

Social, behavioral, psychological, ethical, economic and political foundations of public relations, and the theories of public relations as a communications discipline. (3 units) Prerequisite: junior standing.

COMM 361 (01) 12797 – Wednesdays, 4– 6:45 p.m.
Fullerton Campus, SGMH Room 1506

**Dr. Doug Swanson**

Accredited Public Relations Practitioner (APR)

Professor & Vice Chair

Department of Communications

Office: CP 460-13 ♦ (657) 278-8607

dswanson@fullerton.edu

<http://www.djswansonapr.net>

Weekly in-person office hours: Fullerton Campus, Wednesdays from 2 to 3:30 p.m.; Irvine Campus, Thursdays from 1 to 2:30 p.m. My office hours may occasionally need to be cancelled without notice. If you wish to come see me, please contact me via e-mail in advance. Thank you.

Objectives

This lecture-based class gives an overview of public relations, a multi-faceted discipline that is grounded in journalism and strongly aligned with advertising, marketing, promotions and publicity. The class will help you understand what PR is and how it is applied to build mutual influence and understanding between organizations and people. Because PR skills apply everywhere in the professional world, an understanding of public relations is valuable to anyone who wants to achieve career success.

The class will include assigned readings each week, to be supplemented by classroom lectures and discussions. Aside from the text, most course materials will be available on TITANium. These materials include PowerPoint slides, lecture notes, audio/ video examples, supplementary readings and podcasts.

The class includes a variety of assignments to verify your understanding of PR concepts. Because public relations is a very subjective field (meaning, it's open to interpretation) some assignments will challenge you to think critically about the structure and role of PR in actual practice, and whether or not you are comfortable with the values and professional standards we see demonstrated in the industry.

This course is structured to support the Professional Values & Competencies of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The course is designed to help you move from “awareness” to “understanding” and then “application” of 12 different concept areas. These include:

- The history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- The First Amendment and the rights and responsibilities it offers us as communicators.
- The appreciation of, and ability to work with, diverse people and cultures.

- The ethical pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.
- The critical evaluation of media-generated communication for fairness and accuracy.
- The ability to be a critical thinker who can work independently and as part of a team.

By the end of the class, here's what you should expect to know and be able to do. The skills and knowledge are essential if you are in the PR concentration and plan to go on to required courses COMM 362 and COMM 464 / COMM 474:

- Be able to define public relations several different ways, and understand the history, development, and current state of the profession in our multi-cultural world.
- Be able to identify the elements in the public relations process, as well as the components of a public relations campaign.
- Recognize the legal and ethical obligations of a public relations practitioner.
- Recognize the importance of multi-cultural awareness and sensitivity in public relations.
- Distinguish between public relations and related professions such as advertising, marketing, journalism, publicity, and social media. Be able to explain the different roles and jobs available in the field and the nuances of PR in different market sectors.
- Appreciate the importance of crisis communication and the role it plays in government, politics, society, and the nonprofit sector.
- Have a beginning level understanding of the critical importance of writing and social media use in public relations.

Syllabus as written agreement

The syllabus is a written agreement between you and me about what will happen in this class. I will clearly follow the syllabus to eliminate surprises in terms of concepts, readings, assignments and tests, due dates, assignment evaluation, and final grade calculation. In turn, you will agree to abide by the terms of the syllabus. Specifically, you agree not to ask for extra consideration not stipulated in the syllabus (particularly in terms of extra credit or grade curving, neither of which is offered).



The opportunity for learning in the classroom and through TITANium is critical to your success in this course. You are an adult, and I expect you will approach the class and its responsibilities with a serious attitude. We will have fun. That's my style. But at the same time we will take the learning experience in this class very seriously.

Receipt of this syllabus constitutes agreement on your part to all the terms contained within the syllabus.

Required text *(available in paper copy or through Course Smart)*

Wilcox, D. L., Cameron, G.T., & Reber, B. H. (2015). *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics* (11th Ed.). Boston: Pearson.

I strongly recommend that you have a recent edition of *The Associated Press Stylebook*.

The assigned readings are bedrock information for this basic PR course. Sometimes they may be directly referred to in class. Other times they will not – and the class material will build from the basic information presented in the text. When you need to have your book in class, you'll be informed in advance. Most of the time you won't. However, you should read the material and know it well.

Much of our class discussion of PR will focus on its application in today's popular culture. Therefore, I ask that you stay aware of what's going on in "the real world" through regular reading of one or more significant national publications (newspapers/ magazines). Consider *USA Today*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, or the *Wall Street Journal*; *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, etc. All can be accessed on the web or read in the library. The more you know about current events, the more able you will be to recognize and understand public relations at work in the world.

Course materials on TITANium

COMM 361 is managed through CSUF's online classroom management software, linked on your portal as TITANium). Please visit the site and, if you feel it's necessary, take the tutorial to become familiar with the system.

All written and electronic materials disseminated in this course are specifically intended for use in COMM 361. You are welcome to retain these materials after the course is ended. However, if you wish to reproduce or republish these materials, please request my written permission. I get a bit testy when I find test questions and assignment "answers" from my class on the Internet.

For additional information:

<http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/cprtindx.htm>

Academic preparation

As Winston Churchill said, "*There is no substitute for hard work.*" Indeed, CSUF recommends that you spend 25 to 35 hours a week in study if you are a full-time college student:

http://nsm.fullerton.edu/nsm/fss/docs/NSM_Academic_Success_Pamphlet_3.docx

COMM 361 offers a lot of content for you to understand and apply. How much time you **invest** (and I use that word purposely) is your decision. The more you view time spent as an investment, the more successful you are likely to be. Use the learning outcomes (on TITANium) as your guide and ask lots of questions.

In COMM 361, students work as a community of scholars. You alone are responsible for your academic preparation – including communication with me between classes as needed (e-mail, or, if asked, an office visit). "*Oops, I didn't check my e-mail*" is not an acceptable excuse to offer if I contact you between classes about an important issue in COMM 361.

Assignments

For each assignment, carefully review the detailed written instructions posted in TITANium.

Dr. Swanson's assignment evaluation guide is also posted in TITANium. Read it carefully, along with the Common Copy Errors document, so you will understand performance expectations.

Grades in this class are earned, and based completely on points, with the exception of the absence penalty noted on page 5. There is no curve or other 'formula' involved. There is no extra credit. Your final grade will be based on the number of points you earn during the term.

• Pre & Post-test Assessment [Solo]	(2 @ 25 points each = 50)
• TITANium Online Tests [Solo]	(5 @ 100 points each = 500)
• Discussion Questions / Class Activities [Team]	(5 @ 50 points each = 250)
• Electronic Portfolio and Resume [Solo]	(200 points)
• Distracted Driving Campaign Proposal [Team]	(300 points)
• Final Exam [Solo]	(500 points)
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = 1,800	

How points earned translate to your final letter grade:

Total points earned	Percentage of total	Means...	Final letter grade	(GPA)
1,675 – 1,800	93 – 100%	Mastery of course objectives	A	4.0
1,620 – 1,674	90 – 92.9%		A-	3.7
1,566 – 1,619	87 – 89.9%	Proficiency in meeting course objectives	B+	3.3
1,494 – 1,565	83 – 86.9%		B	3.0
1,440 – 1,493	80 – 82.9%		B-	2.7
1,386 – 1,439	77 – 79.9%	Developing knowledge of course objectives	C+	2.3
1,314 – 1,385	73 – 76.9%		C	2.0
1,260 – 1,313	70 – 72.9%	Insufficient demonstration of knowledge	C-	1.7
1,206 – 1,259	67 – 69.9%		D+	1.3
1,152 – 1,205	64 – 66.9%		D	1.0
1,080 – 1,151	60 – 63.9%		D-	0.7
1,078 or fewer	59.9% or below	FAIL	F	0.0

Calculating your grade point average:

<https://www.fullerton.edu/aac/aactool/gpacalguide.asp>

Grades are kept in TITANium, and this method has proven to be reliable. However, you should save a copy of everything you submit for this class. Please save a copy of all graded work I return to you. On the last class day before finals week, the assignment grades entered in TITANium will be considered to be correct unless you notify me at that point.

Policies relating to academic performance in this course
Please read this section very carefully.

The following policies are designed to make the course expectations clear, and the course requirements fair to everyone. They are also designed to help prepare you for “the real world” of PR, which is much less forgiving on issues of personal involvement and work quality.

Attendance

Attendance in class is a university expectation, as noted in the university catalog.

You may miss up to three class sessions (20% of the total) for any reason with no penalty. No notes or absence excuses are required. However, at four absences, the highest final grade you may earn is a B, regardless of academic performance. There are no exceptions. Attendance is verified through a roll sheet passed around in class. If you do not sign, you are marked absent.

“Late” assignments

Assignments not submitted on deadline are penalized 10%. There is a 10% penalty each day, until four days beyond the deadline. At that point, assignments are not accepted for credit. The Distracted Driving Campaign Proposal due at the end of the semester is not accepted late for any reason.

Classroom management issues

- ***Disruptive behavior is unacceptable.*** Class will begin on time, and you will arrive on time. If you repeatedly show up late, we will need to have an unpleasant discussion.
- ***One person speaks at a time.*** There are 100+ students in this class. Everyone is welcome to express opinions. Dr. Swanson enjoys a healthy discussion. However, he has the floor, and will surrender it one person at a time. When somebody speaks, everybody else listens. Students who continually engage in side conversations will be excused from class and marked absent.
- ***Responsible laptop use.*** Dr. Swanson welcomes you to use your laptop to take notes or review items on TITANium. If Dr. Swanson sees you looking at porn, shopping for shoes, or otherwise using your laptop irresponsibly, you will immediately leave the room and be marked absent.
- ***Dr. Swanson authorizes cell phone use.*** Occasionally, there will be authorized use of cell phones to allow you to participate in class polling. Otherwise, cell phone use is not sanctioned in this class. That means no rings, no calls, no text, no Twitter, no exceptions. If your phone rings, you leave the room. If Dr. Swanson sees you texting, you leave the room. Dr. Swanson decides whether you may return to the room, or if you’re done for the day and marked absent.
- ***Follow the university’s policies regarding food and drink.*** Please enjoy your meal before you come to class. There is a posted policy about food and drink, and we will adhere to it.
- adhere to it. food/ drink.

Emergency procedures

In the event of an earthquake or other natural disaster, we will drop and cover. Dr. Swanson will provide instructions about exiting the room, and you will follow those instructions. Please familiarize yourself with the university's emergency preparedness guidelines:

<http://ehs.fullerton.edu/EmergencyInfo/>

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits faculty from discussing your academic performance with others, or in the presence of others. Faculty cannot discuss your work performance or grades with you in a group in the classroom. It is a violation of FERPA to return your graded papers to another student if you are absent from class. In COMM 361, individual team member point scores are not shared with the other members of the team. If you wish to discuss specific issues about your work in class, see Dr. Swanson during office hours. Please be aware of FERPA, and its protection of your rights. If *any* professor is violating your FERPA rights, you should immediately contact the office of the CSUF Dean of Students.

Academic honesty

There are team-based assignments in this class. You are free to work with others on these assignments. However, it is unacceptable for students to turn in work which appears to me to be copied, either all or in part, from a single original. Seldom if ever will assignments other than tests involve only one way of expressing a correct answer. Thus, if multiple assignments submitted are substantially non-original in appearance (using the same form of expression in content or context), they will earn no credit. There are online tests in this class. Dr. Swanson routinely checks TITANium's online test submission data to make sure different students aren't submitting test results at the same time. This suggests collusion, and will result in an unpleasant and time-consuming inquiry.

Because plagiarism is a serious concern in academe, I do electronic searches to verify the originality of content and the accuracy of submitted work. Do not plagiarize. If in doubt about sourcing, ask. Plagiarized papers do not earn credit in this class and may require filing of a report of academic dishonesty with the university. The same could happen with verified online test results collusion. Let's not go there.

Accommodations

Under university policies and federal law, students with documented disabilities are entitled to "reasonable accommodations" to ensure equal opportunity for academic performance. If you have a disability, or think you may have one, please contact the Office of Disability Support Services <http://www.fullerton.edu/dss/services/>.

If you are having *any kind of difficulty* that hinders your full participation in the academic experience, see Dr. Swanson for direction to resources.

If *any* professor violates your right to accommodation or disrespects your request for direction to student support services, you should immediately contact the office of the CSUF Dean of Students.

Cultural Diversity

I am committed to cultural diversity in the curriculum. This course will involve a study of how public relations practitioners work ethically in communication with a variety of publics. You should expect to be intellectually challenged on diversity issues, and become critical thinkers in this subject area. I want you to enjoy COMM 361 and feel that your individual background and experiences helped contribute to learning by all students in the class.

I want you to be comfortable in your learning, both inside and outside of class. But I also recognize that higher levels of learning will occasionally make us feel a bit uncomfortable, because our preconceived notions about life are challenged.

The diversity of background and experiences that you and other students bring to this class is a resource for helping us master the concepts of public relations. Indeed, successful PR *cannot be accomplished* without a proficient understanding of how to work in a diverse, mindful environment in which constantly changing publics are targeted in ways that are respectful of the values of those publics.

I work hard to present materials and hold discussions that are insightful on diversity issues and respectful of individual students concerns in terms of cultural background, religion, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, level of physical ability, and so forth.

I will at times present controversial public relations issues in class and I welcome your dissent and discussion. I do not profess to have all the “right” answers, and I will not be offended if you disagree with me. If you do have differing opinions, please be honest and speak up *at that time*. Don’t go crying to the department chair, the dean, your mom, your preacher, or anyone else and expect them to intercede on your behalf. Be direct with me, as I will be with you. Let’s talk the issues out in class. You will see I’m a pretty reasonable guy.

Your suggestions about how to improve diversity in COMM 361 are always welcome.

Assignment summary descriptions

Detailed instructions are in TITANium.

Assignment due dates are shown on the course calendar.

• Pre & Post-test Assessment [Solo]	(2 @ 25 points each = 50)
• TITANium Online Tests [Solo]	(5 @ 100 points each = 500)
• Discussion Questions / Class Activities [Team]	(5 @ 50 points each = 250)
• Electronic Portfolio and Resume [Solo]	(200 points)
• Distracted Driving Campaign Proposal [Team]	(300 points)
• Final Exam [Solo]	(500 points)

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = 1,800

Pre & Post-test Assessment **[Solo]**

You will complete an online pre-test at the beginning of the semester and a post-test at the end. These instruments are designed to collectively measure students' knowledge of public relations at the beginning and end of the course. The pre- and post-tests are anonymous. You will not be asked to provide your name. Your performance doesn't impact your course grade. You will be asked to provide proof of completion so that point scores can be awarded. More details will be provided in class.

TITANium Online Tests **[Solo]**

This class has no midterm exam. In exchange for having no midterm, you will complete five open note, open book tests in TITANium. Tests will open and close on specific dates, in the weeks shown in the calendar. Test opening and closing dates will be announced in class. You may only attempt each test one time. Do not forget the tests, because there will be no 'make up' if you miss. *No exceptions!*

Discussion Questions / Class Activities **[Team]**

Your class team will respond in writing to specific questions posted in the TITANium Discussion Forum. You will also participate in class activities on specific dates. More details will be provided in class.

Electronic Portfolio and Resume **[Solo]**

Individually, each student will create a simple electronic portfolio, using Weebly. (Weebly is available to you at no charge.) Your ePortfolio will contain one work sample and a copy of a current resume. Your ePortfolio will be reviewed for visual, informational, and operational proficiency. (If you already have a blog or web domain, you may use it for this assignment.) Detailed instructions are posted in TITANium.

Distracted Driving Campaign Proposal **[Team]**

Your class team will create a proposal for a public relations campaign to be conducted at CSUF to address the issue of student distracted driving. This is a hypothetical proposal, but it will follow a specific format. Detailed instructions are posted in TITANium.

Final Exam **[Solo]**

This will be an in-class, on paper, closed-note, closed book, and comprehensive exam. The final will involve true-false and multiple-choice questions. *You will need to provide a Scantron sheet.* A review will be conducted for the exam (with a review sheet). Attendance at the final exam is mandatory.

Course Calendar

The calendar is subject to change as the course moves along. I will notify you and post a revised calendar on TITANium if changes are necessary.

Wk	Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Tests	Readings
1	8/26	Class Introduction Overview: History of PR			Chapt. 1, 2
2	9/2	Theory & Research	Pre-test	T#1	Chapt. 5
3	9/9	Strategic Planning			Chapt. 6
4	9/16	Communication and Evaluation	DQ/A#1	T#2	Chapt. 7, 8
5	9/23	Traditional Media			Chapt. 14, 15
6	9/30	Social Media	DQ/A#2		Chapt. 13
7	10/7	Event Planning		T#3	Chapt. 16
8	10/14	Publics	DQ/A#4		Chapt. 9, 11
9	10/21	Legal Issues			Chapt. 12
10	10/28	Ethical Issues & Crisis		T#4	Chapt. 3, 10
11	11/4	Careers & Global Perspectives	DQ/A#5		Chapt. 20
12	11/11	Corporate & Agency PR	ACADEMIC HOLIDAY NO CLASS MEETING		Chapt. 4, 17
13	11/18	Gov't, Politics, & Entertainment	Electronic Portfolio and Resume		Chapt. 18, 19
14	11/25		ACADEMIC HOLIDAY NO CLASS MEETING		
15	12/2	Health, Education, & Nonprofits		T#5	Chapt. 21
16	12/9	Review for Final Exam	Campaign Proposal Post-test		
17	The one and only time for the final exam is the time shown in the fall 2015 course timetable - <u>Wednesday, December 16 from 5 to 6:50 p.m.</u> Attendance is mandatory.				