

## PRS 100 Introduction to Public Relations Course Syllabus

Department of Communication Studies

Harrington School of Communication, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Rhode Island

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**Instructor:** Cheryl Hackett                      **Term:** Summer 2024  
**Day/Time:** Online

**Office Hours:** By appointment

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This syllabus contains policies and mutual expectations established for this course that are intended to create a productive learning environment. Students should read the entire syllabus carefully and understand the course scope, expectations, learning outcomes, deadlines, attendance policies, grading criteria, and other important information. Students will be expected to fully abide by these policies and expectations.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides students with basic public relations skills in a variety of genres and contexts. Instruction begins with a review of public relations fundamentals. The focus widens to forms of public relations writing and messaging, including informative and research-based writing. Research techniques and AP Style are covered. Class work includes lectures, writing and online learning. Course requirements include four writing assignments, and a final exam.

### **COURSE GOALS:**

The goal of this course is to provide students with an introduction to public relations principles, practices, and emerging trends. Students will explore public relations' history, evolution, functions and ethics. Various career paths will be examined such as communications, media relations, development, public affairs, investor relations, and event management. Students will explore the significance of effective strategies, concise objectives, and SMART goals within the dynamics of public relations. The importance of accurate budget preparation, effective writing, collaborating, critical thinking and time management will be explored. Students will be encouraged to develop a toolbox to enhance their academic and professional pursuits.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon satisfactory completion of this course, a student should have the ability to:

1. Understand audience, purpose and tailoring print, broadcast and digital SEO PR messages.
2. Demonstrate competence in writing social media posts, news advisories, news releases, and fact sheets.
3. Compose strategic PR documents that include a clear focus with supporting evidence.
4. Define PR practices in local, regional, national and global venues.
5. Identify effective strategies utilized by successful PR practitioners.

6. Understand ethics PR practitioners must value, employ and advocate.
7. Demonstrate understanding of AP Style.

### **SUGGESTED READING:**

AP Style Book

### **ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING POLICY:**

#### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

Assignments will be discussed in detail prior to the due date. No late submissions accepted. The required assignments for the course are:

1. **Social Media Evaluation & Posting:** Select a non-profit organization located in your hometown. Examine their social media campaign. Write a 1-page evaluation. Select a social media outlet that would best connect with their followers. Create a 1-page social media post for the non-profit that uses SEO writing techniques and will connect with the highest percentage of their followers and potentially increase followers and engagement.
2. **News Advisory:** Write a 1-page news advisory that announces a special event. Follow AP Style. Include contact information, headline, dateline, lead, WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, HOW headings with brief details.
3. **News Release:** Write a 2-page news release that announces either a new hire, new product or special event for the organization of your choice. Follow AP Style. Include contact information, headline, dateline, lead, background, quote, and boiler.
4. **Fact Sheet:** Write a 1-page fact sheet that provides an overview of an organization.

#### **ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES:**

Meeting deadlines is a critical component of best PR practices and the course. Writing assignments are time sensitive and due at the end of class. Please submit assignments electronically using Bright Space. **Late submissions are not be accepted and will earn a zero grade.**

#### **GRADING:**

20%	Social Media Evaluation & Post
20%	News Advisory
20%	News Release
20%	Fact Sheet
20%	Final Exam

A 94-100

A- 90-93

B+ 87-89

B 83-86

C 73-76

D 60-66

B- 80-82

C- 70-72

F <6

C+ 77-79

D+ 67-69

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

**Excused Absences:** Absences due to serious illness or traumatic loss, religious observances, or participation in a university sanctioned event are considered excused absences. Students are responsible for work missed during an excused absence but will not be penalized by grading or assignment/exam make-up policies. Students should notify faculty in advance of absences due to religious observance or university-sanction events, and as soon as possible for other absences See University Manual sections 8.51.11-8.51.14 for details.

**Mental Health and Wellness:** We understand that college comes with challenges and stress associated with your courses, job/family responsibilities and personal life. URI offers students a range of services to support your mental health and wellbeing, including the URI Counseling Center, MySSP (Student Support Program) App, the Wellness Resource Center, and Well-being Coaching.

**Professionalism/Civility:** URI has adopted a civility policy regarding disruptive classroom behaviors. Disruptive behaviors are defined as behaviors that interfere with the learning and/or teaching process. Disruptive behaviors in the classroom include inappropriate talking during lectures or class discussions or in any manner interfering with other student's ability to have a quality learning experience. Students who engage in disruptive behavior will receive one warning without penalty. Continued incidents of disrupting the class will result in the initiation of removal procedures or the loss of a letter grade. Disruptive behaviors also include cell phone use and unauthorized computer use. You may use your computer to take notes or to access a digital version of the textbook. Cell phones must be turned off, silent, and out of sight during classes, and you should not be checking for calls or messages during class. Common sense and common courtesy should govern classroom civility. For more information about electronic devices in class visit: Learning on Use of Electronic Devices in Class: <https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/Using-Electronic-Devices-in-Class>.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's name on any attendance sign-in sheet, written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. [Faculty are encouraged to include details regarding course-specific expectations, including the use of AI-generative tools.]URI's Student Handbook (<http://web.uri.edu/studentconduct/student-handbook/>)

**The following are examples of academic dishonesty:**

- Using material, directly or paraphrasing, from published sources (print or electronic) without appropriate citation
- Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently
- Unauthorized possession or access to exams
- Unauthorized communication during exams
- Unauthorized use of another's work or preparing work for another student
- Taking an exam for another student
- Altering or attempting to alter grades
- The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams
- Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references
- Facilitating or aiding another's academic dishonesty
- Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the instructors

**Land Acknowledgement:** The University of Rhode Island land acknowledgment is a statement written by members of the University community in close partnership with members of the Narragansett Tribe. The statement recognizes and pays tribute to the people who lived on and stewarded the land on which the University now resides. The statement seeks to show gratitude and respect to Indigenous people and cultures and build community with the Narragansett Nation and other Native American tribes.

### **University of Rhode Island Land Acknowledgment**

The University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. We honor and respect the enduring and continuing relationship between the Indigenous people and this land by teaching and learning more about their history and present-day communities, and by becoming stewards of the land we, too, inhabit.

### **STUDENT RESOURCES:**

**Disability Services for Students Statement:** Your access in this course is important. Please send me your Disability Services for Students (DSS) accommodation letter early in the semester so that we have adequate time to discuss and arrange your approved academic accommodations. If you have not yet established services through DSS, please contact them to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations in the classroom. DSS can be reached by calling: 401-874-2098, visiting: [web.uri.edu/disability](http://web.uri.edu/disability), or

emailing: [dss@etal.uri.edu](mailto:dss@etal.uri.edu). We are available to meet with students enrolled in Kingston as well as Providence courses.

**Accessibility Requirements:** To ensure that we are supporting the success of all students, course materials need to be accessible (e.g., videos, audio recording, texts, etc.) in face-to-face, blended and fully online courses.

**Disability, Access, and Inclusion Services for Students Statement:** Your access in this course is important. Please send me your Disability, Access, and Inclusion (DAI) accommodation letter early in the semester so that we have adequate time to discuss and arrange your approved academic accommodations. If you have not yet established services through DAI, please contact them to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations in the classroom. DAI can be reached by calling: 401-874-2098, visiting: [web.uri.edu/disability](http://web.uri.edu/disability), or emailing: [dai@etal.uri.edu](mailto:dai@etal.uri.edu). We are available to meet with students enrolled in Kingston as well as Providence courses.

**The Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning also has resources available:**  
<https://web.uri.edu/teachonline/basics-of-accessibility-online/>.

**ITS Instructional Technology and Media Services** provides information and support about captioning video content. Adding captioning to video content is an essential step in making videos accessible to all viewers – especially for learners who are deaf or have low hearing. Captions are also shown to increase comprehension for students whose native language is different from what is spoken in the video.

**FERPA:** Please be aware that FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) regulations prohibit any disclosure of “personally identifiable information” from a student’s “education record” without the prior written consent of the student. For more detailed information on FERPA regulations, please go to: <http://security.uri.edu/policies/ferpa/>

**Anti-Bias Syllabus Statement:** We respect the rights and dignity of each individual and group. We reject prejudice and intolerance, and we work to understand differences. We believe that equity and inclusion are critical components for campus community members to thrive. If you are a target or a witness of a bias incident, you are encouraged to submit a report to the URI Bias Response Team at [www.uri.edu/brt](http://www.uri.edu/brt). There you will also find people and resources to help.

**Academic Enhancement Center:** The Academic Enhancement Center (AEC) offers face-to-face and online services to undergraduate students seeking academic support. Services are based out of Roosevelt Hall, the Carothers Library room LL004, and online. Peer tutoring is available for STEM & BUS-related courses through the Drop-In Center and small-group tutoring. The Writing Center peer consultants offer feedback focused on supporting undergraduate writers at any stage of a writing assignment. The UCS 160 course and one-to-one Academic Skills Consultations offer strategies for improving studying and test-taking skills. Complete details

about each of these programs, up-to-date schedules, contact information, and self-service study resources are all available on the AEC website, [uri.edu/aec](http://uri.edu/aec).

All Academic Enhancement Center support services for Fall 2023 begin 9/11/23. Visit [uri.edu/aec](http://uri.edu/aec) for information about our AEC programs.

**URI SPEAKING CENTER:** The URI Speaking Center provides assistance to students who need or want to improve their public speaking skills or manage issues regarding speech apprehension and anxiety. The Center is staffed by exceptional undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty who ensure that students are adequately trained to prepare, develop, and deliver oral presentations. The URI Speaking Center also serves to prepare students for the inevitable expectation of effective public speaking in their careers. Please stop by the URI Speaking Center or check out their website for operating hours -02 Davis Hall-basement 401-874-2284 [www.com.uri.edu/speakingcenter](http://www.com.uri.edu/speakingcenter)

**The Undergraduate Writing Center** provides free writing support to students in any class, at any stage of the writing process: from understanding an assignment and brainstorming ideas, to developing, organizing, and revising a draft. Fall 2021 services are offered through two online options: 1) real-time synchronous appointments with a peer consultant (25- and 50-minute slots, available Sunday - Friday), and 2) written asynchronous consultations with a 24-hour turn-around response time (available Monday - Friday). Synchronous appointments are video-based, with audio, chat, document-sharing, and live captioning capabilities, to meet a range of accessibility needs. View the synchronous and asynchronous schedules and book online, visit [uri.mywconline.com](http://uri.mywconline.com).

**STEM & BUS Tutoring** helps undergraduate students navigate a variety of 100 and 200 level STEM & BUS courses through free peer tutoring in-person and online. Students can select occasional or weekly tutoring sessions through the TracCloud system or visit the Drop-In Center, located in the Carothers Library lower level room LL004. The TracCloud application is available through URI Microsoft 365 single sign-on and more detailed information and instructions can be found at [uri.edu/aec/tutoring](http://uri.edu/aec/tutoring)

## **Introduction to Public Relations: Weekly Schedule Summer 24**

### **WEEK 1 (June 24 - June 28)**

- **Monday: Review Learning module posted on Brightspace**
- **Tuesday: Watch video posted on Brightspace**
- **Wednesday: Read article posted on Brightspace**
- **Thursday: Draft Social Media assignment. Instructions, rubric and sample posted on Brightspace.**
- **Friday: Edit and upload Social Media assignment to Brightspace**

#### **WEEK 2 (June 30 – July 3)**

- **Sunday: Review Learning module posted on Brightspace**
- **Monday: Watch video posted on Brightspace**
- **Tuesday: Read article posted on Brightspace**
- **Wednesday: Edit and upload New Advisory assignment to Brightspace**

#### **WEEK 3 (July 7 – July 11)**

- **Sunday: Review Learning module posted on Brightspace**
- **Monday: Watch video posted on Brightspace**
- **Tuesday: Read article posted on Brightspace**
- **Wednesday: Draft News Release assignment. Instructions, rubric and sample posted on Brightspace.**
- **Thursday: Edit and upload News Release assignment to Brightspace.**

#### **WEEK 4 (July 14 – July 18)**

- **Sunday: Review Learning module posted on Brightspace**
- **Monday: Watch video posted on Brightspace**
- **Tuesday: Read article posted on Brightspace**
- **Wednesday: Draft Fact Sheet assignment. Instructions, rubric and sample posted on Brightspace.**
- **Thursday: Edit and upload Fact Sheet assignment to Brightspace**

#### **WEEK 5 (July 21 – July 25)**

- **Sunday: Review Learning module posted on Brightspace**
- **Monday: Watch video posted on Brightspace**
- **Tuesday: Read article posted on Brightspace**
- **Wednesday: Draft Final Exam responses. Instructions, rubric and sample posted on Brightspace.**
- **Thursday: Edit and upload Final Exam to Brightspace**

**It is the responsibility of each student to be aware of this important information contained in the syllabus.**