

**PUBLIC RELATIONS (Com 444)**  
**Dr. Catherine Becker**  
**3 Credits**

Class meetings: T & R, 11:00-12:15 in K 111

Office: 209 EKH

Office Hours: T & R 12:30-1:45 & Fridays 12:30-3:00

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Public Relations is the management of relationships with groups of people that can influence the success of an individual or organization. This course will examine how public relations can ethically and systematically build productive mutually beneficial relationships with diverse stakeholders.

**CURRICULUM:**

This course counts as an upper division elective in mass media or organizational communication. It is a “capstone” course.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Students will be able to discuss ethical issues related to the practice of public relations
2. Students will be able to utilize the primary methods for practicing public relations such as planning, research, evaluation, and campaigns.
3. Students will describe the laws that influence the practice of public relations.
4. Students will be able to present a proposal to address a public relations issue and/or opportunity for a client.
5. Students will be able to perform as a member of a team, meet deadlines, and exhibit professionalism.
6. Students will be able to produce an effective news release.

**GRADES:**

Exams (3 @ 15%)		45
Presentations		25
Assigned Reading	10%	
Campaign Proposal	15%	
Written Assignments		30
News Release	15%	
Communication Tool	15%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

**TEXTS:**

*Public Relations: A Values-Driven Approach-CASES EDITION, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* by D. Guth and C. Marsh. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc. 2007.

*Public Relations Writing: The Essentials of Style and Format, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* by T. Bivins. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 2005.

## **ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION**

Attendance and participation will not be graded separately. However, regular attendance will greatly increase your chances of succeeding in this course. Prepare for each class by reading the assigned pages, a local or national newspaper, and answering the following questions:

1. What is the one thing you learned about public relations that you didn't know before?
2. Relate something you read about in the paper with the material in the assigned reading.
3. Ask a question about anything we have discussed in class or that you have read in the text.
4. Discuss the ways that what you are learning be applied to your career or contemporary issues in the news.

## **EXAMS:**

There will be three exams. Questions may consist of multiple choice, true/false, and/or written or oral questions. They will include material from the text and discussed in class. Make-ups will be allowed only in cases of documented illness or emergency

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

One of the most important skills a public relations professional has is the ability to meet deadlines. Therefore, late assignments will not be accepted except in cases of documented emergencies. Other important public relations skills include ability to write well and make professional presentations. Therefore, you must use correct grammar and spelling in your written work and be well-prepared and professional when making presentations. You are required to make two presentations to the class. The first presentation will be related to the assigned reading; the second presentation will be to "pitch" your group's campaign proposal.

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

### **Presentation #1 – Assigned Reading:**

Your first presentation will be a discussion based on material from the assigned reading. Material discussed should be selected from the texts, case studies, or web materials. *Do not read from the texts!* "A" presentations will accurately present the material, be well organized, interesting, and professionally delivered. You may work and a group of up to five members. Your group may chose to prepare questions from the presentation that can be used to evaluate your success. It is possible some of or all of the questions will be included on an exam. This presentation must be 35-45 minutes long.

### **Presentation #2 - Campaign Proposal:**

You will be a member of a team whose mission is to design a public relations campaign for a non-profit secular organization. Your campaign may be "real" or hypothetical. If your team chooses to do an actual campaign, be sure to implement the following procedures. Begin by appointing a contact person to establish a relationship with a key individual in the organization

and interview them about the organization's needs. Inform them that this project is part of a course in Public Relations and that for their cooperation your group will offer the organization and opportunity to implement some of all of your campaign strategy. Invite the individual to attend class on the day of your presentation.

Whether real or hypothetical, prepare your campaign proposal as follows:

1. Generate a cover sheet that describes your client, their mission, the issue, your campaign objectives, and the publics involved.
2. Describe the research your campaign is based on (real or hypothetical). Include a discussion of the research method, analysis and results.
3. Describe the media that you have selected to target, the reasons for the selection.
4. Make and prepare to defend a campaign budget.
5. Discuss ways to evaluate the campaign's effectiveness.
6. Each member of the group must submit an individual communication tool that can be included in the campaign.

Be creative!

7. Present your proposal to your client in class.
8. Based on the feedback you receive, revise and submit your proposal and/or communication tools. The revisions will be due by the end of the final exam session.

Grades will depend on the feasibility, creativity, the quality of the materials you generate for your campaign, professionalism and ethics.

### **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:**

#### **Written Assignment #1 – News Release**

Write a 1-2 page news release for the organization or individual of your choice. Include a cover page that describes your organization, its mission, the issue, the public you are trying to reach, your objectives, and target media. Be sure that your news release is in the correct format (as demonstrated by the example in your text and discussed in class). Be sure to follow these guidelines exactly. News releases that are not formatted correctly are frequently rejected. Therefore, two points will be deducted from your grade on this assignment for each error. This includes the cover sheet so check and recheck your work Please keep in mind that the production of an excellent press release usually involves *several* revisions. **Start at least two weeks before this assignment is due.**

#### **Written Assignment #2 – Communication Tool**

This is a communication tool that you design individually that will be included as component of Campaign Proposal (see presentation #2 above). Be sure to include a cover page or table of contents with your proposal that shows who has authored which individual component. These will be graded separately, but you may consult with your group for assistance.

### **Service Learning:**

Service learning is an option for students who want to pursue it. Service learning involves volunteering to work on public relations activities for an approved organization. If you are interested in pursuing service learning, you need to create a proposal that includes the following: what you will do, when, the number of points it is worth, the criteria for evaluation, your signature and your supervisor's signature. Once approved, your proposal will be returned signed by your instructor. The maximum amount of points you can accumulate via service learning may not exceed 30% of your final grade. You may not do service learning to replace the news release assignment. You must conclude your service learning experience with summary of your activities and a reflection on how your experience relates to the course material.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

#### **Special Needs:**

Any student with a documented disability who would like to request accommodations should contact the University Disability Services Office - Hale Kauano'e A Wing Lounge, 933-0816 (V), 933-3334 (TTY), shirachi@hawaii.edu - as early in the semester as possible.

#### **Advising:**

Advising is a very important resource designed to help students complete the requirements of the University and their individual majors. Students should consult with their advisor at least once a semester to decide on courses, check progress towards graduation, and discuss career options and other educational opportunities provided by UH-Hilo. Although advising is a shared responsibility, be aware that students have final responsibility for meeting degree requirements.

#### **Final Note:**

It is my intention to do everything I can to make this course a success. For me, this means setting high standards (you learn as much as or more than you thought you would or could) and that we have some fun (enjoy the experience as much as possible). If you have any special needs, concerns, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to discuss them with me.