

# Syllabus for J425, **Public Relations Case Studies**

Journalism Division (Room 126, Journalism Building)

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Summer One, June 8 to July 9, Room 205/9-10:50 a.m., T-R (not F)

**Professor:** Dr. Lamar W. Bridges, Professor and Journalism  
Division co-ordinator (Room 127)

**Office Hours:** afternoons work better in summer or make an appointment, please

**Telephones:** (903) 886-5229 (office) or (903) 886-4703 (home)

**FAX:** (903) 886-5230 (Division office)

**Course description:** "An analysis and evaluation of contemporary public relations problems in public and private organizations. Case studies are examined" (catalog). The class will be devoted to examining cases from the various specialized fields of the broad promotional term of public relations. The focus is a seminar approach in which students read about cases, discuss cases and explore solutions to cases assigned.

**Textbook:** Public Relations Cases (NINTH EDITION) by Darrell C. Hayes, Jerry A. Hendrix and Pallavi D. Kumar, WadsworthCengage Learning (©2013) This is a softcover book. **Please note the edition needed- the ninth. Copies are available new, used, or by rental.**

**Course objectives:** Specific objectives are: (1) to acquaint students with a diverse range of case studies **with the focus of audiences**; (2) to acquaint students with **a process** for problem-solving in public relations situations; (3) to provide practical exercises in public relations **problem-solving** and to begin to develop **judgment** for such situations; (4) to develop further the writing and analytical skills of students.

**Class attendance:** Attendance is mandatory; no excuses or absences can be accepted. Absences are recorded, per University policy. I will request that any student who misses a second class be dismissed from the class (dropped). Please be aware of this statement. If you care to see the administrative form, go to the website of The College of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Arts. The form is on that site.

**I also expect students to be in class on time.** Promptness is expected in the professional world.

**Cell Telephones:** TURN THEM OFF. They are annoying. DO NOT communicate with anyone outside of the classroom. Your attention should be directed to the class, the instructor, and your classmates for learning about cases and the discussion of cases.

**Plagiarism:** any form of academic dishonesty is unacceptable. Plagiarism of material is obviously included. Academic dishonesty subjects you to possible dismissal from the class and referral to the Department Head and/or the designated administrative officer. You will be asked to sign a plagiarism statement. This form stays in the files of Dr. Bridges. If you have a concern about proper attribution, the citing of sources, or the use of materials, see the instructor. *Do not use the excuse of "I did not know."* Public relations and news students should understand the concept of public trust and the need to serve the public and clients honestly and with credibility.

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**Course requirements:** Journalism 425 combines instructor-led sessions, discussion, and both verbal and written case analyses by students. The emphases will be upon the thought processes (**or problem-solving**) in public relations situations and written **practice** in applying these **processes** to the field of public relations.

Students will be expected to analyze cases and to submit written reports and to present oral reports based upon guidelines furnished by the instructor. The student should strive to write clearly, use the language correctly, and present material cleanly. In addition, the instructor may assign "outside" or "individual" cases to be solved. These cases demonstrate to the instructor the student's ability to solve "problems" not from the textbook.

Other practical work may be incorporated into the course. Assignments will depend partly upon students enrolled in the class and their backgrounds in mass communication and public relations. **Therefore, excuses for lack of work cannot be accepted. Nor can any excuses for lateness or absences.**

**Specific requirements:** **First**, this class requires each student to **participate fully in the sessions**; J425 is not intended to be a class in which the instructor simply "talks" about cases. Students will discuss public relations scenarios. The "profession" of public relations is a highly-decentralized field, with numerous specialties and different methodology. But, problem-solving is a common theme -- finding solutions to reaching audiences, through print, electronic or interactive channels. Critical thinking and solid writing are central to the field of public relations.

**It is the content that matters, regardless of the delivery system. Content is the focus.**

**Second**, each student must submit written analyses of assigned cases. The format of these analyses will be explained. In addition, you may make verbal presentations. See No. 4.

**Third**, designated "exercise cases" may be utilized for students to analyze. These cases afford the student further practice in solving problems from the areas explored in the class. Your analyses of these cases are important in your evaluation because they demonstrate to the instructor your work in thinking through scenarios and your ability to present your thoughts.

**Fourth**, oral or verbal presentations will be valued at points TBD depending upon enrollment. The verbal presentations offer practice in explaining data to your classmates and to the instructor.

**Fifth**, a final examination will be given at the designated hour. This may include the solving of a case(s).

Materials submitted in numbers **two and three** must be prepared on a word processor. No handwritten papers will be accepted, unless so noted by the instructor. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** If you miss a class at which an assignment is due, your grade is a zero -- period.

Public relations "professionals" must meet deadlines and prepare work cleanly. "Cleanly" means correct spelling, correct grammar, and careful usage of the mechanics of the English language. And it means preparing one's work with pride and concern for intellectual honesty. Note the statement on plagiarism.

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**University support:** Students with disabilities may call upon University personnel for assistance. A statement from that office will be distributed to all students during the opening class; that statement will have office numbers and telephone numbers for University personnel who can explain that office's services.

**Class schedule:** Week-by-week will be determined. Cases will be the focus. I will give you a weekly schedule or a full schedule, which is projected but may have to be changed depending upon our progress in cases and analyses.

Grades will be submitted per the University deadline; no Incompletes (X) will be given in J425. Weights of points follow. This may have to be re-evaluated and changed once we get into the class and the instructor gauges early work. The box below contains projected point totals. This projection may have to be revised.

**Evaluation:** Here are weights for the above at the beginning of class.

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| (1) final examination ( <b>comprehensive</b> ) | 100 points  |
| (2) verbal presentations (in-class)            | 100 points√ |
| (3) written case analyses (problem-solving)    | 150 points□ |
| (4) attendance/discussion (TBD per student)    | 50 points * |

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400 POINTS

√I will keep a folder on each student's presentations.

□I will keep a folder on each student's written work.

\*attendance: we have 20 classes, T thru R. These are easy points for you.

-LWB, revised, '15

