

**Instructor: Dr. Bruce O'Neal**

Office: Dan Rather 310 (virtual; in-person by appoint);

Office hours: By appointment

Office phone: 936.294.3174

Email: boneal@shsu.edu

**Course number: MCOM 3381 02 | CRN 23342**

**Course title: Principles of Public Relations**

Credit hours: 3

Class times: Tuesdays at 5 – 7:50 p.m.

Classroom: Room 240 at The Woodlands Center, The Woodlands, TX

*NOTE: Although I monitor email regularly, do not send email a few hours before class and assume I will see it before class convenes.*

**TEXTS AND OTHER MATERIALS**

**TEXTS:**

***Think Public Relations (2013) by Wilcox, Cameron, Reber, and Shin***

Supplemental materials may be put on reserve in the library and assigned for class reading. It will be your responsibility to go to the library to access them.

**OTHER MATERIALS:**

You may wish to purchase a **portable storage device** OR use an online storage service (i.e. Dropbox) for back-up storage of class assignments.

**DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES of this course**

**Catalog description:**

This course will examine the principles of public relations, advertising, sales promotions, direct marketing and online communications with an emphasis on the way organizations promote their products and images to their publics. The traits of leadership, crisis management and ethics will be explored.

**Objectives:**

This class will use a combination of lecture, class discussion, and problem-solving. This is an A.C.E.-designated course designed to provide you with the foundation of the major issues of public relations, the problem-solving processes to analyze/resolve PR problems, and practical application of these issues and processes to real world situations.

Client: We are still determining the client, so they are not listed here. We will discuss on the first class day.

Course Needs: In order to complete this course, you will need (1) a working SHSU computer account, (2) a working SHSU e-mail address, and (3) USB drive or cloud storage. In addition, each group will need a binder, a folder and material to create prototypes.

ACE #1 - FYI: Because our activities are service-oriented, this course has been designated an ACE (Academic Community Engagement) course. The ACE program is designed to encourage students to support community organizations by using skills developed in their classes. In our case, because we work to support as well as understand our client, our activities qualify. FYI, Requirements are listed below.

We are recognized because we not only focus on developing academic skills during the semester, we actively use our skills with our client(s). Our client may be an organization within the university or an entity outside of the university. As you will see as we move through the course, you are exploring a variety of ways to help this client. As already noted, you will work in teams and at the end of the course will present your recommendations to the client. These suggestions include a short section on how you would evaluate your own work outcomes should the client elect to use, or hire, your team.

Competencies: As a result of completing this course, you should be able to:

1. Critically analyze and evaluate public relations or advertising situations -- either a case history or a current campaign -- using one of the ROPE or RACE methods and/or the three PIE steps of case analysis presented by your author (p. 17+):

Planning: preparation by gathering information: identifying organizational response opportunities, analyzing/developing communication messages, selecting/identifying communication tactics;

Implementation: executing a response; and evaluation: measuring how well the program was done

2. Develop additional skills and competencies needed by public relations or advertising professionals and utilize these skills and competencies in the practice of public relations for a campaign [plus ACE requirements in #3 & 4 below]

3. ACE #4-a: experience: understand and apply research methods used to design and evaluate public relations or advertising campaigns

4. ACE #4-b: experience: analyze and select appropriate media, including new or social media, for communication strategies

5. ACE #4-c: experience: prepare and present a comprehensive client analysis and program, including a proposed evaluation format, for a specific public relations or

advertising campaign or issue

ACE (#3): An outline at the end of the syllabus explains how points are awarded in this course. ACE activities are part of these points but are not isolated.

NOTE: (ACE #2) By meeting the competencies listed above, you also meet generic ACE requirements for this course. The entire course focuses on your client's needs and identifying suggestions to meet these needs. Therefore, the ACE hours you complete will parallel the hours that you put into the client's problem. In other words, everything we do in the class that directly affects the client project -- approximately 85 percent of our time -- parallels the ACE requirements.

In addition to in-class work, you will spend (a) one class period (approximately 1.30 hours) in a client interview to become more familiar with the details, (b) one class period rehearsing, and (c) your final exam period presenting your suggestions to the client. These meetings also parallel ACE needs.

Your knowledge and progress in the class (meaning your grade) will be assessed primarily through your campaign preparation and ONE mid-term team presentation. You will also have (1) scheduled quizzes over the assigned readings before discussion and (2) the separate, formal case noted above. NOTE: The separate case presentation for practice will be among members outside your group. The textbook readings assigned are scheduled to match your campaign progress. Because you must complete the readings before you can apply the material to your campaign, no makeup quizzes will be given.

After completing this course, you should be understand and be able to apply:

- the historical development of public relations
- three general setting of PR – corporate organizations, non-profits, and public affairs
- five major publics concerning PR – media, employees, community settings, consumers, and the financial community
- the role and use of research planning in the PR process
- the legal and ethical environment of PR
- the management practices of PR
- major trends in PR – technology and global settings

## **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

### ***ATTENDANCE***

A commitment of your time to this course is essential. Regular attendance is expected and will be necessary for successful completion of the course. You are responsible for any assignment made during class. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to email the instructor or contact a classmate who was in class. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE**

**ACCEPTED and you will receive a zero (0) credit for that assignment.** Since the class meets only once a week, it will not be possible to make up missed class sessions. Deadlines, for class purposes, are at the beginning of class the day work is due, unless otherwise designated. **Do not come late to class.** I do not have office hours at The Woodlands Center, but will be available at least 30 minutes before class begins and after class is over; alternatively, you may schedule time to meet with me at the main campus, Rm 310. Follow professional procedures as you would for a job. Punctuality is essential; class attendance is expected and will be noted.

Department policy on absences is as follows: Students will not be penalized for one absence unless an assignment or exam has been missed. ***Beginning with absence #2, one letter grade will be deducted from the final grade of the course. Each succeeding absence will result in an additional letter grade loss. There are only 15 class meetings and each absence is the equivalent of missing a week of work in a regular class.***

Attendance will be documented by a sign-in sheet as students enter the classroom. The sheet will be picked up by the instructor when class begins. It is the responsibility of the students who come in after the sheet has been picked up to see the instructor after class to be counted tardy rather than absent. *A student who signs in and then leaves the class before the class is over will be considered absent for that day.*

Students attending SHSU co-curricular activities will not be penalized for absences. Appropriate documentation should be presented to the instructor prior to the absence.

**TIME REQUIREMENTS:**

You are expected to have read the textbook material and to be in class every time it meets. You may also be assigned out-of-class readings, and you may need to work on additional exercises outside scheduled class times. You should expect to allow at least two out-of-class hours of preparation for every hour you spend in class.

**EQUIPMENT:**

This class will occasionally meet in a computer lab at The Woodlands Center. PC computers and DTP software will be provided in this lab for all assignments given. You may use your own computers, but software may not be compatible. Please do NOT use substitute software! You may also wish to purchase a portable storage device for your work.

**FORMAT FOR ASSIGNMENTS**

When an outside assignment requires written material, that material must be typed (using Microsoft Word, if permission is given to email), double-spaced, on one side of the paper. Hand-written assignments will not be accepted. Emailed assignments will NOT be accepted without prior approval of the instructor. All assignments must be uploaded by deadline to Blackboard.

**EXAMS and CLASS PARTICIPATION**

You may be quizzed over reading material assigned, as well as classroom discussion. If you have a legitimate and documented excuse for being absent on the day of the exam, the instructor will allow a make-up exam. It may be an all-essay form of exam. The make-up exam will be **taken within 24 hours of your return to class**. If you are absent when an assignment is due, and you have a documented excuse, you may turn it in at the next class meeting. **After that time period, you will receive a zero for that exam or assignment. It is your responsibility to contact the instructor to arrange a make-up test.** For a university-sanctioned absence with documentation, you may schedule to take a regular exam (not essay) before or after the absence.

Students are expected to be present, to have completed the readings, do their work in class, and contribute during class discussion.

**The following types of behavior will not be allowed in the classroom:**

**Eating and drinking is not allowed in the computer lab when the class meets there.** Drinks with secure lids may be brought into the room in book bags, but not consumed there.

- Mobile phones and other electronic communication devices may not be in-use during class. If you must take a call in an emergency, please step outside of the classroom. Anyone using any of these devices will be asked to leave the class.
- You may not read other material/newspapers/magazines and/or work on material for other classes during this class. You may NOT surf the Internet, read email or conduct other cyberspace business not related to the class.

- All students are expected to be attentive during presentations by the instructor and participate in class discussions. Failure to render this common courtesy will result in their being asked to leave the class.

**GRADING:**

Course grade will be based on five written exams (including the Grammar Module and the AP style module) and the final exam. Daily class exercises will be given in class to prepare you for the writing portions of the exams. Although class exercises may not be graded, they are an important source of feedback from the instructor to prepare you for the written exams. These are your opportunity to get one-on-one work with the instructor.

***Grades will be calculated as follows:***

Assignments	20%
Discussions (daily, Quick Fire Challenges, attendance)	20%
Tests (midterm, final, interims and PR project updates)	60%

**Extra credit may be given, but should not be expected. Points may be taken off final exam for excessive absences (see attendance) and lack of team participation.**

The grade scale is as follows

A = 100 – 90%  
B = 89 - 80%  
C = 79 – 70%  
D = 69 – 60%  
F = Below 60%

Ultimately, letter grades must be assigned to evaluations of course work. Under the definitions established by Sam Houston State University, students who receive the following letter grades are considered to have reached the level of attainment defining that letter. Thus, letter grades received for journalism courses may be interpreted this way:

A= Excellent  
B= Well above average  
C= Average  
D= Barely passing  
F= Failure

All exams, once they are graded, will be distributed during class for students to see and ask questions. The exams will then be returned to the instructor during that class period.

A final class grade will not be released over the phone or Internet. ***It is the student's responsibility to record and keep track of their own exam grades in order to know their progress during the semester.***

Students who cannot complete the course requirements due to illness or any other unforeseen issue may apply for an X in the course. To apply for the incomplete, the student must submit in writing to the instructor a documented explanation. The request will be submitted to the dean for a final decision.

## **SHSU POLICIES**

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Ethics are the cornerstone of responsible journalism. Honesty is expected--and demanded--of all students. Violations of professional ethical standards have led to an automatic "F" in the course. All work in this class must be original work. No work that a student has already published or is in the process of publishing is considered original work. No work a student has used to meet requirements in a previous class is considered original work.

The University expects students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Furthermore, the University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work that is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Students found guilty of dishonest behavior in this class will be asked to leave the class and will be given the grade of F for the entire course.

Plagiarized papers will not be accepted. For the sake of clarity, plagiarism is defined below:

Plagiarism occurs when one person claims credit for another person's work. It is a form of intellectual dishonesty that is treated with great severity by professionals and by the university. Students are encouraged to review the university's policy on plagiarism.

Students should be certain they understand the meaning of plagiarism: a paper using quotes without quotation marks and attribution is plagiarized. But plagiarism is more than unrecognized quotes. Conclusions that are not the student's, information that is not common knowledge, and specific facts must be attributed: tell who said it and cite or footnote it, even if this information is not a direct quote. Dates are important here, especially as on-line information is becoming more common.

Although quoted material is not plagiarized, a paper made up of a series of quotations is not a paper written by the student. Students should use quotes sparingly and for specific reasons, such as providing evidence to support a point. Not understanding the material is not an acceptable reason for using a quotation.

**IMPORTANT:** Students must also learn how to cite an author or work used/quoted by a second author.

### **PROPER CLASSROOM DEMEANOR OR CONDUCT**

According to the Student Handbook, "Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Please turn off or mute your cellular phone and/or pager before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking among themselves at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a directive to leave class, or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy."

The students' right to speak on the topics of their choice will be upheld in the class. Choice of topic, values and beliefs will not be judged. Audience members are expected to respect the views of their classmates.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

[shsu.edu/dept/disability](http://shsu.edu/dept/disability)

### **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**



Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

### **VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

### **COURSE/FACULTY EVALUATIONS**

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation toward the end of the semester, using the IDEA system.

### **Q-DROPS**

Students are allowed no more than five Q-drops during their academic career at Sam Houston State University. Classes that are dropped prior to the Q-drop date will not count toward the limit. Students who have used their limit of five Q-drops will need to petition their respective dean to drop a class. If the dean refuses to grant permission to drop the class, the student will be required to remain in the class.

The Q-drop limit took effect with the start of the fall 2004 semester. Any drops accumulated prior to the fall 2004 semester will not be included in the five Q-drop limit. Neither will Q-drops from other universities.

NOTE: A Q-drop is a drop made after the last day for tuition refunds (12th class day for fall/spring; 4th class day for summer) but before the date for which a drop would result in a grade of 'F' - as published in the Academic Calendar.

### Tentative Class Schedule

<b>Week 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss course outline and design</li> <li><u>Chapters 1 and 2</u> - What is PR and what kind of careers are in this field?</li> <li>Quick Fire Challenge</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Chapters 3 and 4</u> - How did PR develop and how is it practiced today?</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 14 Global PR</li> <li>Chapter 13 Events and Promotions</li> <li>Chapter 16 Entertainment, sports, tourism</li> <li>Chapter 18 Non-profits</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Quiz #1 (Chapters 1-4 and 13, 14, 16, &amp; 18)</b></li> <li><u>Chapter 5</u> - Research and campaign planning</li> <li><i>Discussion of class projects; meet with client</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Chapter 6 and 7</u> – The campaign and public opinion formation</li> <li>Continue Working on PR Project and Presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Midterm Exam – (PR Project and Presentation)</b></li> <li><u>Chapter 9</u> – What is ethical and what is legal?</li> <li><u>Chapter 10</u> - What's special about diverse audiences?</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Quiz #2 (Chapters 9 and 10)</b></li> <li>Chapter 8 - How do issues form and how does PR manage them?</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 11 Mass media</li> <li>Chapter 12 Internet and social media</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued</li> <li>Work on projects</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Quiz #3 (Chapters 8, 11, 12)</b></li> <li>Chapter 15 – Corporate PR</li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 17 – Government and Politics</li> <li>Work on projects</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Quiz #4 (Chapters 15 &amp; 16)</b></li> <li>Project work</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project work</li> </ul>
<b>Week 14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project work</li> </ul>
<b>Week 15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Work</li> </ul>
<b>Week 16</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Project Work</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 17</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Final Exam</b> is presentation of project to client</li> </ul>