

JOUR 498: Public Relations in the Age of New Media

Tuesdays 1 to 1:50 p.m., Manzanita Hall 212

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Textbook

- *Public Relations and the Social Web: How to Use Social Media and Web 2.0 in Communications* by Rob Brown

Overview

The Internet continues to revolutionize the practice of public relations. As author Rob Brown notes in the first chapter of our textbook, “We are in the midst of a communications upheaval more significant than the introduction of the printing press.” The impact of this revolution cannot be understated. In addition to learning the traditional “deliverables” of the public relations profession such as media releases, brochures, fact sheets and backgrounders, public relations students today need to obtain a strong understanding of new media communications using an array of Internet tools, including social media networks, blogging, search engine optimization, and video and photo sharing.

This tutorial provides an introduction to new media and ways to integrate public relations strategies across various web 2.0 communications platforms to reach target audiences. You will also learn how to manage the convergence of old and new media in an age when once-clearly differentiated areas of television, radio, online and print have been become inextricably connected.

Each class will begin with a discussion of current events as they relate to new media. One student will then lead an in-depth discussion of the assigned book chapter, complete with an audiovisual component to give the presenter experience using multimedia tools. You will be required to lead two of these class discussions during the semester.

You also will locate a public relations professional who works with multimedia tools, interview this individual, and write a 7- to 10-page paper. The final project will include a comprehensive report on a new media tool along with a multimedia presentation supporting the paper.

Preparation

You are expected to be FULLY prepared for each class. You may be called upon at any time during the tutorial to answer questions regarding the textbook readings or current events involving new media.

Attendance

Attendance in this tutorial is crucial. Since the class only meets for 50 minutes once a week, you are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. If you cannot make it to class, you **MUST** call or email me prior to the start of class to obtain an “excused absence.” Any unexcused absences will dramatically impact your participation grade, as will excessive excused absences. This will, in turn, lower your course grade.

Late Assignments

You must turn in your work on time. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DUE DATE.** Work must be turned in promptly at the start of the tutorial to receive full credit. If you are absent on the date of your assigned textbook discussion – either excused or unexcused – you will not be able to make up those points. You still will be responsible for creating a handout for the other students that covers the information included in your textbook chapter, but you will not receive any points.

Evaluation

You will be graded on four class components for a possible total of 500 points:

1. **Chapter Review Discussions** – Each student will be assigned to lead the book chapter(s) discussion during two different class sessions, complete with an audiovisual component. Each class discussion is worth 50 points for a possible total of 100 points and is graded based on effort, originality, creativity and content.
2. **New Media Interview Paper** – This assignment involves locating a public relations professional who works with new media, conducting an in-depth interview about his or her involvement with new media, and writing a 7- to 10-page paper. The paper is worth 100 points and is graded on the basis of effort, originality, content, grammar and punctuation.
3. **Final Project** – This assignment involves using media-related databases accessed through CSUN library resources to investigate a new media tool. Using the information found through your research, you will present an oral report in class that features a PowerPoint and/or video presentation, along with a minimum 5-page written report with separate bibliography. The oral

presentation is worth 150 points and the written paper is worth 75 points, for a possible total of 225 points.

4. **Participation** – This component is worth 75 points and is based on class attendance, punctuality and participation.

Grade Range

500-450 points = A

449-400 points = B

399-350 points = C

349-300 points = D

Below 300 points = Fail

The + and – grading system will be used.

Cultural Diversity

To ensure that your work reflects the diversity of the community, you are strongly encouraged to broaden your public relations experiences by focusing your assignments on ethnic, racial and religious minorities; the elderly, disabled and poor; gay men and lesbians; and other similar groups.

Plagiarism/Cheating

The CSUN Journalism Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated, and anyone caught cheating will be reported to the University for possible further action. For a further explanation of the behavior defined as academic dishonesty, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 587-588 of the 2008-2010 CSUN catalog. Remember, too, that passing off information taken from the Internet as your own is a violation of CSUN's plagiarism policy and carries the penalties outlined above.

Communicating with the Professor

Please feel encouraged to call or email me to discuss any aspects of this class. You will receive the quickest response via email: bscomm@ca.rr.com. I will give you my cell phone and home phone numbers during our first meeting. You are very welcome to call before 9 p.m. any night.

CLASS SCHEDULE

(pending approval of furlough days for faculty)

August 25:

Public Relations and the Social Web: An Introduction

September 1:

Reading Assignment: Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Lecture/Discussion: How Communications Has Changed

September 8:

Reading Assignment: Chapter 4

Lecture/Discussion: The New Channels of Communications

September 15:

Reading Assignment: Chapters 5 and 6

Lecture/Discussion: The Power of the New Media

September 22:

Reading Assignment: Chapter 7

Lecture/Discussion: The New Ethics

September 29: **FURLOUGH DAY**, No Class

October 6:

Reading Assignment: Chapter 8

Lecture/Discussion: The Blurring of Channels

October 13:

Reading Assignment: Chapter 9

Lecture/Discussion: Issues Management in the 2.0 Environment

October 20:

Reading Assignment: Chapter 10

Lecture/Discussion: Evaluating the Need for New Media

October 27:

Reading Assignment: Chapters 11 and 12

Lecture/Discussion: New Media Tools

November 3:

Writing Assignment: *New Media Interview Paper Due*

Reading Assignment: Chapter 13

Lecture/Discussion: Evaluating and Measuring New Media Public Relations Efforts

November 10:

Reading Assignment: Chapter 14

Lecture/Discussion: Understanding the New Threats of Web 2.0

November 17:

Reading Assignment: Chapter 15

Lecture/Discussion: Understanding the Major Players

November 24: **FURLOUGH DAY**, No Class

December 1:

Reading Assignment: Chapter 16

Lecture/Discussion: The Future of New Media

December 8: **FURLOUGH DAY**, No Class

December 15: 12:45 to 2:45 p.m. **Final Presentations/Reports Due**