

**SUNY Fredonia**  
**Department of Communication**

**COMM 222 PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Fall 2019  
MWF 11:00- 11:50 AM  
Fenton Hall 175

**Professor David Norman**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This is an introductory course in public relations (PR). Students learn the basic theories, history and practices of public relations; how to prepare basic written documents such as news releases and advisories. We will define PR and examine various distinctions under the public relations “umbrella” and different approaches to each. You will discover how PR differs from but works in concert with advertising and marketing. We will examine various aspects of traditional and social media, understanding how a story moves from idea to communication to placement. You will also learn the PRSA Code of Ethics and review PR’s role in crisis communications and reputation management. We will often reference and examine current, real-world situations and how public relations plays a role in actions and outcomes.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- Meaningful understanding of the concepts, history and practices of public relations.
- Ability to apply general public relations principles.
- Skills to explore and analyze public relations case studies.
- Ability to consider potential opportunities in building constituent relationships.

**DEPARTMENTAL GOALS:** Students must demonstrate the ability to:

- Understand, evaluate and communicate creatively— within and across technically and culturally diverse systems— in ways that responsibly confirm the value of all system members.
- Evaluate and creatively consider communication locally, globally and historically through perspectives relevant to their specific major.
- Extend and apply skills and knowledge to create community connections beyond the university that foster professional, civic and developmental engagement.
- Understand and apply ethical principles to the practice of communication in research, interactions and creative processes in diverse social, cultural and professional spheres.
- Develop and implement creative, knowledge-based solutions across a variety of communication contexts within and beyond the university.
- Forge connections between the skills and knowledge acquired in their communication major with their lives and careers beyond the baccalaureate.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:** *The Practice of Public Relations, 13th Edition*, Fraser P. Seitel, (Pearson, 2017), ISBN 13: 978-0-13-417011-4

**REQUIRED READING:** You are required to subscribe and comment weekly to Professor Jeff Morosoff's blog "Public Relations Nation" at <http://jmorosoff.wordpress.com> (published every Sunday morning; comments due by the next Wednesday class and are worth one (1) point each).

**CLASS EXPECTATIONS:** When you are employed by in a professional organization, you're expected to meet deadlines, follow procedures, come to work on time, participate and take notes at meetings, and contact your workplace if you'll be late or absent. The same is expected of you in class. Refer to this syllabus often to stay on track with reading and assignments.

**PARTICIPATION:** Reading the text assignments are an important element of this class. This will give you the full benefit of the course and the information provided. This class involves discussion and feedback, and the textbook chapters plus handouts will supplement discussions. Your attitude, participation and a demonstrated interest in the subject matter will be included in your grade. Extra help is always available, and meetings with me regarding your progress are welcomed and encouraged.

**ATTENDANCE:** You are expected to attend and be on time for every class. More than two (2) unexcused absences or more than three (3) latenesses will result in points deducted from your grade (one point for each excessive absence, one half-point for each excessive lateness) for the semester. Excused absences are given only when I am notified before class. Please e-mail me as soon as you know you will be absent or late.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** To contact me outside of class, please email me at david.norman@fredonia.edu and I will respond to you within 24 hours.

**PERSONAL MEDIA:** **There is NO USE of electronic devices** (cell phones, laptops, tablets, digital players, etc.) permitted during class time. You will be asked to leave the classroom if you ignore this policy.

**ASSIGNMENT POLICIES:**

Assignments must be submitted on the due date and in class or will not be accepted. Missed assignments will result in the loss of points from your final grade. All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced and stapled. Please put your name on the first page and number each page. Save the Word file. Spell check, proofread and do your work as professionally as possible. Print out your assignments before you come to class. Don't send me your assignments via email; they will not be accepted.

No work or a previous paper done in another class will be accepted. All written work may be tested against Turnitin and other tools for originality and proper citations of all sources. I reserve the right to discuss your work with my colleagues to assure originality.

Sources, when required, should be noted in AP style. Here are some easy references:

- [www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/index.aspx?doc\\_id=796](http://www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/index.aspx?doc_id=796)
- [www.crk.umn.edu/library/links/apa5th.htm](http://www.crk.umn.edu/library/links/apa5th.htm)
- [www.apstylebook.com](http://www.apstylebook.com)

**FINAL PROJECT:** As a team, you will be asked to create a complete public relations campaign for an actual client. You and your partners will present your campaign in class. Contributions from each team member must be appropriately distributed and verified. Lateness, plagiarism or no submission will result in no grade for the project and possible failure of the course.

**EXAMS:** A midterm and final exam will be given in class. Make-up exams will be arranged only in emergency situations with prior approval.

**GRADES:** You are entitled to fairness, consistency and clarity. You are not entitled to a good grade. You earn good grades by mastering the content and subject matter, producing quality work, and making an effort to go beyond course minimums.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:	20%
PR NATION ASSIGNMENTS:	10%
MIDTERM EXAM:	20%
FINAL EXAM:	25%
FINAL PROJECT:	25%

You're far more likely to earn an A or A- when your work exceeds expectations. Work meeting basic competencies and expectations will most often receive grades in the B+ to B- range. Work that is either below par, omits some of the requirements or is late will usually earn a C+, C or C-. Students poorly executing and/or missing assignments may receive a D or F.

Keep a folder of all your work and exams as a means to track and ensure accuracy on grading throughout the semester. You should also record your own attendance and lateness; both are part of the calculation of your final grade.

**NUMBER/LETTER GRADE EQUIVALENTS:**

94-100 =	A	74-76 =	C
90-93 =	A-	70-73 =	C-
87-89 =	B+	67-69 =	D+
84-86 =	B	64-66 =	D
80-83 =	B-	60-63 =	D-
77-79 =	C+	Below 60 =	F

**Academic Integrity Policy**

Students are expected to review and abide by SUNY Fredonia's policy regarding academic integrity. Compliance with strict standards of academic honesty is expected. Academic misconduct/plagiarism will not be tolerated and may be grounds for failure of a course and suspension or dismissal from the university. Note that plagiarism is the failure to correctly site/reference any ideas or words that are not originally your own; you should always reference the sources of your information. Plagiarism also includes the using others' (or sharing your own) essays, quizzes, etc., as well as the use of pre-written, purchased or downloaded materials. Please review the Fredonia Academic Integrity Policy at <http://smartcatalogiq.com/en/Catalogs/SUNY-Fredonia/2016-2017/catalog/Academic-Policies/Copy-of-Academic-Integrity-Policy>.

**Accommodations for Disabilities Policy**

Students with disabilities who may need reasonable accommodations to have equal access to this course must contact the Coordinator of Disability Support Services, Reed Library (4th Floor), 673-3270. The Coordinator will review your disability documentation and make determinations about what accommodations and/or services you are eligible for."Disability support services can be found at <http://www.fredonia.edu/tlc/DSS/dss.htm>

**COMM 222 – FALL 2019 COURSE CALENDAR (subject to change)**  
**MWF 11:00 – 11:50 AM**

Week of:  
**AUG 26**

**Course introduction and overview --** Review of course objectives, policies, procedures, exams, and assignments, including the PR campaign. We will define public relations and examine PRSA's definition. What is news? What is PR's role in creating and disseminating the news? What's all this about "fake news?" History and growth of public relations. The PR umbrella PR as a career. We will distinguish between PR, advertising and marketing. We will also discuss agency vs. corporate PR, traditional vs. non-traditional PR.

**The stories of the week will begin each session. Importance of participation in class.**

**Reading:** Chapter 1 & 2

**Sept 2 Labor Day- no class**

**SEPT 4**      **Communication** – We'll review communication theories and how they relate to the public relations profession.

**Public Opinion** – Attitudes and how they are influenced. What is reputation?

**Reading:** Chapters 3 & 4

**SEPT 9**      **PR ethics** – Doing the right thing. The PRSA Code of Ethics will be reviewed. PR vs. journalism standards.

**PR research**–We will examine how research is fundamental to every PR effort. Various types of research methods and their implementation will be studied.

**Law and public relations** – a conflict of interest? We will review the First Amendment and laws governing libel and slander. We will also examine copyright laws and free speech challenges presented by the Internet.

**Reading:** Chapters 6-8

**Assignment (due 9/11):** Comment on "Public Relations Nation."

**SEPT 16**      **Media Relations**– We will discuss how the media and the PR industry are co-dependent; how the media operates; how to pitch the media, KISS.

**Reading:** Chapter 9

**SEPT 23**      **Social media and PR** – We will look at how the Internet has changed traditional forms of PR and continues to evolve within the profession. Guest speaker.

**Reading:** Chapter 10

**Assignment (due 9/25):** Comment on "Public Relations Nation."

- SEPT 30**      **The PR Umbrella:** This session will examine and analyze other forms of public relations activities and tools including community relations; government relations and lobbying; employee relations. What do they have in common? How are they different?
- Reading:** Chapters 11-13.
- OCT 7**            Midterm review
- Oct 9 MIDTERM EXAM**
- Fri Oct. 11 Fall Break- no class
- OCT 14**        **Integrated marketing communications:** We will examine how PR works with other forms of communication and influencers to motivate opinions and actions. Also, native advertising, growth of content-based PR and international public relations.
- PR campaigns** – The class will be instructed on the format of a PR campaign proposal.
- Assignment (due 10/16):** Comment on "Public Relations Nation."
- Reading:** Chapter 14 &16
- OCT 21**        **Writing for Public Relations:** Long live the news release? Backgrounders, pitch notes, advisories, the art of the pitch and more.
- Reading:** Chapter 15
- OCT 28**        **Reputation management and crisis management** – We will examine how organizations use PR to mitigate public concerns and manage reputation. Why do many organizations do things wrong?
- Case studies:** Classic case studies and the professor's war stories.
- Reading:** Chapter 17
- Assignment (due 10/30):** Comment on "Public Relations Nation."
- NOV 4**            **Catch up and TBD**
- NOV 11**        **TBD and guest speakers**
- Assignment (due 11/13):** Comment on "Public Relations Nation."
- NOV 18**        **Public relations management** –How PR serves as a management function to create, maintain or improve an organization's public image. We will discuss the structure of a public relations department, agency or consultancy.
- Careers in public relations**  
 - Agency, corporation, other organizations

- Managing a PR agency
- Business development

**Reading:** Chapter 5 &18

**NOV 25**      **THANKSGIVING BREAK- NO CLASSES**

**DEC 2**        **Team project presentations**

**DEC 9**        **Team project presentations, cont.**

Review for final exam.

**DEC 13**      **FINAL EXAM**