I. Introduction:
The field of public relations encompasses many areas of practice. While certain principles are consistent, the styles and settings of communicators vary widely. One of the most important functions of a PR professional is your role as counselor within your organization. In order to provide effective and sound advice you will need to have an arsenal of approaches to PR problems from which you can choose. Case studies can provide you with that knowledge. This course will allow you to analyze professionally executed communication campaigns and to learn from the best and worst the industry has to offer.

II. Course Objectives
➢ To provide a stimulating forum for the discussion of “best & worst practices” in public communication.
➢ To develop your ability to comprehend, analyze and critically assess both successfully and poorly executed campaigns.
➢ To prepare you to be an ethical and effective practitioner of public communication.

III. Course Approach
This course relies heavily on student participation, so come to class prepared and ready to share your thought and insights.

IV. Course Text/Readings

Required:

Because you are studying the public relations field, it is imperative that you read at least two or more major newspapers/ news sources, in print, on the Internet (news sites as well as blogs), weekly news magazines, cable television, radio, etc.
Recommended Reading:
*The AP Style Guide.* I encourage you to become familiar with AP style and to use this guide for all of your writing assignments in this class. If you are majoring in Public Communication, the *AP Style Guide* is typically required for COMM-337 (Public Relations Writing).

Additional readings via Blackboard:
The syllabus, course schedule, and other course materials will be placed on Blackboard as will announcements of additional readings. There will be links to additional readings placed on Blackboard. You are responsible for these additional readings. Get in the habit of checking Blackboard each day. You can access Blackboard through my.american.edu. I will be using the e-mail addresses provided by Blackboard. If you use another e-mail address rather than your my.american.edu one, please have your e-mail forwarded.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments:
You will be responsible for the reading material from the texts and other handouts before each class. Your participation in the course discussions and your contributions are important to the overall success of the course.

B. Special Reports and Assignments:
You will submit a number of projects to demonstrate your ability to produce basic public relations materials. As we get to know each other better, this list of assignments may be revised to better fit the overall skills and capabilities of the class.

GENERAL ITEMS
1. Campaign Analysis (5-6 pages): You will analyze and critique the goals, strategy, target audiences and potential effectiveness of The Foundation for a Better Life’s Values campaign (values.com).
2. Case Summaries and Presentations (outline and 10 min. presentation): You will be assigned three case studies from the text. You will prepare an overview of each case and discuss various aspects of the analysis including strengths, weaknesses and effectiveness of the campaigns. Please make sufficient copies of your outline to distribute to all classmates and the instructor. In addition to submitting an outline, you will make an oral presentation of the case study. The presentation will demonstrate your ability to make connections between the cases and communication theory or between the techniques described in the cases and another
current public communication scenario. Dates and cases will be assigned in class.

3. News Release (2 pages) and Media List: A news release or press release is one of the most important tools in public relations. It requires clear, concise writing, and an understanding of how the information will be used by the media. You will be given a topic and asked to write a two-page news release. You will also be required to prepare a media list for this release.

4. Letters to Special Audiences (1 page per audience). Produce letters to different target audiences regarding (case material to be provided).

5. Communication case exercise (In-class). You will be assigned to a “communication account team” that will be given an in-basket project concerning the development of an escalating crisis situation. Your team will identify appropriate communication responses and negotiate with other groups to implement your strategy.

6. Group Project/ Presentation and Public relations plan (8-10 pages) Working in a small group, you will contribute to the strategic planning and development of a communication campaign on behalf of a client. The program each team develops will be based on research of case studies, successful and otherwise, intended to accomplish similar objectives. You will site case studies in order to support your recommended strategy. This project will have two parts. The first will be to develop a strategic communication plan on behalf of the “client”. The second will be to research other case studies to support your team’s strategy and to “sell” your plan to the client. The project should demonstrate students’ comprehension of the strategies and tactics upon which the model campaigns were based. Groups will apply insights garnered through analysis of cases to their presentation, with all members of the group receiving the same grade.

B. Quizzes
There will be four unannounced quizzes during the semester and will cover current events and class readings. If you miss a quiz, your grade for that quiz will be 0 unless you provide a valid excuse from a doctor. If you missed class without having provided a valid excuse, you won’t be allowed to make up that quiz and will get 0.

C. Mid-term
The mid-term will be a take-home exam.

D. Final Exam
The final exam will be a mixture of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions.

VI. COURSE GRADES
Course grades will be assigned based on total points earned with the following ratio for the assignments:

- Class attendance and participation 10%
- Campaign Analysis paper 10%
- Case Summaries & Presentations 15%
- News Release/Media List 10%
- Letters to Special Audiences 10%
- Communication Case Exercise 5%
- Group PR Project 15%
- Quizzes 5%
- Midterm Exam 10%
- Final Exam 10%

For each assignment grades will be assigned based upon the following scale:
- A 95-100 points
- A- 90-94
- B+ 87-89
- B 84-86
- B- 80-83
- C+ 77-79
- C 74-76
- C- 70-73
- D 60-69
- F 50-59

**GRADING POLICY EVALUATION**

**The grade of A** is awarded for excellence, the very best work in the class. An A student turns in all work on time with consistently very high standards of quality, creativity, and original thinking. This person produces outstanding products and performs exceptionally in presentations and critiques. A final grade of A is earned when tests and assignments average at least A-/B+

**The grade of B** is awarded to students who have turned in all work on time, and consistently completed work in a high quality manner. The work shows creative thinking, extra effort, and care in presentation. This person has demonstrated knowledge that surpasses the basic material and skills of the course. A final grade of B is earned when there is an average of B on tests and assignments.

**The grade of C** is earned when all class work is turned in and the student has mastered the basic material and skills of the course. This person
participated in class and demonstrated knowledge of the basic material and skills. This is the average grade in the class.

The D or F is given for work that is incomplete, late, and/or does not demonstrate mastery of the basic material and skills of the course.

VII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION
Regular attendance and participation in class discussions and projects are required for successful completion of the course. More than two unexcused absences will result in points being subtracting from your grade. Submit your work on-time or count on getting points subtracted—10% per class.

An attendance sheet will be provided. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet, but only for yourself. A 10-minute grace period will be allowed with a legitimate excuse; after that, you will be marked tardy. Tardy marks will affect your final course grade.

You may have one unexcused absence. The grade of students with three unexcused absences will be dropped one letter grade. Unexpected circumstances do arise occasionally, so, you are allowed three excused absences as long as they provide legitimate documentation.

CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES. Please turn off your cell phones and laptops before class begins. If you need to keep your cell phone on for emergency purposes, please let me know. If you must use your laptop to take notes, please let me know before class starts. Texting or instant messaging in class is absolutely forbidden and results in a .5 penalty (deducted from grade) for each occurrence.

Note: If you absolutely need your laptop for taking notes, know that you will be called on and expected to participate during class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE
Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course.
The Academic Integrity Code includes but is not limited to: Plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, dishonesty in exams or papers, work done for one course and submitted to another, deliberate falsification of data, interference with other students’ work and copyright violations. Students are expected to behave according to university standards of honesty, decency, and consideration. Every student at the university receives a student handbook which includes “Rights, Responsibilities, and the Code of Conduct,” an article that defines these standards. Students who do not follow these guidelines may be asked to leave the class. You can access the Academic Integrity Code here: http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. **Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies.** In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean’s office for course and school/college-specific information.

**ACADEMIC SUPPORT CENTER**

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don’t hesitate to consult with me. In addition to the resources of the department, a wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements.

**Academic Support Center** (885-3360, MGC 243) offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities. Writing support is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle 228.

**Counseling Center** (885-3500, MGC 214) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and
connections to off-campus mental health resources. **Disability Support Services** (885-3315, MGC 206) offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability and might require accommodations in this course, please notify me with a letter from DSS or ASC early in the semester so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

**IX. COURSE SCHEDULE**

In the next page, you will find the Course Schedule. **This schedule is subject to change** due to unforeseen events, special opportunities, guest speakers, and my knowledge of you and your media knowledge, interest and involvement. Revised versions will be placed on Blackboard. You will be alerted to any major changes, so please check your emails and Blackboard.
**COMM 346.003 Fall 2009**

**Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>Introductions&lt;br&gt;Review of syllabus, class assignments and guidelines&lt;br&gt;Discussion of “What is public relations?” and “Why analyze case studies?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 4</td>
<td>Public Relations Overview&lt;br&gt;Public Relations Process</td>
<td>Chapters 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 11</td>
<td>Public Relations Process (continued)&lt;br&gt;Sample Case Study</td>
<td>Chapter 2 (continued)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 18</td>
<td>Media Relations</td>
<td>Chapter 3&lt;br&gt;<strong>Due: Campaign Analysis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 25</td>
<td>Internal Communications</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>Community Relations</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Public Affairs and Government Relations</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>FALL BREAK&lt;br&gt;<strong>Mid-term exam due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>Investor and Financial Relations</td>
<td>Chapter 7&lt;br&gt;<strong>Due: News Release and Media List</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>Consumer Relations</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>International Public Relations</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 13</td>
<td>Special Publics</td>
<td>Chapter 10&lt;br&gt;<strong>Due: Letters to Special Audiences</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>Emergency Public Relations&lt;br&gt;<strong>In-Class Communications Case Exercise</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 11&lt;br&gt;<strong>Due: Group PR Plans (Presentations &amp; Paper)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 24</td>
<td>CLASS MEETS TODAY : Integrated Marketing Communications</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 27</td>
<td>NO CLASS due to Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>GROUP PR PLAN PRESENTATIONS&lt;br&gt;Team Evaluations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 11</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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