

MCOM 4363 – Public Relations Case Studies (Seminar)
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Course Description: This asynchronous online seminar builds on foundational concepts introduced in *Introduction to Public Relations* and explores how public relations is practiced across different organizational functions, stakeholder contexts, and industries. Rather than repeating introductory PR concepts, the course emphasizes the application of those concepts through research, real-world case studies, and critical discussion.

As a seminar-style course, learning is primarily student-led. Students will work in groups to research assigned PR topics, select relevant readings and real-world cases, lead case-study presentations, and facilitate class discussions. Through these activities, students will examine the goals, stakeholders, challenges, strategies, and tools associated with different areas of PR and consider how communication practices vary across organizational and industry contexts. Emphasis is placed on active participation, critical thinking, independent research, peer learning, and the ability to draw strategic insights from both successful and failed PR practices.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Conduct industry-specific research to understand the unique PR needs, challenges, and stakeholder landscapes of various sectors.
2. Critically analyze real-world PR campaigns, identifying core strategies, audience targeting, media use, and communication outcomes.
3. Draw insights from both successful and failed cases, and apply those insights to evaluate or design strategic communication approaches.
4. Effectively use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) as a support tool in research, ideation, and strategic thinking—while maintaining originality and critical judgment.
5. Collaborate in teams to investigate, present, and lead discussions on assigned PR case topics.
6. Learn lessons from failed PR campaigns and propose strategies to make them successful in today's context.
7. Engage in reflective discussion and peer review, articulating well-informed perspectives and challenging assumptions in class dialogue.

Course Requirements and Recommends

1. Textbook:

- A. Swann, P. (2025). Cases in public relations management: The rise of social media and activism. Routledge.

This is the primary textbook for the course and provides case studies that will support our analysis and discussion of PR practices across different industries.

You can access the e-book from the link below

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=31725483>

B. Introduction to Public Relations, Page & Parnell, 2nd edition, ISBN:
9781544392004

This textbook serves as a reference for reviewing foundational PR concepts that you have learned in previous PR courses and may need throughout the semester.

You can access the e-book from the link below

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=7106967>

These e-textbooks allow up to 3 people at a time to access it, so we recommend that students download the chapters they need, then exit the book in case others are waiting.

Evaluation and Grade Calculation

Assignments	Percentage of Final Grade
Local Event Reflection	10%
Group Research Proposal	10%
Group Presentations & Lead Discussion	40%
Final Case Re-Evaluation Project	20%
Weekly Discussion	20%

Percent	Letter Grade
90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% and below	F

1. Local Event Reflection (10%)

- a. During Week 8, students will attend the Texas Rose Festival and observe the PR strategies used by the organizers. The goal is to experience real-world public relations in action and reflect on the tactics used to engage the audience, shape public perception, and build community presence.

- b. For this event, you need to write a 600–800 word reflection, including the event’s objectives, the types of audience it attracted, the communication tools/platforms observed (e.g., signage, social media, volunteers, press coverage), and your analysis of the effectiveness of these strategies.
- c. You must also include one photo of yourself taken at the event location as proof of participation. The photo should clearly show both you and the event setting (e.g., signage, crowd, performance, or key visual elements).
- d. Submission: 10/18

2. Group Research Proposal (10%)

- a. In Week 1, students will be assigned to groups of two. Each group will select its own topic from Part I and Part II of the course and will lead one seminar presentation in each part of the semester. Topic selections will be finalized in Week 1 to ensure that each topic is covered by one group.
- b. Before beginning each seminar project, your group will submit a 300–600 word research proposal outlining your plan for the upcoming presentation. Two proposals are required: Proposal 1 in Week 2 for your Part I topic and Proposal 2 in Week 9 for your Part II topic.
- c. Each proposal should include:
 - The topic selected by your group and the specific real-world PR case you plan to analyze.
 - A brief explanation of why you selected this case and how it relates to your topic.
 - The key issues, questions, or aspects of the case your group plans to investigate.
 - The types of sources and information you plan to use in your research.
 - A preliminary plan for how you will approach the case in your presentation.
- d. The purpose of the proposal is to ensure that your selected case is appropriate for the topic and that your research plan is focused and feasible. Instructor feedback should be incorporated into your research and final presentation.
- e. One group member should submit the proposal on behalf of the group through Canvas.

Submission:

Proposal 1: Week 2 Thursday (9/3)

Proposal 2: Week 9 Thursday (10/22)

3. Group Presentation and Lead Discussion (40%)

- a. Each student group will be responsible for two PR case presentations during the semester, one in Part I and one in Part II. On your selected presentation weeks, you will introduce the

key characteristics of the PR area, industry, or stakeholder context (e.g., target audiences/stakeholders, communication challenges, typical PR goals, regulatory or cultural factors) and present a real-world case involving either a successful or failed PR campaign.

b. Your case-study presentation should analyze the case's objectives, target audience/stakeholders, strategy, media platform(s), execution, and results. The team should also identify 2–3 lessons or strategic insights that can inform future PR practice.

c. Each presentation should be approximately 30 minutes and recorded in advance. The recorded presentation must be posted to the designated Canvas discussion by 11:59 p.m. on **Wednesday of your presentation week**. At the end of the presentation, your group should provide 2–3 substantive discussion questions for the class.

d. As discussion leaders, presenting groups are responsible for actively engaging with classmates after the presentation is posted. Group members should review and respond to questions and comments from classmates by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday. Both group members are expected to participate meaningfully in facilitating the discussion.

e. Each group must submit a draft version of its presentation slides to the instructor **via email** by 11:59 p.m. on the Saturday prior to the assigned presentation week. Along with the draft, the group must submit at least two credible sources used in its research. These materials will also serve as assigned readings for the class during the upcoming presentation week. The instructor will review the draft and readings and provide feedback before the presentation is finalized.

Note: AI tools and AI-generated content do not count as research sources or supporting materials and cannot be used to fulfill this requirement.

f. Each group is required to use at least one AI tool (e.g., ChatGPT) in the research or ideation process and disclose how it was used in the slide deck. A short disclosure and reflection of AI usage must be included in each presentation.

g. Although grades for group presentations are typically shared among team members, the instructor reserves the right to assign individual grades based on participation, communication, responsibility, and contribution to both the presentation and discussion leadership. If it becomes clear that a group member did not contribute equally, their grade may be adjusted accordingly. Students who have concerns about group dynamics are encouraged to communicate with the instructor in a timely and professional manner.

h. Because the groups presenting in Week 3 and Week 10 have less preparation time than groups presenting later in each part of the course, students in these groups will receive 3 extra-credit points on the presentation grade in recognition of the shortened preparation period.

Submission Timeline

Saturday before presentation week, 11:59 p.m.: Draft presentation slides and at least two proposed class readings

Wednesday of presentation week, 11:59 p.m.: Recorded 30-minute presentation posted to Canvas

Sunday of presentation week, 11:59 p.m.: Responses to classmates' questions and comments

4. Weekly Seminar Discussion (20%)

a. Because this is an asynchronous seminar course, active participation in weekly discussions is an essential part of the learning experience. During each student-led presentation week, students who are not presenting are required to participate in the weekly Canvas discussion after completing the assigned readings and viewing the recorded group presentation.

b. Each week, the presenting group will provide 2–3 discussion questions at the end of its presentation. Each non-presenting student must select at least one of these questions and post a substantive response. Your response should demonstrate thoughtful engagement with both the **assigned reading(s) and the group presentation** by making a meaningful connection between the reading materials and the case being discussed.

c. At the end of your response, you must also pose **one substantive question** to the presenting group. Your question should encourage further analysis or discussion rather than ask for factual information that can be easily found in the presentation or readings.

d. Weekly discussion posts will be evaluated based on the depth of your analysis, meaningful integration of the assigned reading(s), engagement with the case presentation, and the quality of the question you pose. Simply summarizing the reading or presentation, expressing agreement or disagreement without explanation, or posting a general comment will not receive full credit.

e. Students are not required to complete the regular Weekly Seminar Discussion during the weeks in which their own group is presenting. Instead, presenting group members fulfill their discussion responsibility by facilitating the seminar and responding to classmates' questions and comments as part of the **Group Presentation and Lead Discussion** assignment.

Submission:

Weekly Seminar Discussion responses and questions are due by **11:59 p.m. on Saturday** of each presentation week.

5. Final Case Re-Evaluation Project (20%)

- a. For your final project, you will choose one failed case from the video “[Top 23 Worst Marketing Fails of Each Year \(2000–2022\)](#)” and conduct a strategic re-evaluation. First, analyze the original campaign’s context, objectives, audience, and reason(s) for failure. Then, examine how the cultural, technological, or media environment has changed since the original campaign.
- b. Ask: Would this campaign still fail today? If so, how would you revise it? What strategic adjustments—messaging, platform, tone, audience targeting—could make it successful now?
- c. Your report should be 1500–2000 words and include a reflection on how you used AI tools during your research or brainstorming process. You are required to use AI to assist with idea generation or cultural comparison, but critical thinking and originality remain central.
- d. Submission: 12/10

Assignment Policy

- A. Assignments do have deadlines and these deadlines need to be met. It is your responsibility to utilize time outside of class in an effective manner so you can ensure that you submit each assignment before the due date and time.
 - a. For many assignments, **not all**, the submission folder will stay open for one week after the due date. Any assignments turned in after the due date will receive a deduction in points. Specific point values that will be deducted each day can be found on the assignment overviews on Canvas. It is your responsibility to know when the assignment is due for full credit, when the assignment closes, and the number of points that will be deducted each day for late submissions. Assignments will not be accepted after this final date.
- B. Assignments and due dates may be changed at the instructor’s discretion with fair notice to students.
- C. I will not accept assignments via email unless there are issues with Canvas and the email includes your assignment and a screenshot of the Canvas malfunction.
- D. Merely completing all assignments does not guarantee that you will pass the course. You must put forth effort and show an understanding of the material to earn a satisfactory grade.
- E. You are required to utilize APA (American Psychology Association) format for any assignment that requires the utilization of outside sources and AP (Associated Press) format for all photo captions/journalistic stories.
- F. I will not accept screenshots of assignments. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must be typed, formatted to be a .DOC, .DOCX, PPT, PPTX (Pages, Google Drive, and other online word processors must be exported to this specific format), and submitted via Canvas.
- G. Assignment instructions and due dates will be provided through Canvas and the course schedule. Canvas includes a syllabus function that outlines upcoming due dates, due dates can be seen listed on each assignment under the assignment tab in Canvas, assignment due dates can be added to your Canvas calendar, and each

due date will be listed in the course modules. There are SEVERAL ways to determine what is coming up due in class. It is your responsibility to be aware of what is coming up due and to stay on top of your assignments.

- H. Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. **A student who is caught doing either will earn a “0” for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. If a student is caught a second time, they will automatically fail the course.**

- a. In addition to UT Tyler’s Student Conduct and Discipline policy, plagiarism/cheating includes the use of materials previously submitted in my classes or other professors’ classes. I expect you to submit original work created specifically for this class during this semester.
- b. All work (written, photos, videos, etc.) will be examined utilizing plagiarism detection software.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy for This Course

- a. UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools’ ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler’s Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler’s Academic Integrity Policy.
- b. In this course, you are **required** to use generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) for selected assignments and presentations. These tools are valuable for research, ideation, and critique, but they are not a replacement for your own thinking, interpretation, or strategic judgment. All AI use must be clearly disclosed. For each assignment that involves AI, you must:
 - a. Include a brief explanation of how the AI tool was used (e.g., to compare case outcomes, generate messaging options, analyze stakeholder reactions, etc.)
 - b. Specify the tool and version (e.g., ChatGPT 4.0, Gemini Pro)
 - c. Attach a screenshot or PDF showing at least one full AI conversation with a minimum of three back-and-forth exchanges (e.g., three

- prompts and three responses). This should show how you refined or redirected the AI to improve output quality.
- d. You are responsible for reviewing and validating the AI-generated content. Low-quality, inaccurate, or unedited AI output will lower your grade.
 - e. Submitting AI content without disclosure, or using AI in ways that violate the assignment instructions, will be considered a breach of academic integrity and handled according to UT Tyler’s Honor Code and Academic Integrity Policy.

Course Schedule

Date	Agenda	Due
Week 1 Outlook		
8/24 -8/30	<u>Course introduction</u> <u>Lecture:</u> PR review Reading: Foundation Review (as needed): Chapter 1 (Teruggi and Parnell, 2020) Required Reading: Chapter 1, 4 (Swann, 2025)	Group list and order determination
Week 2 Part I Introduction: PR as a Stakeholder Management Function		
8/31 -9/6	<u>Lecture:</u> Research Method, and AI applications in Research Reading: Required Reading: Chapter 2 (Swann, 2025) Appendix A, B(Swann, 2025)	Group Research Proposal 1
Week 3 Crisis Communication		
9/7 -9/13	Reading: Foundation Review (as needed): Chapter 12 (Teruggi and Parnell, 2020) Required Reading: Chapter 5 (Swann, 2025)	Group presentation: research and case study (students-led) Weekly Seminar Discussion 1
Week 4 Employee Communication		
9/14 -9/20	Reading: Foundation Review (as needed): Chapter 10 (Teruggi and Parnell, 2020) Required Reading: https://screencloud.com/internal-communications/internal-pr	Group presentation: research and case study (students-led) Weekly Seminar Discussion 2
Week 5 Corporate Communication		

9/21 -9/27	Reading: Foundation Review (as needed): Chapter 11 (Teruggi and Parnell, 2020) Required Reading: Chapter 3(Swann, 2025)	Group presentation: research and case study (students-led) Weekly Seminar Discussion 3
Week6 Public Affairs, Politics & Advocacy		
9/28 -10/4	Reading: Foundation Review (as needed): Chapter 15 (Teruggi and Parnell, 2020) Optional Reading: https://determ.com/blog/political-pr/	Group presentation: research and case study (students-led) Weekly Seminar Discussion 4
Week 7 Financial Communication and Investor Relations		
10/5 -10/11	Reading: Required Reading: Chapter 7 (Swann, 2025)	Group presentation: research and case study (students-led) Weekly Seminar Discussion 5 Due: First group presentation slides submission
Week 8 Field Observation Week: Experiencing Community PR		
10/12 -10/18	Attending Tyler Rose Festival	Personal Assignment: The PR event reflection 1
Week 9 Part II Introduction: PR as a Marketing Communication Function		
10/19 -10/25	<u>Lecture:</u> Research Topics in Marketing PR Foundation Review (as needed): Chapter 7,8 (Teruggi and Parnell, 2020) Required Reading: Appendix D (Swann, 2025)	Group Research Proposal 2
Week 10 Healthcare		
10/26 -11/1	Student Proposed Reading	Group presentation: research and case study (students-led) Weekly Seminar Discussion 6
Week 11 FMCG		
11/2 -11/8	Student Proposed Reading	Group presentation: research and case study (students-led) Weekly Seminar Discussion 7
Week 12 Luxury and Fashion		
11/9 -11/15	Student Proposed Reading	Group presentation: research and case study (students-led) Weekly Seminar Discussion 8
Week 13 Culture, Sports & Tourism		
11/16 -11/22	Student Proposed Reading	Group presentation: research and case study (students-led) Weekly Seminar Discussion 9
Week 14		
Thanksgiving Week		

Week 15 Technology, Automotive & Appliance		
11/30 -12/6	Student Proposed Reading	Group presentation: research and case study (students-led) Weekly Seminar Discussion 10
Week 16		
12/7- 12/12	<u>No Class</u>	Watching video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_OnyXiChSs Submit Final Case Revisit Evaluation Project