Dec 1	Cross-Cultural PR	Chapter 14, D
Dec 2- Dec 8	Law	Chapter 15, D, Final Proposal