

Michael Lee Kent, Ph.D.

Communication Studies

Techniques of Communication: Graduate Public Relations

SPCM 582-01 | W 5-7:30 p.m. | FL 210 (actual location TBA)

Office Location: Life Hall 231C

Office Hours: T/Th 1-2:30 | M 12:30-1:30 | W 3:30-4:30 | and by appointment

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Course Description: Techniques of Communication deals with issues of communication as they relate to mediated and public relations contexts. The course will be organized as a graduate level “introduction to public relations” course. The first part of the semester will be devoted to an introduction (or refresher) on public relations and public relations writing. The remainder of the course will be devoted to public relations theory and the current state of research in the field.

Objectives

- To learn the basic research and writing skills involved in the practice of public relations.
- To become familiar with recent research and theoretical assumptions as well as the basic historical tenants of the field.
- To learn to critically examine the theoretical assumptions of public relations.
- To gain detailed insight into individual areas of study through directed readings.

Academic Dishonesty: The University is an academic community of scholars. Academic dishonesty is a very serious offense against the integrity of this community and will not be tolerated. All academic work submitted by you is assumed to be your own original work and to contain your own thought, research, and self-expression. Work that borrows the ideas, organization, or wording, from others must be properly acknowledged.

Plagiarism is the unauthorized or inappropriate use of the words or ideas of others. Plagiarism occurs when written or spoken material is borrowed (even from oneself), in whole or in part, and passed off as original by a writer or speaker. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, presenting someone else’s speech, presentation, essay, or news release as original. It also includes failing to document the source of word-for-word or paraphrased material in oral presentations or papers.

It is my policy to pursue plagiarism vigorously, to fail students who plagiarize, and to report cases of plagiarism to the university administration.

- Please come to class prepared to participate and contribute to class.
- Please submit all work in a professional “final-draft-looking” form.
- **NB:** “draft,” dot matrix, or typed documents will not be accepted for grades.
- Late assignments will be discounted 10% per calendar day.

The Department of Communication’s attendance policy is as follows: students are allowed to miss the equivalent of one week of classes without penalty. If four classes are missed (on a three day a week schedule), your final grade will be reduced by 2%, if five classes are missed, your final grade will be reduced by 5%; if six classes are missed, your final grade will be reduced by 10%. Missing more than two weeks worth of classes will result in a failing grade for the course.

For “perfect” attendance: (including being on time for each class) you will gain an additional 3% on your final grade. No exceptions to bonus will be made for any reason.

Texts/Readings (Required)

- Heath, R. L. & Vasquez, G. (eds.) (2001). Handbook of public relations. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

NB: The Newsom, et al., text (or a similar text) will be made available for you to borrow. Most hard cover public relations texts cost about \$95. You should buy one if you plan to teach, or conduct public relations research, but you are not required to for this class—Bob and Gabe’s book is expensive enough!

- Newsom, Turk, and Kruckeberg (2000). This is PR: The realities of public relations (7th edition). New York: Wadsworth. ISBN: 0-534-55962-X

Assignments	Points
Participation/Preparedness/Professionalism	150
Reaction Papers to Readings (4 @ 100 points, 2–3 pp. each)	400
Public Relations Writing Assignments (4 @ 100 points)	400
Research/Critical Essay w/ pres. (15+ pp. of text + bib./10-15 min.)	600
Total	1,550

College level writing standards are expected on all work submitted (this includes correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, careful proofreading, etc.). No spelling errors are allowed—having even one spelling error will result in a zero for the assignment in question. All assignments should be double-spaced (with 25–27 lines-per-page), have one-inch margins (1”) all around, and be written in one of the following fonts: **Bookman** or **Bookman Old Style** 11pt., **Times** or **Times New Roman** 12 pt., **Palatino** 11 pt., **New Century Schoolbook** 11 pt., **Garamond** 12 pt., or **Bernhard Modern** 12 pt. (see me for other options)—for headings you can use **boldface type, Ariel Black, or Helvetica Black**.

Course Schedule

Day 1:	9.5	Overview of Class History of Public Relations Theories	
Day 2:	9.12	Read: Newsom, Turk and Kruckeberg chapters ‡ Assign Fact Sheet	
Day 3:	9.19†	Read: Text, 6–10 Assign Pitch Letter	
Day 4:	9.26†	Read: Text, 11–15 Assign News Release	Fact Sheet Due
Day 5:	10.3†	Read: Heath and Vasquez, Section I Assign Backgrounder	
Day 6:	10.10†	Read: Text, Section II, pp. 183–278	Pitch Letter Due
Day 7:	10.17†	Read: Text, Section II, pp. 279–368	
Day 8:	10.24†	No Class—United Nations Day (also University Day)	
Day 9:	10.31†	No Class—National Communication Association Conference	
Day 10:	11.7†	Read: Text, Section II, pp. 369–440	News Release Due
Day 11:	11.14†	Read: Text, Section III, pp. 441–534	
Day 12:	11.21†	Read: Text, Section II, pp. 535–624	
Day 13:	11.28†	Read: Text, Section II, pp. 625–690	Backgrounder Due
Day 14:	12.5†	Public Relations Activity	All Reaction Papers Due
Day 15:	12.12	Free Day Evaluations	
Day 16:	12.19	Final Exam Day Presentations 	All essays due

†: Reaction Papers may be submitted.

‡: If you do not have Newsom, et al., then simply keep to the same reading schedule.

- **Note on public relations writing assignments:** Multiple drafts and editing are hallmarks of effective public relations writing. My undergraduate students must complete (and usually need) three required drafts—several students require four or five drafts to get their releases perfect. I would be happy to look over your “drafts” (provided that they’re typed), and I recommend nothing less for you.