Fundamentals of Public Relations

UCLA Extension Program – Online Class

Syllabus

Instructor: Robert Z. Chew, President, BoldPoint Now & PFI Communications

Location: UCLA Extension Online
Time: 11 Meetings

Instructor contacts:
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Course Objective

This online course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the fundamentals, practice and profession of public relations, with emphasis on the basic skills required to work in public relations or to utilize public relations techniques in other fields.

Course Information

An Online Learning Environment: This is a 100 percent online course. An Online Course means everything we do in this class will be conducted over a dedicated website customized for this course. All participating students need to do is log on (after registering) with their username and password to Canvas and begin. At the beginning of each week, and every week thereafter, a new lesson and assignments will be posted. The online classroom is easy to navigate. There are discussion groups, resources, links, Q&A’s, and other tools to make the online learning experience fun and worthwhile. Best of all, you can take this class while on the road, vacationing, or from home or work (if your company will allow it) and at anytime of day or night. Just remember, assignments must be completed before the new lesson begins.

Assignments and Deadlines: Because this is an online class, all assignments will be detailed in the “Assignment” section/tab of the module in the course. Assignments will include a variety of exercises, written materials, press releases, editorial, strategic plans, presentations, and a Final Project. Assignments will be easy to find and follow. There will be detailed descriptions and instructions each week and they are due prior to the start of the next week’s assignment, that is, each student has one full week to complete assignments except for the Final Project assignment, which will have two weeks available for completion. All written assignments will be either posted or e-mailed as attachments to the instructor in a MS Word document or similar (No PDFs), unless otherwise noted during class work. Comments and corrections are made directly on the Word document. Layouts and graphic illustrations can be simple, but must be clean and neat. Late work will be accepted, but will be downgraded for being late. Again, the instructor needs to be able to make comments directly on assignments, hence no PDFs. Due to the amount of students in each class, the detailed comments,
and work travel, it may take up to five days to return weekly comments and grades to each student. Please be patient.

**Reading and Online Attendance:** All material will be provided by instructor or will be indicated/assigned during each online class. No textbooks are required for this class, though books will be suggested. You can find the ebook, Fundamentals of Public Relations, by Robert Z. Chew on online bookstores. Reading assignment will be given. Students must log-on each week. Online attendance is critical since a significant part of the course involves exercises/discussions. Comments and lessons build upon the previous week’s work and exercises, hence, it is important to get assignments in on time. Previous week’s material and assignments will be posted for a minimum of one week. I suggest you print out your weekly lessons, homework, notes and readings and keep them in a three-ring binder. You’ll be building your own textbook along the way.

**Spelling and Grammar:** Correct spelling and grammar are essential in public relations. Assignments containing spelling and grammatical mistakes will be marked down.

**Grading:**

- Weekly log-in/participation: 10%
- In-class exercises and homework: 50%
- Final project/presentation: 40%

Students may take the course for a letter grade, pass/no pass, or not for credit. For students taking the class for a letter grade, the following scale will determine final grades, using the percentage allocations listed above:

A: 93-100   C: 73-77
A-: 90-92    C-: 70-72
B+: 88-89    D+: 68-69
B: 83-87     D: 63-67
B-: 80-82    D-: 60-62
C+: 78-79    F: Below 60

*Note: The final project will involve preparing a strategic PR plan, press kit, and presentation on a topic to be provided. More information will be provided midway through the class.*

**Schedule:** This syllabus is meant only as a guide and may be altered to accommodate additional class needs or other unforeseen issues. Also, students are encouraged to bring relevant issues of interest to the attention of the instructor, who will be happy to provide advice and/or assistance.

**Course Policies**

*Academic Honesty Policy*
Academic dishonesty covers behavior in cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication of information. These behaviors are not tolerated. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the UCLA Extension Student Conduct Code and the official statements regarding cheating and plagiarism at: https://www.uclaextension.edu/Pages/str/StudentConduct.aspx

Services for Students with Disabilities
In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, UCLA Extension provides appropriate accommodations and support services to qualified applicants and students with disabilities. These include, but are not limited to, auxiliary aids/services, such as note takers, audiotaping of courses, sign language interpreters, and assistive-listening devices for hearing-impaired individuals, extended time for and proctoring of exams, and registration assistance. Accommodations and types of support services vary and are specifically designed to meet the disability-related needs of each student based on current, verifiable medical documentation.

Arrangements for auxiliary aids/services are available only through UCLA Extension Disabled Student Services at (310) 825-4581 (voice/TTY) or by email at access@uclaextension.edu. Please request such arrangements with at least five working days’ advance notice. All assistance is handled in confidence. Accommodations must be pre-approved. Requests for retroactive accommodation will not be accepted.

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**Week 1: Course Introduction**

- Introduction of Instructor Bob Chew
- Review of syllabus and assignments
- Grading components
- Description of Final Project
- Introductions by students, with brief description of background, career objective
- Introduction to PR: Why PR versus other communications fields?
- Types of PR
- Career opportunities in Public Relations
- Basics of Journalism – 4 Ws and H; samples; in-class writing assignment

**Week 2: The Basics of Media Relations**

- Assignment discussion
- Critiques/sampling of press releases submitted
- Understanding Media and How it Works
- Media relations:
- What is it?
  - How is it done
  - Do's and Don’ts

- Assignment #2: Writing pitch letters and media alerts

**Week 3: Strategic PR Plans**

- Review Assignments – class samples posted and discussed
- PR Basics – Part 1
  - PR plans – Understanding Objectives, Strategies, Tactics
  - Developing a plan

- Assignments: 1) Building a PR Plan

**Week 4: Ethics & Financial PR**

- Review, critique assignments
- Introduction to Ethics & Financial PR
  - Purpose
  - Tools
  - Audiences
  - Expertise required

- Assignment: 1) Write financial press release 2) seek out PRSA’s Code of Ethics

**Week 5: Technology and Healthcare PR**

- Understanding of the these two important specialties
- How to work with tech media and tech research firms
- How to use PR in growing Healthcare field
- Assignment: Understand Tech media & research firms and work with healthcare campaigns to improve PR

**Week 6: Public Affairs**

- Review, discuss sampling of Strategic Plans
- Public Affairs: What is it and how does it work?
- Example Public Affairs Case
- Assignment: Create a public affairs PR plan and press release

**Week 7: Digital and Online PR**

- Review of changing world of PR from traditional media to digital media
- Review of online PR tools required
• Assessing skill levels in digital PR
• Assignment: List of creative digital PR skills and needs assessment

Week 8: PR & Social Media

• How social media has changed PR
• Create direct to customer PR
• How Social Media is management
• PR person as Chief Content Provider
• Assignment: Creating Effective Social Media Content

Week 9: Your Career and Final Project

• A review of career options in Public Relations
• Understanding your skill set and making it work for you
• The Final Project Begins
• Assignment: The Final Project. You have two weeks to complete your final project, which includes a PR Plan, a Press Kit, and a Press release

Weeks 10 & 11: Presenting in PR

• Review, discuss assignments
• Presenting With Power: A two-part review on proper presentation skills
• Final Project Submitted