

# **CORPORATE PUBLIC RELATIONS • PRCA 3331 • FALL 2008**

Georgia Southern University ▪ College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences ▪ Communication Arts

Professor: Barbara B. Nixon, Ph.D. (ABD)  
Office: Veazey Hall 3005  
Office Hours: MWF 10:00-10:45 am and by appointment  
Phone: 678-5665 (office); 678-5138 (main office); 678-0822 (fax)  
Blog: <http://publicrelationsmatters.com>  
E-mail: [bnixon@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:bnixon@georgiasouthern.edu)

**PREREQUISITE:** PRCA 2330

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Corporate Public Relations examines the role of public relations within a corporation and its responsibilities in developing and maintaining external and internal relations. This course will combine lectures, case analyses and discussion. Student participation is critical to the success of the class, just as public relations practitioners' input is to the success of organizations. Guest experts will often visit the class.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- To understand the corporate context as it affects the corresponding practice of public relations
- To understand the various roles of public relations in supporting the organizations, ranging from employee and investor relations to government, community and customer relations
- To explore contemporary applications and implications of corporate public relations, while also recognizing the historical context for current practice
- To appreciate the role new media plays in corporate public relations

## **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Doorley, J., & Garcia, H. F. (2007). *Reputation management: The key to successful public relations and corporate communications*. New York: Routledge.

Li, C., & Bernoff, J. (2008). *Groundswell: Winning in a world transformed by social technologies* Boston, MA: Forrester Research, Inc.

Students will be expected to read the business section of a major daily newspaper (i.e. *LA Times*, *NY Times*, *Wall St. Journal*) and stay current with breaking general and business news having corporate and financial communications implications.

## GRADING:

Readiness Assessment Tests (RATS)	100
Team Presentation on <i>Groundswell</i>	100
Article Review	150
Blog	200
Final Project / Presentation	250
Engagement / Participation	100
Final Exam	<u>100</u>
	1000

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

**Readiness Assessment Tests (RATS):** Readiness assessment tests will be given over each reading assignment from the textbooks. The open-book, multiple-choice RATS will be administered via WebCT Vista prior to you coming to class, so that our class time can be more focused.

**Assignments:** You will receive details on the Team Presentation, Article Review, Blog & Final Project/Presentation during the second week of class.

## COURSE POLICIES:

**1. Attendance:** Your attendance in class is expected and necessary for your success in this course. Because every speaker needs an audience, you need to be an active class participant, even on days when you are not speaking. In addition, to achieve the objectives of this course, your involvement and participation are necessary.



**Six (6) or more total absences (on any course day, lecture or speech) will automatically result in a failing grade for the course. THERE ARE NO EXCUSED ABSENCES; AN ABSENCE IS AN ABSENCE, for whatever reason. Additionally, to insure that each of you has an audience, NO MORE THAN TWO (2) ABSENCES WILL BE PERMITTED ON SPEECH OR GUEST SPEAKER DAYS.** Each subsequent absence on a speech day will result in the loss of half a letter grade (5 percentage points) off your final grade for the course.

The current Georgia Southern University catalog states the following in regard to class attendance: "The student is responsible for all material presented in class and for all announcements and assignments whether or not the student is in attendance. The University does not issue an excuse to students for class absences. In case of absences as a result of illness, representation of the University in athletic and other activities or special situations, instructors may be informed of reasons for absences, but these are not excuses."

Think of your schoolwork as your job; just as you would not miss work, you should not miss class. Schedule doctor's appointments, advising appointments, etc. for times that do not

conflict with this class. *It is your job to keep track of your total absences; I am not responsible for reminding you about your total absences.*

**2. Tardiness:** You are expected to be in class on time for every class meeting. Coming into class late is disruptive, not only for the other students, but for me. *Tardiness in excess of 15 minutes will be considered an absence.* At my discretion, excessive tardiness (less than 15 minutes on multiple occasions) may be converted to an absence. Similarly, you are expected to remain in class for the entire class period; early departures will be treated in the same manner as tardy arrivals. Thus, you should schedule appointments (such as advising, doctor, etc.) in such a manner that they do not overlap with class time.

**3. Late Work and Make-Ups:** No late work for speeches will be accepted. You will be expected to speak, prepared or unprepared, on the day you are scheduled. Excuses such as forgetting your note cards or your visual aid or not being prepared are unacceptable. **Deadlines are a fact of real life.** If an unexpected occurrence (car accident, hospitalization, family death, etc.) keeps you from class, you must consult the professor prior to class or as soon as possible. If you know in advance that you will not be in class on a speech day, then you should sign-up for one of the other speech days for that set of speeches.

**4. Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** The Georgia Southern University Honor Code states: "I will be academically honest in all of my course work and will not tolerate the academic dishonesty of others." As members of the campus community, students are encouraged to actively support academic honesty and integrity in the classroom. The Communication Arts Department and I take the issue of academic dishonesty very seriously and will pursue instances of alleged dishonesty to the fullest extent. Therefore, you should familiarize yourself with the provisions for academic dishonesty in the Georgia Southern University *Code of Student Conduct* found in the current *Student Guide*. This policy applies to all course work, oral and written. In this course, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, receiving or giving aid on any quiz or examination, submitting a speech outline written by another, and delivering a speech developed or written by another. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty shall be subjected to the procedures for adjudicating academic dishonesty outlined in the current *Student Guide*. For findings of a first offense within this course, the penalty shall be a zero on the assignment. For findings of a second offense within this course, the penalty shall be a final grade of "F." These penalties are in addition to any penalties imposed by the University per the above referenced procedures.

**5. Classroom Decorum & Behavior:** The Preamble to the current *Student Guide* states, "A student-centered University is characterized by civility, respect, cooperation, responsibility, and understanding among all its members. A student-centered University conveys high expectations for appropriate behavior and is designed to assist students in the development of an informed set of values, ethics, and beliefs. It fosters a climate that promotes civility and respect. Georgia Southern University students are expected to engage in behaviors that are consistent with the attainment of academic integrity and moral values. As members of the campus community, students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to actively support . . . civil discourse among all members of the campus community, treating each student with dignity and respect regardless of personal differences." Likewise, Section IV.6.C of the

*Student Conduct Code* defines “any classroom behavior that interferes with the instructor’s ability to conduct class or the ability of other students to learn” as “disorderly conduct” and in violation of the Student Conduct Code.

You are expected to behave in class in accordance with these provisions of the Student Conduct Code. Violations will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

**6. Speech Day Behavior:** You are expected to show respect for speakers by being attentive and non-disruptive. This means that you should not be sleeping, reading, text messaging, engaging in conversation, or any other potentially distracting behavior while others are delivering their speeches. Any inappropriate behavior observed by me will adversely affect your speech grade.

**7. Cell Phones and Electronic Devices:** Because your friends and family may not know your class schedule, turn off your cell phones in class. Ringing cell phones are annoying and disruptive, especially during speeches. Furthermore, because of the advance technology of text messaging and digital imaging, the use of any personal electronic devices (cell phones, PDAs, iPods, headphones, etc) is prohibited during examinations. The use of any such item during an examination will result in immediate dismissal from the classroom and the examination.

**8. Disability Accommodations:** This class complies with the Americans with Disabilities (ADA). Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations must: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC); and, (2) provide a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating what your need may be for academic accommodation. The SDRC can be reached at 871-1566.

**9. Religious Holiday Policy:** In accordance with University Policy, students observing religious holidays will NOT be disadvantaged *when advance arrangements are made* with the professor to make-up course work.

**10. Agreement with Syllabus Content:** This syllabus is an agreement between the professor and the student, between me and you, to respectively provide and complete a worthy learning experience. By remaining a registered student in this course, you have identified your understanding of and agreement to the obligations set forth in this syllabus for satisfactory completion of this course, including the course policies as well as the assignments. The professor reserves the right to modify this syllabus during the term.

#### **OTHER ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:**

- To do well in this course, you need to attend class regularly, read the material, complete assignments, study and prepare to adequately discuss the information and issues in the course.
- Materials for exams will come from lectures, textbooks, guest speakers, handouts, websites and occasional DVDs and podcasts.
- All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, using 12-point font, with one-inch margins all around, unless otherwise specified. Give attention to AP Style, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and general appearance.
- Deadlines are given to provide each student adequate and equal time for completion. Hence, **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**
- Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period or as noted in WebCT Vista.
- You are responsible for all materials, deadlines, and assignments presented in class, whether you attend class or not. If you are absent, obtain material from a classmate or the professor as soon as possible.
- Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Be considerate of others in the classroom.
- NO CAPS: Caps, hats, etc. are not allowed on exam or presentation days.
- NO CELL PHONES: Be certain to have all cell phones, beepers, alarms, etc. turned off upon entering the classroom.
- Though our class is meeting in a computer lab, we will not be using the computers during most classes. Leave the PC monitors turned off unless directed to turn them on.
- Failing to not attend class without officially withdrawing will result in an F for the course: **Last day to withdraw without penalty is October 13, 2008. The last day of class for Fall Semester is December 5, 2008.**
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Contact me as soon as possible in the case of serious personal or medical circumstances via phone or e-mail.
- **FINAL EXAM:** The Final Exam is due on WebCT Vista no later than Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 5:00 pm.

## **BARBARA B. NIXON'S TEACHING & LEARNING PHILOSOPHY**

Several years ago, a colleague shared with me this quotation by longshoreman and philosopher Eric Hoffer:

*"In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists."*

This quotation struck a chord with me. Put simply, my overarching goal in teaching is to ensure that our world has more learners than learned. I am fortunate to be in a role in life where I can have an impact on our future world leaders.

### ***What do I expect from my students?***

- Students should be fully read on all of the chapters (or other reading assignments) and to be ready to discuss any part of the readings.
- Students should raise questions when they are uncertain of the material we are discussing, including questions that I will have no easy ("pat") answer for.
- Students should make every effort to gain the most value that they can from the class. They should want to become independent learners.
- Students should become aware of not only how what happens in the world (current events) impacts them, but also how what they do impacts the world. Campus is not a cocoon.

### ***And what can my students expect from me?***

- Because I am aware that students learn in many different ways, I will not lecture at my students daily from behind a raised podium. Instead, I will provide instruction to them in an interactive manner. In a typical week, students will experience partner discussions, small group discussions, Internet scavenger hunts, and even crossword puzzles, in addition to short (less than 20 minute) lecturettes. "Death by PowerPoint" will not happen in my class.
- I will provide them with the most current information I have available. I stay current on topics and trends in the industry.
- I will stay abreast of current technology and apply it in the classroom whenever it adds to the learning experience. (Examples include current software, Vista, podcasts and blogging, to name a few.)
- I will make every effort to help guide students through the issues that they raise, and we will seek resolution together.
- I will make every effort I can to make sure that students understand the issues and concepts my courses present.
- When I have positive feedback to share, I will share it openly in the classroom and call attention to students by name in the process. My goal in this is to enhance or maintain the students' self-esteem, not to break it down. There are plenty of other places in the world where their self-esteem may be diminished. Constructive criticism will still be provided to students, but not by name in front of a whole class.
- I expect for us to have fun in class. Laughter and learning go hand in hand in my book. If we are not enjoying ourselves in class, there's something amiss.
- And perhaps most importantly, I will listen to my students so that I can learn from them, too.

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### TENTATIVE DAILY SCHEDULE (as of 14 August 2008)

DATE	TOPICS	READING
WEEK 1 (Aug. 18, 20)	Welcome Overview of Reputation Management Personal Reputation Management	RM, Ch. 1
WEEK 2 (Aug. 25, 27)	Ethics & Communication	RM, Ch 2
WEEK 3 (Sept. 3)	Media Relations	RM, Ch. 3
WEEK 4 (Sept. 8, 10)	New Media	RM, Ch. 4
WEEK 5 (Sept. 15, 17)	What is The Groundswell?	G, Ch. 1-3
WEEK 6 (Sept. 22, 24)	TBD	
WEEK 7 (Sept. 29, Oct. 1)	<b>Groundswell Team Presentations</b>	
WEEK 8 (Oct. 6, 8)	Employee Communication The Groundswell Inside Your Company	RM, Ch. 5 G, Ch. 11
WEEK 9 (Oct. 13, 15)	Government Relations Community Relations	RM, Ch. 6-7
WEEK 10 (Oct. 20, 22)	TBD <b>Article Review Due Oct. 23</b>	
WEEK 11 (Oct. 27, 29)	Investor Relations Global Corporate Communication	RM, Ch. 8-9
WEEK 12 (Nov. 3, 5)	Integrated Communication Issues Management	RM, Ch. 10-11
WEEK 13 (Nov. 10, 13)	Crisis Communication Corporate Responsibility	RM, Ch. 12-13
WEEK 14 (Nov. 17, 19)	<b>Final Project Presentations</b>	
WEEK 15 (Nov. 24, 26)	Thanksgiving Holidays	
WEEK 16 (Dec. 1, 3)	Challenges & Opportunities Evaluations / Wrap Up <b>Final Project Due Dec. 2</b>	RM, Ch. 14
FINAL EXAM	Complete your final exam in WebCT Vista no later than Wed., Dec. 10 at 5:00 pm.	

Circled dates are for RATS (Readiness Assessment Tests); these must be completed in Vista by 10:00 am on that day, and cover the materials in the Readings column for that week. **Caveat: The above schedule and procedures are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. When possible, you will be provided at least two (2) class days of advance notice of any changes.**

## Department of Communication Arts – Academic Policies Statement

### Responsibility and Accountability

The Department considers students to be individuals who are responsible for their own behaviors. Students are expected to make decisions with an awareness of the consequences which will most likely result from these decisions. Decision-making without considering the resulting consequences is not justifiable behavior if the consequences put the student's academic efforts at risk. In other words, if you enroll in a class, you are obligated to meet the responsibilities of this class, regardless of other commitments, including work, family, and other class obligations.

### Civility

Students are expected to communicate in a civil manner in their academic interaction at all times, both in and out of the classroom. This means that interactions are to be carried out in a polite, courteous, and dignified manner, which are respectful and understanding toward both peers and professors. Failure to behave in a civil manner may result in disciplinary actions as described by the Student Conduct Code.

### Plagiarism

Cheating, in its multitude of forms, is a serious offense to the University and compromises the learning process of the violators and their classmates. Ultimately, the reputation of the institution is at risk. For these reasons, the Department expects students to understand the provision of the Student Conduct Code that addresses academic dishonesty and the penalties for it, and to conduct themselves with integrity in their academic efforts. To that end, students are expected to follow both the letter and the spirit of academic honesty and to consult beforehand with their instructors whenever those ethical standards are even remotely at risk.

### Attendance

It is the Department's policy that any student who misses twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the scheduled class days, for any reason, will receive a failing grade for the course. All days when a student is not present will be counted as an absence. Individual instructors may impose stricter attendance policies. Instructors are not responsible for reminding students about their total absences.

### Definition of Grades

The Department adheres to the following definitions as found in the *Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog* (p. 38):

- The 'A' grade may be interpreted to mean that the instructor recognized exceptional capacities and exceptional performance.
- The grade of 'B' signifies that the student has, for any combination of reasons, demonstrated a significantly more effective command of the material than is generally expected.
- The 'C' grade is the instructor's certification that the student has demonstrated the required mastery of the material.
- The student is graded 'D' when his/her grasp of the course is minimal.
- The 'F' grade indicates failure to master the essentials and the necessity for repeating before credit is allowed."

### Posting of Grades

It is the Department's policy **NOT** to post any student grades at any time during, or at the conclusion of, the semester.

### Georgia Southern University General Education Outcomes

Georgia Southern University has identified ten categories of general education outcomes comprising knowledge, skills, and perspectives which it seeks to instill in its graduates. Please see

[http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/provost/instruction/gened\\_outcomes.html](http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/provost/instruction/gened_outcomes.html)