PR 101: Principles and Practice of Public Relations
Fall 2018
PH 103
Monday, Wednesday, Friday
9:20 to 10:20 a.m.

Brittany Rowe-Cernevicius
403 Thompson-Clark Hall
roweba@westminster.edu

Office Hours
M-W-F: 10:30-11:30 a.m.
Tu & Th: 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

*Please type PR 101 in the subject line

I am also available by appointment.

Course Description:
The course is designed to introduce students to the public relations industry and what it means to be a public relations practitioner. There are many misconceptions surrounding the profession and this class seeks to help students to gain a realistic view of what it means to have a career in public relations. This semester we will examine the role of public relations in today’s society, the process of planning a public relations program, the theoretical underpinnings of public relations strategies, and various public relations tactics.

Major Outcomes:
To successfully complete a Public Relations major, students will demonstrate the ability to:
1. Write persuasively, in a variety of formats, for a variety of media
2. Use diverse research methods and analyze data to develop and support various PR functions
3. Apply PR strategies and tactics to solve problems creatively
4. Use PR principles and practices to guide management effectively and ethically
5. Practice oral communication skills professionally in a variety of situations

Course Objectives
In this course you will…
1. Develop your knowledge of the field of public relations
2. Define the terms used by public relations practitioners
3. Discuss the legal and ethical issues surrounding public relations
4. Define public relations objectives, strategies, and tactics and use them to develop a public relations campaign
5. Write messages designed to effectively reach various publics
6. Create a public relations campaign for a client
7. Work effectively with others
8. Practice your presentation skills

Required Textbooks:

Recommended Textbook:
Class Policies:

1. **Attendance is required!** You must attend class and actively participate in order to achieve the goals of this course. This class meets three days per week, so you may only miss three classes without penalty. You will lose 50 points for each additional absence. If you have an emergency situation, and will be missing class, please notify me as soon as possible. If you are frequently late for class you will be warned and continuing to arrive late will result in a loss of points. Habitual sleeping in class will also be considered an absence. If you are texting in class, you will be marked absent. If you are sleeping or texting in class, you may be here physically, but you aren’t here mentally. In-class activities and quizzes cannot be completed as make-up work.

2. **Absences during exams & presentations:** The only absences that will be considered excused are a death in the family, severe documentable personal illness, and participation in a college sponsored activity (e.g., intercollegiate activities or sports). Whenever possible, please notify me in advance if you will need to miss class during an exam or presentation. You must contact me prior to or within 24 hours of the missed class. If you (or someone acting on your behalf) fail to notify me within 24 hours of the missed class you will not be allowed to make up the missed exam. If you are absent for a group presentation, you will not be able to make up your portion of the presentation.

3. **The best way to contact me is via email.** However, please be aware that I may not be able to respond immediately to emails sent later in the day (typically after 3 p.m.) or on weekends, but I will get back to you as quickly as I can. During my office hours, I will try to be available via D2L chat. If you have a simple question, you may want to try this option for a quick response.

4. **Cell Phones & Computers:** As a matter of courtesy, all cell phones must be turned off when you enter the classroom, unless otherwise noted. Please refrain from texting during class; it is disruptive to your classmates. Students who are texting in class will be marked absent. If you have your cell phone out during a test, the test will be confiscated and you will receive a zero on the test. I do not mind if students use computers for taking notes during class. However, I reserve the right to prohibit computer use during class if I feel a student is using the computer for other purposes during class or if I think the use of a computer is disruptive in any way.

5. **Reading assignments:** You are expected to complete all reading assignments before coming to class. I will not cover all of the information discussed in an assigned reading. However, that does not mean you do not need to be familiar with the material. Some class periods will consist of activities based on the day’s reading and coming to class unprepared will inhibit participation. Over the years, I have found that students don’t often read before coming to class. If I get the sense that the majority of you have not read, I may start giving reading quizzes, so be prepared.

6. **Written assignments:** Unless otherwise noted, your work should be typed, doubled-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font. Sloppy work communicates something about you and your level of professionalism. Please use paragraphs, introductions, conclusions, and transitions accordingly. Some assignments may require you to cite your sources using either MLA or APA format, which can be found in the Prentice Hall Reference Guide. Be sure to proofread your papers for typos and grammatical errors. If you have questions about the requirements for an assignment, please contact me. The Learning Center, located on the fourth floor of Thompson-Clark Hall (ext. 6700), is a valuable resource where students can receive additional help with writing and study skills.

7. **Submitting Assignments:** The public relations industry is a fast-paced, deadline driven industry. If you don’t complete a particular project on time, the results could be detrimental for your client and could cost you your job. Late work will NOT be accepted. Unless otherwise noted, the start of class will be the deadline for your assignment. Be sure to allow enough time to print your papers if a hard copy is required for submission. Some assignments may require you to submit your work online.
7. Submitting Assignments (cont.): Do not wait until the last minute to submit assignments online—D2L will close assignments automatically and may not accept them. Assignments that do not adhere to the assignment guidelines given in class may receive a zero. If you have questions about the proper format for an assignment, please feel free to contact me to clarify the assignment or for additional instructions.

8. Academic Integrity: In accordance with Westminster College’s policy, violations of academic integrity include cheating, misconduct, plagiarism, and providing false information. Please refer to your student handbook for a detailed description of Westminster’s Academic Integrity Policy. Work that violates the college’s policy will receive a zero and the assignment or test may be turned over to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for further disciplinary action. Please remember that violating the Academic Integrity Policy may be grounds for dismissal from the college. If you have questions about properly citing source material or what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me.

9. Accessibility: Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students with disabilities who may require additional accommodations for environmental or curricular barriers should contact Faith Craig, the Director of Disability Resources. Her office is 414 Thompson-Clark

10. Ethical Communication: As participants in a collegiate learning community, it is important to respect others’ right to express themselves. It is quite possible that you may not agree with every comment or opinion expressed in class. While you are not obliged to agree with others, you are asked to be respectful of everyone’s right to their own comments or opinions. **Scholarly debate can be a valuable educational tool. However, racist, sexist, or other oppressive language will not be tolerated. Students using this type of language may be asked to leave the classroom.** It is important to remember to disagree in a respectful manner and not resort to personal attacks on those who may see things differently and/or have opinions that are different than yours.

11. The information contained in this syllabus is subject to change. If you miss class, you may want to check with a classmate to make sure that there have been no additions/subtractions to the coursework.

Assignments/Evaluations:

**Late work will NOT be accepted.** Unless otherwise noted, the start of class will be the deadline for your assignment. More detailed assignment information and guidelines will be provided for you during the semester.

1. **Current Events** (Outcome #1, Outcome #2, Outcome #3). Public relations practitioners need to be constantly vigilant for opportunities and problems that may impact their clients. Therefore, it is imperative that you stay up-to-date on current events. It’s important to able to discuss what’s going on in the world and to understand how PR may be shaping those events or how the PR industry may be impacted by them. Your class will choose one of two options for keeping up with current events.

2. **Exams** (Outcome #1, Outcome #3). There will be five exams this semester. They will cover chapters 1-4 (25 points), chapters 5-8 (50 points), chapters 9-12 (50 points), chapters 13-16, and chapters 17-21 (25 points).

3. **Agency Simulations & In-class Activities** (Outcome #1, Outcome #3, Outcome #5). In order to give you a better idea of what it is like to be a public relations practitioner you will be assigned to a PR 101 public relations agency with several other classmates. It will be your job to function like a public relations agency and complete tasks over the course of the semester during several agency simulations. **These simulations will be in-class activities and cannot be completed as make-up assignments.** Just as in the working world, if you don’t show up for work, you don’t get credit for
work completed. If you are not present for an agency simulation, you will not receive the points that your agency earned by completing the task.

4. **Individual Assignments** (Outcome #1, Outcome #2, Outcome #3). Over the course of the semester you will complete individual assignments. These assignments are directly related to tasks you might perform while looking for a job in the field or while working as a practitioner. The point value for these assignments will vary and you will receive specific guidelines for each assignment.

5. **Agency Pitch Project** (Outcome #1, Outcome #2, Outcome #3, Outcome #4, Outcome #5). Your public relations agency will be required to plan and pitch a public relations program that you design for a specific client. You must include all the stages that go into designing an effective public relations program. The final project will include a written report detailing the plan and a group presentation to pitch your plan. Your final grade for this project will consist of both individual and components. Occasionally, there will be class time to work on this project but it will require your group to meet outside of class.

**Assignment Point Breakdown:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assignments (point values vary)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Simulations (point values vary)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Pitch Project</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams (3 @ 50 pts)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Available Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>700</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total points will change if reading quizzes are required

**Final Grade Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92.9-90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89.9-87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>86.9-83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79.9-77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>76.9-74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69.9-67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>66.9-64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Less than 59.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I do not negotiate final grades. You will be able to track your progress in class via MyWestminster. Feel free to talk to me any time during the semester if you are concerned about your progress.

If you have any questions or concerns about this course or a particular assignment, please contact me. I want you to succeed!
Grading Criteria:
Letter Grades

A  The work is outstanding. I think the work exceeds the assignment description, demonstrating creativity, enthusiasm, and overall excellence.
   The chief principle of A quality work is its rich content. The information delivered is such that the reader/listener feels significantly informed, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph. Papers/presentations are marked by stylistic finesse: the introduction and title are engaging, the transitions artful, the sentence structures varied, the diction tight, fresh, and highly specific, the tone appropriate to author, audience, and purpose alike. Grammatical errors are virtually nonexistent and the work showcases a high level of professionalism. Presentations are free from verbal fillers. Because of its careful organization and development the A quality work fully address the problem/subject at hand with unusual clarity, quality, and creativity.

B  The work is very good. Papers/presentations in this range demonstrate work above average and approach the quality necessary to earn an A.
   Work is significantly more than competent, mostly free of mechanical errors. It showcases above average professionalism. Its specific points are appropriately arranged, well-developed, and unified around a clear organizing principle which is apparent. Transitions are generally smooth, the sentence structures pleasingly varied. The presenter’s diction is concise and accurate. Presentations are virtually free from verbal fillers. On the whole, the B work thoroughly addresses the problem/subject at hand but could benefit from a bit more clarity and/or creativity.

C  The work is judged to be “average.” It demonstrates enough competency and accomplishment to meet the requirements of the assignment.
   It is generally competent, meeting the assignment guidelines, despite mechanical errors. It does have reasonable organization and development. The information it delivers, however, is thin and commonplace; the ideas are expressed as vague generalities which prompt the confused reader/listener to ask various questions. Stylistically, the C paper has additional shortcomings as well: such as lack of originality, rough transitions between ideas, and choppy or monotonous sentence structure/grammar. The presenter’s diction is occasionally marred by unconscious repetition, redundancy, and imprecision. Presentations suffer from frequent verbal fillers. While it gets the job done, the C assignment lacks imagination and intellectual rigor, and hence does not fully address the problem/subject.

D  The work is poor. Papers/presentations earning a D do not meet the expectations for the assignment and often lack professionalism, completeness, and critical thought.
   The treatment and development of the subject/problem are only rudimentary. While organization is present, it is neither clear nor effective. Papers/presentations are frequently awkward, ambiguous, and marred by serious grammatical errors. For written assignments, evidence of careful proofreading is scant, perhaps nonexistent. Presentations are sloppily developed and lack professionalism. The work, in fact, often gives the impression of having been conceived in haste.

F  The work is unacceptable. It does not follow the assignment guidelines and/or has major issues regarding professionalism, completeness, and critical thought.
   Its treatment of the subject/problem is superficial; it lacks discernible organization; its prose is garbled or stylistically primitive. Grammar and punctuation errors are frequent. In short, the ideas, organizations, and style fall far below what is acceptable college or professional writing. Presentations earning an F are unprofessional and require serious revision.