UVU UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY™

Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: https://catalog.uvu.edu/

Semester: Spring
Course Prefix: COMM
Course Title: Public Relations and Strategic Communication Case Studies

Year: 2025
Course and Section #: 3520-001
Credits: 3

Course Description
Examines public relations and strategic planning process through the analysis of case studies. Addresses strategic communication planning issues in media relations, crisis communications, ethics, creative planning, research, and evaluation, using real-world situations and clients.

Course Attributes
This course has the following attributes:
☐ General Education Requirements
☐ Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
☐ Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
☒ Discipline Core Requirements in Program
☐ Elective Core Requirements in Program
☐ Open Elective
Other: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information
Instructor Name: Farah Sanders

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply the eight-step strategic communication planning process that resolves or realizes a core problem/opportunity.
2. Examine and analyze public relations strategic planning process through the analysis of case studies.
3. Construct and develop competent public relations campaigns based on research, action planning, execution, and evaluation techniques.
4. Present a competent public relations campaign based on the eight-step strategic communication planning process that implements research, action planning, execution, and evaluation techniques.
5.

Course Materials and Texts

Wilson, Laurie J., Ogden, Joseph D., Wilson, Christopher Strategic Communications Planning: For PR, Social Media and Marketing. 8th Edition ISBN: 979-8-7657-7482-3 and eBook is: 978-1-5249-9902-5.

Laptop or Tablet

- All students are expected to have access to a computer with a keyboard (not a digital keyboard). This course is intended for completion using a laptop computer, desk top computer, or tablet with attached keyboard. No cell phones are permitted for assignment submissions. If you don't have a computer, laptops and tablets are now available for checkout from the UVU Fulton Library (Links to an external site.).

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

Each student enrolled in COMM 3520 will complete the following assignments.

Course Requirements	Points	Learning Outcomes Achieved
Assignments		
Case Study Brief	5	1, 2, 3
CITI Certification	5	1, 2
Reviewing a Survey	10	1, 2, 3, 4
Primary Research Infographic	20	1, 3
Secondary Research, Situation Analysis, and Core Problem Paper	50	1, 3, 4
Action Planning I Paper	30	1, 2, 3, 4
Action Planning II Paper	50	1, 2, 3, 4
Calendar, Budget, and Communication Confirmation Spreadsheets	50	1, 2, 3, 4
Field Experience Research	50	1, 2, 3, 4
Final Written Case Study	100	1, 2, 3, 4
Quizzed and Exams		
Chapter Quizzes (4 @ 15 points each)	60	1, 2, 3, 4
Exam 1 (Ch. 1 – PR Matrix)	63	1, 2, 3, 4
Exam 2 - Final (Ch. 1, 3 – 6, 8-12)	50	1, 2, 3, 4
Discussions		
Discussions (7 @ 5 points each)	35	1, 2, 3, 4
In-Class Discussions (4 @ 5 points each)	20	1, 3, 4
TOTAL POINTS	598	

The following grading scale will be used in the course:

A = 94%-100%
A- = 90%-93.9%
B+ = 86%-89.9%
B = 83%-85.9%
B- = 80%-82.9%
C+ = 76%-79.9%
C = 74%-75.9%
C- = 70%-73.9%
D+ = 66%-69.9%
D = 63%-65.9%
D- = 60%-62.9%
F = > = 60%

You can determine your percentage (and grade) by totaling the points you have accumulated and dividing those points by the number of points possible, then multiplying that number by 100 for your final grade percentage.

Student Time Commitment / Workload:

- A 3-credit hour class means each student spends 3 hours in the classroom each week.
- Each student spends an additional 6 hours outside the classroom each week completing course-related work.
- Students taking this course will have significant readings and projects, which require them to spend 6 hours each week working outside the classroom.

Semester Project

This semester, we will develop a public relations and strategic communication case study that addresses a real-world topic. The topic will apply to issues addressing a variety of audiences. Our class will be working on a case study surrounding sustainability and conservation in Capitol Reef National Park. We will also learn and apply PR tools and techniques to this national treasure by taking a four day excursion to the UVU Capitol Reef National Park Field Station. .

Using Capitol Reef National Park, you will complete a variety of assignments: a review of surveys, primary research infographic, secondary research, action planning (goal, objectives, messaging, key public segmentation, strategies, and tactics, a calendar, budget, and communication confirmation to help build a strategic communication plan. You will also participate in other in-class activities and assignments.

Submission of Assignments

All assignments must be submitted electronically via Canvas. Unless otherwise indicated on Canvas, most assignments are due on Sundays. Assignments must be submitted on Canvas for grade. Assignments submitted after the due date/time will receive 0 points unless discussed with me before the due date.

Exams

Two exams (63 and 50 points) will be given during the semester. The exams will cover material from the readings, lecture materials, class discussions, and assignments.

The second exam will be the final exam and will be comprehensive. As instructed by the University, the final exam must be taken at the time indicated in the syllabus. Please make any necessary travel, work, etc. arrangements to complete the final on the date/time indicated in the syllabus.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be given online every other week. Quizzes will not be repeated and cannot be made up. Approximately seven quizzes will be given. The 15-question multiple choice, true/false, and matching quizzes will be corrected and turned in immediately after they are given. Questions will be taken from the readings due for that class module, lesson or materials presented in the previous class periods/modules.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments must be submitted electronically online via Canvas. Most assignments are due on Fridays unless otherwise indicated on Canvas. Assignments must be submitted on Canvas for grade. Assignments submitted after the due date/time will receive 0 points unless discussed with instructor before
the due date

Technology Fee

This class has a technology fee. The fee is for the technology used to complete the Action Planning II assignment portion of the Case Study, this includes development of tactics in relation to media relations including the development of media lists and social media monitoring. Instructors may also use the technology for in-class activities.

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments
All required readings use chapters from the course that align with lectures and assignments.

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion
Chapter 1 THE RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION
- Define what the Public Relations Case Study Wilson & Ogden method is.
- Identify how Strategic Communications Planning is developed and used.
- Describe the 8-Step Matrix and all four sections.

- Identify the differences between crisis management, issue management, and strategic management.
- Summarize the 8-Step Strategic Communications Planning Matrix and its importance.

Chapter 3 COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH METHODS
- Define the purpose of Primary Research and a SWOT Analysis.
- Execute Primary Research by conducting quantitative and/or qualitative research as part of development of a PR and Strategic Communication Case Study.
- Discuss identification of a sampling error in primary research to help support a PR and strategic communication case study.
- Conduct Secondary Research by using the Marketing Research Checklist.
- Summarize the demographics and psychographic research of Stakeholders using the 8-Step Strategic Communications Planning Matrix.

Chapter 4 STRATEGICALLY APPLYING RESEARCH AND SOCIAL INSIGHTS
- Define a Situation Analysis and Core Problem/Opportunity.
- Discuss all aspects of a Core Problem/Opportunity and what components must be necessary for it to be an effective part of a functioning PR and Strategic Communication Case Study.
- Formulate the Situation Analysis, and Core Problem/Opportunity of a PR and Strategic Communication Case Study learned in the 8-Step Strategic Communications Planning Matrix .

Chapter 5 SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
- Define a Goal and Objective.
- Identify and discuss the necessary components of an Objective as part of a PR and Strategic Communication Case Study.
- Compose a Goal and Objectives within a PR and Strategic Communication Case Study.

Chapter 6 KEY PUBLICS AND PRIMARY MESSAGES
- Define a Stakeholder and how they are used to help achieve a goal and objective.
- Identify objectives accomplished by the stakeholder, demographics and psychographics of the stakeholder(s), opinion leaders, relationship with organization or issue, motivating self-interests of the stakeholder(s), and the viable communication channels used to reach the stakeholder(s).
- Complete the segmenting of stakeholder(s) and the six elements of a stakeholder group within a PR and Strategic Communication Case Study.
- Define and identify a Primary Message.
- Identify Secondary Messages that support Primary Messages, and a call to action in Primary Messages.
- Execute the creation of primary messages and secondary messages to help call the stakeholders to action.

Chapter 8 STRATEGIES AND TACTICS
- Define a Strategy and Tactic.
- Identify the three elements that make up a strategy, the levels of interactivity needed within a strategy and how a tactic is used to help achieve the objectives established in a strategic communication plan.
- Create strategies and tactics to help achieve the objectives of a strategic communication plan.

Chapter 10 CALENDARING AND BUDGETING
- Explain the importance of calendaring interactivity among tactics.
- Illustrate a format for calendars and budgets that supports strategic planning, and communication confirmation tables.
- Create a strategic calendar, budget, and communication confirmation for PR and Strategic Communication Case Study.

Chapter 11 IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT

- Develop a Communication Confirmation table for use in a PR and Strategic Communication Case Study.

Chapter 12 COMMUNICATIONS MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION
- Describe the importance of evaluation in demonstrating results.
- Demonstrate how to plan evaluation based on what you are trying to achieve with a PR and Strategic Communication Case Study.
- Construct evaluation criteria and appropriate measurement tools in a PR and Strategic Communication Case Study.

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

Use of artificial intelligence to construct written material or assist with any and all assignments, discussions, and quizzes/exams is prohibited in this course. Students must submit their own written work, crafted by them without the use of artificial intelligence software, such as but not limited to Chat GPT. Use of such software for submitted work is considered cheating and falls under the guidelines of cheating and the students rights and responsibility code of UVU.

Examples of use of generative AI tools not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts/responses assigned to you or content that you put into a Teams/Canvas chat.
- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool.
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.
- Answering Essay questions in an Exam

Any student work submitted using AI tools found to have more than 15% of the student work generated by AI will be addressed and is subject to review in addition to sanctions (see below). If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out to me for a conversation before submitting your work.

Though intentional vs accidental is often a judgment call for an instructor, it's important to note that accidental plagiarism is still plagiarism—a serious need to address the incident arises regardless. Though the resulting consequences may vary based on the degree of intentionality, any form of plagiarism will be addressed with equal seriousness.

To be clear, copying the exact wording of an AI chatbot is considered plagiarism and means that a student will be held accountable for violating academic integrity. Although many citation guides are already presenting ways to properly use and cite AI, we do not currently believe that citing AI in your work is in line with the standards of academic writing that value knowing the exact author(s) or sources that informed your writing.

If you are suspected of plagiarism, the first step will always be a conversation with your instructor (in-person or via Teams). If the infraction is very minor or clearly unintentional, there may be no sanctions at all. However, a lowered grade and/or the chance to revise the paper may also be possible. In more serious cases, the assignment may receive an automatic zero.

The most serious infractions may lead to your instructor filing an incident report with the Student Conduct office and with the Communication department chair. Regardless of the chair's decision, the

incident report remains a part of your permanent record. The incident may also be reported to the Dean's office for further sanctions and decisions.

We draw your attention to the fact that different classes at Utah Valley University could implement different AI policies, and it is the student's responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.

Using Remote Testing Software
☒ This course does not use remote testing software.

☐ This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities
Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity
At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in UVU Policy 541: *Student Code of Conduct*.

Equity and Title IX

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a specially dedicated space for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.