

**CMN 3965-ADVANCED PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING  
AND PRODUCTION  
FALL 2019  
SYLLABUS**

Instructor: Rashmi Thapaliya, Ph.D.  
Time: MWF 11-11:50 a.m.  
Credit Hours: 3  
Office: 2542 Buzzard Hall  
Office Hours: 12-2 p.m. Mondays & Tuesdays  
10-11 a.m. Wednesdays

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**D2L Email is another communication method.**

**Text:** Readings will be posted on D2L

**Course Overview:** This class focuses on the strategic management of multiple organizational communication channels and the production of written content across different platforms. Students learn how to manage, produce, and coordinate written content and how to engage internal and external stakeholders using a variety of communication channels (off- and online) available to non- and for-profit organizations.

**Learning Objectives:** By the end of the semester, students will:

- a) Explain and critique the use of media/communication channels by for- and non-profit organizations
- b) Generate and interpret strategic goals and objectives for the management and coordination of an organization's internal and external communication channels and publications
- c) Produce and critique engaging content for internal and external stakeholders across multiple communication channels
- d) Facilitate and critique mediated stakeholder dialogue and discussions

**Class Policies**

Communication with the Professor

Please use your university email to communicate with the professor. Please, please, please talk to me at any time if you have questions or concerns. I am here to help, but if you don't ask me, I can't help you.

All electronic communication should be professional. If you decide to communicate with the professor via email, you should:

- use only professional email (nothing like [donotcallme@yahoo.com](mailto:donotcallme@yahoo.com)),
- always use the following subject line: Advanced PR Writing and Production: MAIN REASON YOU ARE WRITING,
- have a professional greeting,
- include your full name, class (Advanced PR Writing) in your email,
- write email as you were to write an actual letter (use a standard greeting, clearly state the purpose of your email in the lead, choose words carefully, etc.), and
- be SHORT, professional, and respectful.

A grammatically correct, organized short email is a simple and effective way to show your respect and professionalism. **I reserve the right NOT to answer any emails that do not meet these requirements.** Any emails on weekdays will be answered within 48 hours. Weekend emails will be answered on the next weekday of classes (i.e., if there is a school holiday on Monday, the email will be answered on Tuesday).

**Attendance:** Attendance is the KEY to pass this class, you are expected to be in the class every day. That said, I understand that life happens. Family issues, health issues, and other concerns may, and do, occur. So everyone will get **TWO** absences with no penalty. They can be excused or unexcused. Use them wisely as anything beyond these absences, will result in point deductions. So, don't use up your two excused absences just because... something may come up later in the semester when you really do need to miss class.

For each absence after that you will lose 10 points (until 5 absences including the 2 with no penalty). After your sixth absence you will lose 100 points. You will get 0 for the attendance. If you are absent seven times or more then your final grade will be deducted by a letter grade in addition to getting 0 for the attendance.

Please do not arrive late to the class or leave early. If you arrive to class more than 5 minutes late then that will be considered as  $\frac{1}{2}$  absence. If you arrive late more than 2 times, then each tardiness will be considered absence.

If you miss a class, you are responsible for accessing the information we covered in class and for completing all readings and assignments that are due that class (by the current deadline) and the next class. Please make sure to contact your classmates to get lecture notes and review materials on Canvas. **Do not contact the professor asking what you missed or if you missed anything important.** You are responsible for figuring out yourself what you missed and how best to prepare for the next class. Missing a class does not excuse you from completing assignments.

**Make-up Policy:** If you miss a class, you **will not be able to make-up any quizzes** and/or any in-class activities. However, if you have an excused, documented absence such as illness or family emergencies, you will have one opportunity to make-up missed quizzes with alternative written assignment, usually a two-page paper on the topic you missed. Please note that this option will be available **one time only** for missed quizzes. Please contact me ahead of time, or as soon as possible (in case of emergency), to take advantage

of this option. **Please note that scheduled routine appointments with a doctor, dentist, etc. will not qualify you for this make-up option.**

### **Late work policy**

Deadlines are critical in public relations and therefore they will also be critical in this class. A late penalty of 20% deduction will be applied for late assignments (for 48 hours after the deadline). Late assignment will not be accepted after that and you will get 0 for the assignment. It is your responsibility to get your assignments done on time, please **DO NOT** expect me to grade your assignments after you have missed the deadlines.

**Personal Electronics:** You may use your laptops or iPads to take notes. However, even if you get a permission to use the device, you cannot use it for other activities (such as surfing the internet or accessing social media accounts). **If you do, you will be banned from using the device in class for the remainder of the semester.**

Lectures may not be recorded. If you are caught using your cellular phone or any other banned device during a quiz or exam, you will be considered in violation of the university's policy on academic dishonesty and I will assess the harshest punishment available. **If you surf the internet, send text messages, or utilize any technology during lectures and in-class assignments, then you will lose class attendance points (10 points) each time I see you using your cell phones. If I see you using your phones more than two times, then you will lose (50 points) each time. I DO see you using your phones in the class. So don't be surprised if you get 0 for the attendance at the end of the semester if you have been using your cell phone in the class. I am NOT going to hear any excuses.**

**Professionalism: The classroom is a place of learning.** I will attempt to make that process as enjoyable as possible but the classroom is not a meeting place for casual conversation or a lounge for taking naps. It also is not a place for rudeness. Displays of disrespect for fellow students or the professor will not be tolerated. If you have a cellular phone, turn it off before you enter the room. If you forget and the phone goes off during class, turn it off immediately and stow it away. If you answer your phone, you must leave the room and may not return for the remainder of the period. **Do not use your cell phone or internet in any way during lectures! Do not walk out of the class during the lectures without an excuse. It will distract your professor and your fellow classmates. As a result, the learning process will be interrupted.**

Our differences add richness to our learning experience. Please consider that sarcasm and humor can be misconstrued in digital interactions and generate unintended disruptions. Working as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful course ambience. Your professor and fellow students wish to foster a safe learning environment. All opinions and experiences, no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an *idea* - but you are not to attack an *individual*. Personal attacks of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in an "F" and/or dismissal from the course. What constitutes a personal attack is solely up to the discretion of the professor. It is very hard to judge the "tone" of digital interactions. That said, I encourage all of you to interact with one another with respect, tact and appreciation when using social media, text messages and email. These are your colleagues. Every one of us will make mistakes throughout this

course, but we should be professional enough to deal with one another with consideration, poise and class. **Remember to be a professional and behave like one.**

### **Academic Freedom Statement**

Some of the material dealt with in this class may be perceived of as controversial/offensive to some students. While students are encouraged to respond to the material and to freely offer their opinions, if any student becomes uncomfortable with any of the topics or finds any of the material questionable, that student is urged to contact the professor about alternative assignments.

### **Diversity in Practice**

An important component of the study of public relations will be to incorporate cultural and social diversity, wherever appropriate, in course readings and assignments. The class includes components related to diversity, multiculturalism and inclusivity. You will be exposed to these ideas repeatedly, and we will discuss gender, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, disabilities and other areas of difference as they relate to research topics. Awareness of these differences is a first step for researchers and public relations practitioners to be successful in their work.

Whenever possible during the process of this course, students should explore elements of cultural and ethnic diversity within the parameters of classroom and field assignments. A greater understanding of the cultural differences in our society will enhance the learning experience and help students develop work that is of greater value to the worldwide audience.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

For information on Eastern's policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty, please check EIU's current Academic Regulations in the undergraduate catalogue.

You are responsible for knowing the university policy on what constitutes academic dishonesty. Here is the short version: **ALWAYS** give credit—I will assume that everything you turn in (unless otherwise noted) is your own personal work, not borrowed work or group-created work.

**It is important to remember that plagiarism is not based upon intent.** Just because it wasn't intentional or it was an accident does not mean that it was not plagiarism. It is! If you turn in something without giving credit to others whose ideas or words you used, you will definitely receive a 0 for the assignment; additional consequences can include failure of the course and even expulsion from the university.

If you collaborate with someone else on an assignment and turn in substantially similar work, you are both guilty of plagiarism.

If you turn in something written by someone else, expect to fail the course and be reported to the Dean of Students. Do your own work. Give credit where credit is due.

### **Grade Appeals**

You may always ask me about a grade you received on assignments, and I am open to REASONABLE appeals. If you would like to question a grade, please wait 24 hours after it has been handed back to you, but no longer than ONE week.

I will NOT discuss grades at the end of the semester unless you believe I made an error in recording and/or calculating your score. Please be advised that I will ignore any requests for “mercy points” at the end of the semester.

**PRSSA:** You may want to consider joining and participating in PRSSA if you are not a member. Participation in PRSSA (not just attending meetings – service, fundraising, etc. are also offered) can earn you extra credit points. You will be expected to live tweet the PRSSA function and provide a print-out of your tweets for extra credit points. You can earn 2 points per PRSSA function/meeting. **You can earn up to 10 extra credit points for this class.**

### **Academic integrity**

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU’s Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

### **Students with disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

### **The Student Success Center**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

### **Booth Library**

Located in the center of campus, Booth Library is the best place to do research, find expert help, or study in a calm, distraction-free environment. In addition to the many print resources, Booth provides access to high quality e-books, journals and scholarship not freely available on the Web. Stop by the Reference Desk or go to <http://library.eiu.edu> to explore library resources. Get expert help with your research by contacting the Booth Library reference librarians. Visit, call 581-6072, or go to <http://booth.eiu.edu/ask> to connect with a librarian.

## **Assignments**

*In-class Assignments*- There will be several class in-assignments throughout the semester. You must be present in the class to work on the assignments. The assignments must be completed during the class period. The in-class assignments will **NOT** always carry the same weight. Some may be graded out of 10 and some may be graded out of 20 or 30. If you are found working on materials not related to class during the time, you will get a 0 for the assignment that day. Yap, I do see you working on things other than class activities. **NO EXCUSES.**

*Exams* – There will be two exams throughout the semester. Each will cover the material presented during class prior to the test. The final exam is comprehensive.

*Quizzes*- There will be five quizzes throughout the semester. The quizzes will cover the materials presented during a class/week and readings assigned in D2L. The lowest quiz grade will be replaced with full points.

*Blog post* –You will be asked to write a blog post. The specifics on the assignments will be discussed during class and posted on D2L.

*Speechwriting*- You will write a speech as a part of your public relations writing skill. The specifics on the assignment will be discussed during class and posted on D2L.

*Spark project* – You will be given the opportunity to test your visual storytelling abilities. The specifics on the assignment will be discussed during class and posted on D2L.

*Newsletter & Brochure*- You will design newsletter & brochure for an organization of your choice. The specifics on the assigned will be discussed during class and posted on D2L.

*Weebly project* – Your final project of the semester will bring together a lot of the skills you have worked on throughout the semester. The specifics on the assignment will be discussed during class and posted on D2L.

## **Grading**

This class will be based on a system of 1100 points.

Blog Post	75 points
Speechwriting	75 points
Spark Project	50 points
Newsletter & Brochure	150 points
Weebly Project	200 points
Final Project Presentation	50 points
Quizzes	50 points
In-class assignments and activities	150 points
Midterm Exam	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Attendance	100 points

**Grading Scale**

A (100-90%)

B (89-80%)

C (79-70%)

D (69-60%)

F (59-0%)

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments and Readings</b>
<b>1</b> 8/19-8/23	Course Introduction Review: Writing for Public Relations	
<b>2</b> 8/26-8/30	Becoming a Persuasive Writer	In-class assignments
<b>3</b> 9/2 9/4-9/6	Labor Day- <b>NO CLASS</b> Blogging	In-class assignments
<b>4</b> 9/10-9/14	Blogging and Pictures/Links	Blog Post Assigned In-class assignments
<b>5</b> 9/16-9/20	Writing public relations for broadcast: News releases and PSAs	<b>PR Blog Post Draft Due (9/17)</b> In-Class assignments
<b>6</b> 9/23-9/27	Speech Writing	Speechwriting project assigned In-class assignments
<b>7</b> 9/30-10/2  10/4	Visual Storytelling  Work on Speechwriting assignment	<b>PR Blog Post Due (9/30)</b> Spark Project Assigned <b>NO CLASS (Speech due 10/04)</b>
<b>8</b> 10/7 10/9 10/11	Review for Exam Midterm Exam <b>Fall Break</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>
<b>9</b> 10/14 10/16-18	Spark Spark project presentations	<b>Spark Project Due (10/14)</b>
<b>10</b> 10/21-10/25	Newsletters and Brochures	Newsletters & Brochures Assigned
<b>11</b> 10/29-11/1	Newsletters and Brochures	Newsletter & Brochure in- class work days (Must come to class) <b>Newsletters &amp; Brochures Due (11/1)</b>
<b>12</b> 11/4-11/8	Writing for the web	Weebly/Microsite assigned In-class assignments
<b>13</b> 11/11-11/15	Photography and design	In-class assignments
<b>14</b> 11/18-11/20  11/22	Progress report with professor Work on Weebly project	<b>NO CLASS</b>
<b>15</b> 11/25-11/29	<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>
<b>16</b> 12/2-12/4  12/06	Weebly project presentations Final Exam review	<b>Weebly Project Due (12/2)</b>
<b>17</b> 12/11	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.</b>





