



Connect

Where and when: This is an in-person course that meets in Allen Hall 318, Tuesdays & Thursdays, from 4 p.m. to 5:50 p.m., beginning April 2 and concluding June 6

Instructor: [Lance Robertson](#) | Course CRN: 32396 & 32468

My office hours: 323 Allen (2-4 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays; Wednesday afternoons by appointment.

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Course description

Public Relations Campaigns is the capstone course in the sequence of instruction offered in public relations within the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication. It provides students with an opportunity to apply the fundamentals of what you have learned over their course of study to actual client work and business problems. The course is designed to build professional experience and prepare you for the world that awaits you after graduation.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: *J350 Principles of Public Relations, J352 Strategic Writing and Media Relations, J452 Strategic Public Relations Communications, J453 Strategic Planning and Case Studies and J494 Strategic Communications Research are prerequisites for Public Relations Campaigns course.*

Course format and workload

Each student will work in a collaborative team. Each team will work with a non-profit organization, government agency or business to conduct original research, identify and analyze the client's public relations needs, define objectives, create a communications/PR plan for the client, and implement 2-4 strategies/tactics to gain practical experience in campaign execution and assessment.

The course is a "bridge" between academia and the professional world. You are expected to conduct yourself as a professional with your client, your contacts, and your team. Students and teams are expected to work with a high level of independence, with guidance, advice, instruction and review by your instructor. Class sessions are conducted as teaching seminars, workshops and instructor advice to help support your work. Guest speakers may supplement the discussions. No textbook is required; all readings will be posted on Canvas or handed out during class sessions.

Expected learning outcomes

- Apply qualitative and/or quantitative research methods to inform a PR campaign.
- Develop a targeted PR plan that addresses client goals, including a budget and timeline.
- Critically assess a client's situation and use appropriate theory to inform strategic solutions.
- Clearly and concisely articulate a PR plan verbally, visually and in writing.
- Implement key portions of the plan and measure results.
- Work as an effective team member.
- Win the respect, trust, and cooperation of your client and your teammates.
- Observe and deliver ethical best practices and appropriate techniques to the client.

Estimated workload

Scheduled class sessions will be a mix of formal gatherings of the entire class for tutorials, exercises or student presentations; informal "meet in teams," in which teams gather independently; and hybrid sessions involving the entire class that then breaks up into individual teams. Here's how you'll spend your time over the course of the term (hours are estimates only):

- Formal class sessions: 18-20 hours
- Research/reading/individual assignments/work: 20 hours
- Team meetings, client meetings and client work: 20-25 hours

Note: Graduate students will be assigned additional work based on a case study of an actual client.

Course requirements

There are four primary “deliverables” due by the end of term. They are:

- A professional-quality public relations (communications) plan that is sized appropriately for the client, the client’s immediate and future needs, and the identified strategies/objectives.
- Two (2) to four (4) tactics, or “deliverables,” that the team has created, and which has high value to the client. Teams may create more deliverables if time allows.
- A formal presentation to the client at the end of the term outlining your communications plan, the tactics you created and delivered, and recommendations the client may consider for future communications.
- A presentation (individually) of your individual portfolio to PR professionals (Portfolio Review).

These and other elements, are briefly described below (details to follow):

Research

Teams will conduct research to support the Communications/PR Plan for your designated client. Primary research can include online surveys, interviews with key stakeholders, intercept surveys, or other research as appropriate and as time allows. Teams can critically use AI for research to ensure factual, validated outcomes. Teams must develop a **one-page research plan** (what you plan to do), which will be provided to your client for feedback and approved by your instructor. Teams then will complete the research outlining key results and takeaways. A **2-3-page written research report** will be included as part of the final PR Communications Plan. Key takeaways from your research also will be woven into your Situation Analysis, and will help drive the development of audiences, goals, objectives, strategies and tactics.

Situation analysis

Teams will include in the final PR plan a Situation Analysis, which will incorporate several elements: a brief description of the client and current initiatives, an assessment of the client’s current situation and needs (both operational and with communications); relevant takeaways from your research; a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis; a PEST analysis (Political, Economic, Social and Technological); and a Communications Audit of the client’s existing communications efforts (including strengths and deficiencies). A draft will be submitted for feedback and grading.

Audience identification

Teams will develop one or more key “audiences” in which to target your specific communications efforts. This should include the additional development of demographic/psychographic “personas” to help focus your PR plan and deliverables on the targeted audience, and to help the client better understand the audience.

Deliverables (tactics or “executable elements”)

During the term, each team will create and implement two to four (2-4) deliverables, or tactics, based on the strategies and objectives that are developed. These professional-quality materials will

demonstrate what you have learned about the client, the primary audience identified, the messages to be communicated, and the needs of the client.

Communications plan

Each team will create a professional-quality public relations plan that is presented to the client and your instructor at the end of the term, verbally, electronically and in printed format. The PR plan will incorporate the following (*the exact order will be outlined in more detail during a class session*):

- Background and situation analysis (including SWOT and PEST grids or other visual representations)
- Communications Audit
- Research that was conducted, in the form of a report (2-3 pages, with graphs, charts and list of sources)
- Key messages for the specific campaign
- Overarching goal/desired outcomes
- Audience(s) you've identified for your specific campaign
- Objectives and Strategies
- Tactics you created and delivered
- Tactics that are recommended as part of the plan, but were not done due to time constraints
- Longer-range communications recommendations (strategies and tactics) for the client. These are recommendations outside the immediate campaign.
- A budget and timeline
- How you or your client will measure success of your PR plan and tactics

More details about your Final PR Plan will be provided in the first few weeks of the term.

Final presentation to client and instructor

Each team will deliver a final presentation to the client at the end of the term. This will include a formal team presentation of approximately 20 minutes (not including questions from the client) summarizing your plan, the research you did, the strategies and tactics that you implemented, and your longer-term "next steps" recommendations.

Weekly progress email

Each team will be responsible for preparing a weekly team progress report memo, via email. These are due to me by noon Friday, from Week 2 through Week 7. Please format them as a professional business email memo addressed to your "supervisor" (me). Use the weekly memo to keep me informed about your client relationship, campaign progress and team collaboration. Employ your strategic writing ability to make these progress reports both informative and engaging.

Professional portfolio review

One final step in your academic career in public relations is the professional portfolio review. It marks the transition from student to prospective employee. During Dead Week (Week 10), each student will present a portfolio of his or her public relations work (academically and professionally) to a panel of PR professionals via Zoom. Your initial presentation will be followed by feedback and questions from the

PR professionals. Be prepared. A good night's sleep and message points designed to walk reviewers through your portfolio are essential. More information will be available on or about Week 4. **Note: You must complete your portfolio and review to pass this class and graduate!**

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Grading

The breakdown of grading of specific assignments and components of the course are as follows:

Final Written PR Plan (team is graded together) 30% of final grade

- Final Communications/Public Relations Plan as outlined above and in subsequent detailed information

Tactics (“deliverables”) completed (team grade) 20%

Graded client-related work (team grade) 20%

- Research you’ve conducted (written draft & report)
- Audience identification (class presentation)
- Weekly progress reports for instructor
- Draft Situation Analysis (including PEST/SWOT and Communications Audit)
- Memo outlining the tactics you intend to carry out
- A draft of your final PR Plan
- Other work as assigned (exercises, etc.)

Presentation to client (team & individual grade; 50/50) 20%

Professionalism (individual grade) 10%

- Participation/performance in class presentations
- Client satisfaction and relationship management
- Professionalism (attendance, participation in team effort, team collaboration, and in-class engagement)

Professional Portfolio Review (Pass/No Pass) 0%

- While not graded for the purposes of this course you must complete your Portfolio Review in order to pass the class, earn your degree and graduate!!

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

Note: Plus or minus grade cutoffs are as follows: X9-X7% for plus grade, X6-X4 for solid grade and X3-X0 for minus. Your instructor will gauge course engagement and effort to determine final grades that fall between these grading parameters.

Grading Rubric

The general rubrics outlined below help guide students during the course of the term. Grading PR work is not like a math assignment, in which there is one answer. There often are gray areas and variations in that preclude a more precise rubric. Here is a more general outline of how I will grade individual and team submissions during the course of the term:

Deadlines: Assignments are late if they are submitted after the date and time I ask for them. Unless there is a valid reason for a delay, one letter grade will be deducted after the deadline, and an additional letter grade will be deducted for each passing day until the assignment is submitted. Assignments that are more than a week late will not be accepted.

A-range (90-100): Excellent. Professional-quality work that is well-organized, and exhibits excellent comprehension, creativity, strategic thinking and techniques that resonate with the intended target audience. A-range work is essentially ready for publication and is of professional quality. It requires almost no editing. It incorporates relevant research and creativity. Meets or exceeds all criteria for assignment.

B-range (80-89): Above Average. This work could be raised to professional quality without extensive editing. It is grammatically correct but may lack polish and organization, or vice versa. This level of work shows good scholarship but needs revision before publication. Grammatically correct but needs polish, re-organization of sentences/paragraphs, or incorporation of strategic communications concepts. (B+ is 88-89%; B- is 80-83%).

C-range (70-79): Meets Minimum Standards. The quality of work can be improved with considerable revision and editing. Work in the C range has issues in at least one basic area, such as grammar; spelling; weak messaging' is "off strategy;" or does not match up with the audience, overarching goal or desired outcomes of the client. It is an adequate first draft — a starting place — but needs significant revision before presenting to a supervisor or client. (C+ is 78-79%; C- is 70-73%)

D-range (60-69): Does Not Meet Standards. This quality of work is inadequate but can be improved with considerable revision. Writing contains multiple basic errors and is confusing, lacks organization, uses poor syntax/sentence structure, and/or lacks strategic concepts. (D+ is 68-69%; D- is 60-63%)

F (59 or lower): Unacceptable. This work is not completed in a professional or timely way. It often demonstrates unsatisfactory comprehension, strategic thinking, organization, grammar and does not follow assignment directions.

General class information

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. Late assignments will be penalized for each day they are late. I reserve the right to make changes to the attached weekly class schedule, which might affect the deadline schedule. Such changes usually are made to accommodate guest speakers' schedules, instructor illnesses or other unusual circumstances.

Computer use

You are strongly encouraged to bring your laptop to class and use it to participate in team projects, do research, share ideas, collaborate on writing, and connect.

Use of Generative AI

Students in this course may use AI appropriately for the following purposes:

- Research (both secondary and primary)
- Client background and determining situational analysis
- Developing concepts for audience identification and personas
- Creation of presentation templates
- Other non-content purposes

Any materials that are created using AI must be clearly identified (in a footnote) in all work submitted. Students must use their own creativity in writing. AI may be used to help generate ideas, concepts, audience and research strategies, and other non-narrative purposes. When using AI, students are expected to ensure:

- Client confidentiality (DO NOT share sensitive confidential client information with AI!)
- Accuracy (DO NOT rely on AI for accuracy, always double-check factuality and sources!)
- Timeliness of information (AI models may have limited and outdated knowledge).

If students breach the above AI guidelines and policies, points may be deducted from their grade and a misconduct procedure may be invoked. If in doubt about use of AI, please consult me.

Professionalism

We will be operating as if we are in a real-world work environment and you are the professional employees of a PR consulting firm, of which your instructor is the owner/creative director/manager. Actions that could get you disciplined at work, or lose a client's account in the real world, will affect your grade in class. Client satisfaction, communicating with your instructor, and positive teamwork are keys to your success!

You are expected to be in class on time. Each student is expected to accept responsibility for taking on team assignments, understanding precisely what is expected, communicating with your other teammates, and getting the work done to a high professional standard on or before specified deadlines. If you must miss a class due to illness or other emergency, please inform me **and your teammates** of the reason via email or text message.

All reports or other assignments must be computer generated (no exceptions). Poorly written will not be graded favorably. **Note: Your final written PR Plan must be presented to your client and instructor as a PDF and in printed/bound form.**

All points of view are welcome in class and every student's opinion will be respected. Inappropriate behavior or language is just as unacceptable in class as it is in the work place. Respectful disagreement is fine, because it generally contributes to better understanding. Focus on the issue, not the person.

Team success

This class is as much about learning how to work effectively in teams, and with clients, as it is about creating and producing a sound communications/PR campaign plan. The success of your team will depend on a high level of communication, trust and commitment. Develop your team's operating rules at the outset of class and stick with them.

If a team member is not contributing or abiding by the rules, you will first be asked to use some "crucial conversation" skills to resolve the issue on your own. The team should meet with the instructor **as a team** to discuss the issue only if you are still struggling and cannot resolve issues on your own. Your success in the class depends on the success of your team. Teams are graded together for much of the coursework, so the better your teammates do, the better you do. You are stronger together and when everyone meets commitments.

Successful teams maintain good contact with their clients during the term. That doesn't mean meeting or contacting them every week, but you must maintain sufficient contact to ensure you are meeting the client's expectations. In the business world, keeping the client satisfied is just as important as getting the client in the first place. During the term, there are points in which you must get sign-off or permission from the client before moving forward with your research, strategies or tactics.

Communication from me

I use Canvas and the email listed at the top of this syllabus to communicate changes to the schedule, tips on assignments, class cancellations due to weather/illness, or anything else. You are encouraged to check your UO email regularly, as well as Announcements posted on Canvas. Please try to alert me a day in advance if you plan to visit me during office hours.

Note: For urgent matters, including notices of class absences, please email me directly at lancer@uoregon.edu, rather than communicating via Canvas.

Attendance

Failing to attend classes regularly can affect your final grade significantly. It also can significantly affect your team's overall success. You can avoid being marked absent by informing me ahead of time when you will not be in class or able to meet with your team. Sickness, client meetings, and emergencies qualify as excusable. You are still expected to catch up on missed work. These rules apply to class sessions in which you will meet in teams rather than as an entire class.

Accessibility

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. For more information or assistance, you are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center, 346-1155; website: <http://aec.uoregon.edu/>.

Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations, who have any emergency medical information the instructor should know of, or who need special arrangements in the event of evacuation, should make an appointment with me no later than the second week of the term.

Academic integrity

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act.

Diversity and inclusion

Diversity is supported and valued at the University of Oregon. We respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals; reject bigotry, discrimination, violence, and intimidation; practice personal and academic integrity and expect it of others; and promote a diversity of ideas, opinions and backgrounds.

University of Oregon policy statement on equal opportunity

"The University of Oregon affirms and actively promotes the right of all individuals to equal opportunity in education at this institution without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation or any other extraneous consideration not directly and substantively related to effective performance."

Weekly course schedule

Week	Date	Description	Important Things To Do
Week 1	April 2	Course overview, fill out client interest questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish team collaboration ground rules Develop research and needs questions for client Arrange initial meeting with client on April 9 (off or on campus) Do secondary research Brainstorm ideas for primary research
	April 4	Presentation: Working in Teams Teams get client assignments and establish simple ground rules	
Week 2	April 9	Meet with client during April 9 class period (no formal class session)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with client during April 9 class session Consider arranging an on-site field trip with client outside of class sessions by end of Week 4 Begin Situation Analysis, SWOT & PEST analysis Identify and conduct primary research; complete secondary research; submit research plan memo Week 2 memo due (always by noon Friday)
	April 11	Overview of Situation Analysis, primary and secondary research Team progress reports format	
Week 3	April 16	PR/Communications Plan structure, components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete primary and secondary research Prepare class presentation on research you've completed and audiences you will target Identify targeted audiences; craft "personas" Week 3 memo due Work on Situation Analysis
	April 18	Audience Identification, Personas Work in teams on research report and presentation to class	
Week 4	April 23	Objectives, strategies and tactics overview and exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 25: Teams conduct class presentation on research and audiences Work on mapping out objectives, strategies and tactics Complete draft Situation and SWOT/PEST analyses; submit to Lance by Sunday, April 28 for feedback and comments Week 4 memo due
	April 25	Team presentations: research you've completed and target audiences you've identified	
Week 5	April 30	Work in teams on objectives, strategies and tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine objectives, strategies and tactics Get client and instructor OK on tactics you will create Begin initial work on tactics/deliverables Begin assembling Communications Plan Week 5 memo due
	May 2	Preparing for your professional portfolio presentation and review	

Weekly course schedule (continued)

Week 6	May 7 May 9	Client presentation design and tips Work in teams on your PR Plan and Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue writing Communications Plan • Work on tactics/deliverables • Work on your professional portfolio • Week 6 memo due
Week 7	May 14 May 16	Work on draft PR plan Work on draft PR plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Communications/PR plan due (submit via email by midnight on May 16) • Work on client presentation • Work on individual portfolio • Week 7 memo due (final weekly memo)
Week 8	May 21 May 23	Team meetings with Lance to review draft communications plan Work in your teams on plan revisions, presentation to client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams meet with Lance to review draft PR plans • Revise PR/communications plan • Work on your client presentation • Work on individual portfolio • Provide client with specific half-hour time slot for presentation on Tuesday, June 4
Week 9	May 28-30	Work on PR Plan, Presentation and Portfolios (no formal class sessions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for client presentations • Prepare for portfolio review • Prepare and print final Communications/PR plan (one for instructor; two copies for client) • Complete evaluation of teammates
Week 10	June 4 June 5-6 June 7	Client presentations Finalize portfolio and prep for review Individual portfolio reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print and prepare final PR plans • Conduct client presentations • Submit PDF of PR/Communications plan via Canvas • Provide printed Communications Plan to client and instructor during client presentations • Do your individual portfolio review • Enjoy the summer – and the rest of your life!

Note: Your instructor reserves the right to modify the weekly schedule, based on changing needs, availability of guest speakers and other factors. I will provide the class with advanced notice of any changes that impact student deadlines, assignments or scheduled class sessions.