

## CO 456 Applications in Public Relations Spring 2011

**Instructor: Dr. Jeffrey Brand****Office:** Shilling Hall 411 F**Office Hours:** M-F, 11:00-12:00; Additional times available by appointment**Office Phone:** 424-6225**Email:** jbrand@mail.millikin.edu**Texts:**Coombs and Holladay, *PR Strategy and Application*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, ISBN 978-1-4051-4408-7

There will be additional readings on your Moodle website.

**Course Objectives:**

This course is designed to provide applied experiences in public relations and other related communication exercises. Case studies, reactions and critical exercises, group projects and other learning opportunities will be provided to develop student skills. This course will have particular focus on PR writing assignments and on community development as a pr challenge.

**Departmental Learning Goals:** The Department of Communication has established three learning goals for our students. They reflect the knowledge and skills expected of our majors and other students who take our courses. These three learning goals reflect the content and expectations I have for you in this course:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats before diverse and varied audiences.
2. Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts.
3. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.

These learning goals are consistent with the objectives set forth for this course. You will learn to produce and develop appropriate public relations messages. This course will provide an application of theories used to guide the practice of public relations. You will also become more critical and informed communicators in relationship to the professional practice of public relations.

**Additional Information:** No substitute or extra-credit papers/activities will be accepted. Late work will be penalized. Failure to complete all assignments will result in an automatic "F" for the course.

**Attendance:** If you are going to miss class please contact me as soon as possible. Attendance is necessary for both your personal learning and to the rest of the class. Participation in class is important and will be noticed. Your active participation in group meetings and in-class exercises

can also influence your success in this course.

**Grading and Evaluation:** (Requirements may change as needed as the course progresses)

### Assignment Point Values

Assignments	Points	My Scores
Exam #1	100	
Exam #2	100	
Critical Research Paper	100	
Group Writing/Project Assignments	250	
Attendance/Participation	050	
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	

Grades will be assigned on a straight percentage basis;

Please remember that average work is "C" work. To accomplish a higher grade requires effort and commitment.

### Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism:

All students are expected to uphold professional standards for academic honesty and integrity in their research, writing, and related performances. Academic honesty is the standard we expect from all students. Read the Student Handbook for further details about offenses involving academic integrity at: <http://www.millikin.edu/handbook/>. Staley Library also hosts a web site on Preventing Plagiarism, which includes the complete university policy. It is located at: <http://www.millikin.edu/staley/services/instruction/Pages/plagiarism-faculty.aspx>. Visit and carefully read the Preventing Plagiarism web site.

The Faculty has the right and the responsibility to hold students to high ethical standards in conduct and in works performed, as befits a scholar at the university. Faculty members have the responsibility to investigate all suspected breaches of academic integrity that arise in their courses. They will make the determination as to whether the student violated the Academic Integrity Policy. Should the faculty member determine that the violation was intentional and egregious, he or she will decide the consequences, taking into account the severity and circumstances surrounding the violation, and will inform the student in writing, forwarding a copy of the letter to the Registrar and to the Dean of Student Development.

This letter will be destroyed when the student graduates from the University unless a second breach of integrity occurs, or unless the first instance is of sufficient magnitude to result in failure of the course, with an attendant XF grade recorded in the transcript. If an XF is assigned for the course, the faculty letter of explanation becomes a permanent part of the student's record. If a second violation occurs subsequent to the first breach of integrity, the Dean of Student Development will begin disciplinary and judicial processes of the University, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

If a student receives an XF for a course due to academic dishonesty, this remains as a permanent grade and cannot be removed from the transcript. However, students may repeat the course for credit toward graduation. Some programs and majors have more explicit ethical standards, which supersede this Policy, and violation of which may result in dismissal from some programs or majors within the University. If you have difficulty with any assignment in this course, please see me rather than consider academic dishonesty.

**Disability Accommodation Policy:** Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you should submit your documentation to the Office of Student Success at Millikin University, currently located in Staley Library 014.

Entrepreneurship Exercises:

For the past two years, this course has done a PR project for a Millikin University sponsored entrepreneurial enterprise. In 2010 the course worked with the Bird Feeding Society of America and Dr. David Horn in biology. This year, the class is working with the Blue Connection to promote a new site at the DMH Cancer Care Institute.

Sample assignment details follow:

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Blue Connection Group Project**

*Blue Connection and Cancer Care Center  
Decatur Memorial Hospital*

Event: April 11, 2011; 5:00-6:30  
Grand Opening

Potential Partner: Starbucks Arts & Crafts Sale/Fundraiser

*Class Schedule of Activities:*

- 2-24 Project Introduction and Set Up/Establish Groups and Goals, Step 1
- 3-1 Presentation by B.J. Warren: Goals and Objectives; Project Details
- 3-3 Visit with B.J. Warren: project update and deliverables details
- 3-10 Final drafts and copies of promotional content; pitch and approvals  
B.J. Warren
- 3-21 Materials in distribution and out to community
- 3-30 Preliminary assessment of pre-event publicity, evaluate need for adjustments
- 4-6 Grand Opening Event 5:00-6:30
- 4-14 Event Assessment/Evaluation; begin step 2, development of public relations plan  
outline, brainstorm *Blue Connection* promotional plans
- 5-3 Group Presentations: PR Planning and Strategies for *Blue Connection*

Step 1: Material Pieces (2 groups each)

1. Pre-event publicity pieces: flier/handout and media release explanation of event
2. Social Media Upgrade for Facebook, Twitter, Website - content for promotion
3. Opening Event Informational Materials: brochure/flier, card, *Blue Connection(s)* information update

Step 2: Presentation and Report

Present a public relations plan for the *Blue Connection(s)* organization and discuss challenges and limitations to efforts. Consider full range of message types and resources to be used to promote the organization, 1 year out, 3 years out.

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### **Group Project Report/Resources National Bird Feeding Society**

#### **Group Materials:**

**Stakeholders:** Each group has identified potential stakeholder types and examples of each. Create a rationale for how your particular stakeholder group might promote the goals of the NBFS and identify 5-10 good leads for connecting with them.

**Events/Awareness Activities:** Each group has identified potential events or activities that could be sponsored or offered by the NBFS to expand membership and awareness. Provide a description of that event, its goals and intended outcomes, any sample materials to be used to complete the event, identify costs and budget. Demonstrate how such activities might be repeated, expanded, or otherwise capitalized on to be repeated in other areas or markets.

**Public Relations Plan:** Prepare a two-year schedule to roll out a PR plan for the organization. Include events, times of year, audiences contacted, media contacts, etc. Imagine a two-year intentional plan to build reputation, recognition, status, and service to stakeholders and the public. Use ideas from your group, our discussions, the website, and others to plan two-years of activities, deadlines, ideas to keep the NBFS in the news and in front of stakeholders.

*Discussions and Presentations: May 5 and 7*

#### **Resources:**

**Elements of a PR Plan:** PDF file highlighting goals, see table of contents from class discussion

**Triple Crown:** Pitch Letter, News Release, Feature Story—advice on major document types for media relations