JOUR 2400 Fundamentals of Public Relations

Course overview

Your goal in this class is to know what public relations is - and is not, as well as how it has been practiced in various organizational, situational and relational contexts. This course introduces you to not only the basic history, mechanism, processes, practices, writing formats, and legal and ethical practices of public relations, but also implications of today's constant technological changes and rapid globalization for the profession.

The course emphasizes the four-step public relations process, strategic planning, writing formats and real-world cases. In particular, remember that the majority of public relations professionals consider reporting and writing skills as the most important skillset you must possess.

It is made up of a combination of video and PowerPoint lessons.

This course is offered 100% online over the semester with weekly due dates. This will be done using Canvas, accessed using standard browsers. Each week will be scheduled with a beginning and ending date.. All students will participate, collaborate and progress together within each scheduled week.

Prerequisites

None.

Information for your instructor

- Name: Chris Pilcic
- Contact: Always use the Canvas email system. Email sent to the unt.edu system will not be read.
 - o I will do my best to respond within 24 hours, except on weekends.
 - Please do not email me about assignments within 24 hours of their deadline; I will not be able to respond before the assignment is due.
- Office Hours: By appointment

Textbook and readings:

- No textbook. Save your money.
- Readings may be assigned from other sources.

Course objectives

Students will understand and apply the basic planning and writing skills used by public relations professionals by:

- 1. Describing major theories and processes useful in public relations.
- 2. Identifying the roles of public relations in organizations as well as in society.

- 3. Using the basic vocabulary of the public relations practitioner.
- 4. Comparing various public relations writing formats.
- 5. Examining the importance of reporting and writing skills.
- 6. Explaining the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
- 7. Demonstrating the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society
- 8. Demonstrating legal and professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

Students will explore the primary beliefs and practices of public relations by completing a variety of assignments, which will include:

- Reading quizzes
- Discussions
- Written analyses
- Exams

Course policies

Netiquette

Netiquette, or online etiquette, refers to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors online. Learn more with this <u>quick guide</u>.

Deadlines

Assignments are due on or before the deadline. Deadlines are FIRM for the quizzes, extra credit, discussions and exams. They cannot be made up if the deadline is missed. There is a 10% late penalty per day/portion of day with written assignments. This penalty applies to weekends as well. (After 10 days, your assignment is worth 0.)

Technology requirements

You must have a working computer with a keyboard, webcam and consistent high-speed internet access during the course of the semester. This is a writing-intensive course, so having a keyboard on which to type your assignments is necessary.

Academic honesty

There is one over-arching rule in public relations: Be honest.

Honesty is critical is this profession - and in this class. Use your own words. Don't cheat. Be the person your dog thinks you are.

Submitting your work to this class is equivalent to stating that you have produced the entire work by yourself and you have not previously produced this work to submit to another class or any other outlet. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people's work are unacceptable, leading to serious consequences for you. Read UNT Policy No. 06.003 (Student Academic Integrity. Links to an external site. Links to an external site.

Plagiarism, which in a nutshell, is using other people's work as your own, is a serious offense in any discipline and a firing offense in the professional world. Any situations involving potential academic dishonesty will be handled through <u>procedures established by the UNT Office of Academic Integrity.</u> (Links to an external site.) Links to an external site.

In this course, you must use quotation marks and refer to the original source for a string of seven or more consecutive words from other people's work. You also must not use an extensive quote or too many quotes. Always produce your original work.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

All work submitted for this class must be your original work—that is, it cannot have been published already online, submitted for any other class, or created by generative AI. Remember that many grammar-checking, paraphrasing, word processing programs also employ generative AI. (Before you submit your work, you may wish to check your work for AI flags.)

Turnitin will flag instances of plagiarism as well as the use of generative AI. The use of generative AI in this class, unless specified in the instructions of an assignment, will be considered a form of cheating, and will be assigned the same penalties as cheating. Your instructor may use other AI-detection programs as well. The UNT Academic Integrity Policy may be found here: https://vpaa.unt.edu/ss/integrityLinks to an external site.

About course material

Materials used in connection with this course are subject to copyright protection. Materials may include, but are not limited to: documents, assignments, slides, images, audio, and video. Course materials are only for the use of students enrolled in this course, for purposes associated with this course, and may not be shared to third parties without official authorization. Unauthorized retention, duplication, distribution, or modification of copyrighted materials is strictly prohibited by law. For more information, visit the <u>UNT Policy OfficeLinks to an external site.</u> Links to an external site. In addition, sharing such information on websites or in other contexts may be considered a violation of the <u>UNT Academic Integrity PolicyLinks to an external site.</u>

Course requirements

Exams: 150 points

• There are four exams. The first is worth 50 points, the second is 25 points, the third is 25 points, and the fourth is 50 points. All exams are closed-book, closed-notes and require the

use of the Respondus Lockdown browser and webcam. They cover the readings, lessons and videos in each module.

• Deadlines are absolutely firm. There are no make-up or rescheduled exams.

Written Assignments: 250 points

- There are five written assignments worth 50 points each. These assignments must be uploaded to Canvas. See the modules for deadlines and details.
- Late submissions will be accepted, but there is a 10% late penalty per day. After 10 days, the assignment is worth 0.
- Please view the rubric to see how your assignments will be graded.

Reading quizzes: 140 points

- 15 available quizzes x 10 points each.
- Deadlines are absolutely firm. There are no make-up or rescheduled quizzes.
- I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

Discussion posts: 40 points

- 2 x 20 points each
- Deadlines are absolutely firm. There are no make-up or rescheduled discussions.
- Neither of these grades will be dropped.

I will do my best to complete grading your work within a week of submission.

Grading

Grading criteria for final grades

• A: 90-100%

• B: 80-89.99%

• C: 70 to 79.99%

• D: 60-69.99%

• F: 0-59.99%

Other Grading Information

•

Quality of work: In this class, an A earned on an assignment means that you've done outstanding work and demonstrated exceptional critical thinking. A B is very good work with very good critical thinking. A C means your work is good for the classroom, but it needs more thought and analysis. For nearly all assignments, you'll have to do external research beyond the lesson materials. While this isn't a writing course, grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure are critical in all your assignments.

- o **Turn-around time:** I aim to return graded work to you within one week of the due date. When this is not possible, I will send an announcement to the class.
- o **Grade disputes:** You are required to wait 24 hours before contacting me to dispute a grade. Within that time, I expect that you will review the assignment details and reflect on the quality of the work you turned in. If you would still like to meet, email me to set up a meeting (I cannot discuss grades over email). You should come to our scheduled meeting with specific examples that demonstrate that you earned a higher grade than you received. If you miss your scheduled meeting, you forfeit your right to a grade dispute. If you do not contact me to schedule a meeting within seven days of receiving your grade, you also forfeit your right to a grade dispute.
- Extra credit opportunities: There are a few extra credit opportunities in the course, so please take full advantage of them. Because these items are available to help boost your grade, I do not round-up grades at the end of the semester, and I do not respond to requests asking for this consideration.

I will do my best to complete grading your work within a week of submission.

Course Schedule

This is subject to change pending needs of class. Please see the Canvas modules, assignments and quizzes tabs for full and up-to-date information.

Unit 1

- Nature of PR and Jobs in PR
- · History of PR
- Publics
- Communication Theory
- Exam 1

Unit 2

- Legal issues
- Ethics
- Exam 2

Unit 3

Research

- Planning
- Communication and Evaluation
- Exam 3

Unit 4

- Message Development
- Online PR
- Crisis Communication
- Cross-Cultural PR
- Exam 4

Mayborn School of Journalism Syllabus Statements

JOURNALISM COURSE REGISTRATION

- By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required prerequisites according to your catalog year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you haven't taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your prerequisites, please see an advisor.
- A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed all foundational courses. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses.

RE-TAKING FAILED JOURNALISM CLASSES

Students will not be allowed to automatically take a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for one calendar year after the date you received the second failing grade. Once a student has waited one calendar year after failing a course twice, the student may submit a written appeal to the director to be approved to enroll a third time. Students will not be allowed to re-take a failed journalism course more than three times.

TEXTBOOK POLICY

The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn't require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

OFFICE HOURS

Please see information in the Course Specific section of the syllabus.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please see information in the Course Specific section of the syllabus.

FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) UNDERGRADUATES

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per semester. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so has the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility.

Please visit <u>UNT Financial AidLinks to an external site.</u> (https://financialaid.unt.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirementsLinks to an external site.) for more information about financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. It may be wise for you to schedule a meeting with your MSOJ academic advisor or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

All first-time-in-college students at UNT are required to schedule an appointment with their Academic Advisor and receive an advising code to register for classes both fall and spring semesters of the first year in college. ALL students should meet with their Academic Advisor at least one time per long semester (fall and spring). It is important to update your degree plan on a regular basis to ensure that you are on track for a timely graduation.

It is imperative that students have paid for all enrolled classes. Please check your online schedule daily through late registration to ensure you have not been dropped for non-payment of any amount. Students have been unknowingly dropped from classes for various reasons such as financial aid, schedule change fees, parking fees, etc. MSOJ will not be able to reinstate students for any reason after late registration, regardless of situation. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all payments have been made.

FALL 2025 CALENDAR

ACCREDITATION

The Mayborn, which is one of over 100 journalism programs across the world that are accredited, was reaccredited in 2023. Accreditation is important to you because it means your degree is more valuable than one that comes from an unaccredited school.

- Accreditation has profound benefits. Accredited programs may offer scholarships, internships, competitive prizes, and other activities unavailable in non-accredited programs.
- Accreditation also provides an assurance of quality and rigorous standards to students, parents, and the public. Students in an accredited program can expect to find a challenging curriculum, appropriate resources and facilities, and a competent faculty.
- Accreditation is our promise to our students that you will receive the best education
 possible in journalism and mass communication. With today's technology, anyone can
 present information to a mass audience. But not all are trained in the creation of ethical
 messages that reach and serve diverse audiences that our standards uphold. What you
 learn in an accredited program makes you more marketable and your degree more
 valuable!

The Mayborn School's accreditation is determined by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) through an extensive evaluation process. Accreditation by the ACEJMC council means we embrace the value of a broad, multidisciplinary curriculum that nurtures critical thinking, analytic reasoning and problem-solving skills that are the essential foundation for all mass communication education.

ADOBE ACCESS

UNT now has a new contract with Adobe. The following link contains all the information that students will need to purchase a subscription and opt-out of an existing agreement that is at a higher price: the Adobe general educational offer is \$19.99-\$29.99 per month, our offer is only \$53 (\$50 plus a one-time processing fee of \$3). https://news.evad.unt.edu/adobe-newsLinks to an external site.

Individual Counseling. – Free to UNT Students The email address for students to ask questions or report problems is adobe@unt.edu

JOURNALISM EQUIPMENT CHECK OUT

Checkouts are for 24 hours from the time of checkout, unless specified differently from your assigned professor. Students are authorized to keep checked out equipment for up to 72 hours, depending on the class and the professor's approval. If the student needs equipment for longer than 72 hours, please send an email with approval from your professor to: mayborn-equipment@unt.edu or ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu.

All equipment must be picke dup and returned at a scheduled time within these hours:

• Monday and Wednesday: 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

- Tuesday and Thursday: 9:00 a.m.-9 p.m.
- Friday: 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Saturday and Sunday: Noon to 6:00 p.m.

Anyone who plans to check out equipment during the semester must complete the checkout agreement form. This form should be completed prior to checking out equipment and only needs to be done once per semester. Here's the form:

https://forms.office.com/r/bTSQZuq1Dr?origin=lprLinkLinks to an external site.

The violations listed below will occur if due equipment is not return on the agreed time.

- 1st late infraction 1 week ban from checking out equipment.
- 2nd late infraction 3 weeks ban from checking out equipment.
- 3rd infraction Semester-long ban from any and all equipment checkouts.

If you are going to be late or unable to return equipment that you checked out on time, please email mayborn-equipment@unt.edu or ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu

Equipment room phone number is 940-565-3580.

Equipment room is located in Chilton Hall (410 S. Avenue C), room 155.

ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Understanding the academic organizational structure and appropriate Chain of Command is important when resolving class-related or advising issues. When you need problems resolved, please follow the steps outlined below:

Individual Faculty Member/Advisor - Associate Dean, Mayborn School of Journalism - Dean, Mayborn School of Journalism

OFFICE OF DISABILITY ACCESS

The University of North Texas and the Mayborn School of Journalism make reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time. However, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class.

Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student.

For additional information, see the website for the Office of Disability Access (http://www.unt.edu/odaLinks to an external site.). You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

COURSE SAFETY STATEMENTS

Students in the Mayborn School of Journalism are urged to use proper safety procedures and guidelines. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use property safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the University of North Texas is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance for this insurance program. Brochures for this insurance are available in the UNT Health and Wellness Center on campus. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the UNT Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If you have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, please be sure that your plan covers treatment at this facility. If you choose not to go to the UNT Health and Wellness Center, you may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. You are responsible for expenses incurred there.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or exams; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor, the acquisition of tests or other material belonging to a faculty member, dual submission of a paper or project, resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructors, or any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. Plagiarism includes the paraphrase or direct quotation of published or unpublished works *without* full and clear acknowledgment of the author/source. Academic dishonesty will bring about disciplinary action which may include expulsion from the university. This is explained in the UNT Student Handbook.

See other information in the Course Specific section of the syllabus.

MSOJ ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind – including plagiarism and fabrication – is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school's policy aligns

with UNT Policy 06.003 and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

FINAL EXAM POLICY

Final exams will be administered at the designated times during the final week of each long semester and during the specified day of each summer term. Please check the course calendar early in the semester to avoid any schedule conflicts. See detailed information in the Course Specific section of the syllabus.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

As you know, your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs within the My.UNT site Links to an external site. (www.my.unt.eduLinks to an external site.). If you do not regularly check EagleConnect or link it to your favorite e-mail account, please so do, as this is where you learn about job and internship opportunities, MSOJ events, scholarships, and other important information. Visit the Eagle Connect websiteLinks to an external site. for more information (http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/Links to an external site.) including tips on how to forward your email.

COURSES IN A BOX

Any MSOJ equivalent course from another university must receive prior approval from the MSOJ academic advisor to ensure that all MSOJ degree plan requirements are met. For example, courses that are taken online or from a program that offers course material via CD, booklet, or other manner of correspondence must have prior advisor approval.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR F-1 STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in multiple on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

- (1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
- (2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Advising Office. The UNT International Advising Office has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, students should contact the UNT International Advising Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email international@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION AND PROCEDURES

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials. If Canvas is not accessible during the emergency, contact me via email or phone for more information. Students should confirm that their Eagle Alert contact information is correct via the myUNT portal.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING (SPOT)

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The short SPOT survey will be made available to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. You will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via *IASystem* Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Please look for the email in your UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete your survey. Once you complete the survey you will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT websiteLinks to an external site. (www.spot.unt.eduLinks to an external site.) or email spot@unt.edu. Spots survey dates:

Fall SPOT dates

Term	Survey Administration Dates
<u>8W1</u>	Sept. 30-Oct. 10
<u>8W2</u>	Dec. 2-12
Reg Term	Nov. 18-Dec. 5

ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found on the <u>Dean Of Students</u> websiteLinks to an external site.(www.deanofstudents.unt.eduLinks to an external site.).

CLASSROOM POLICIES

The Mayborn School of Journalism requires that students respect and maintain all university property. Students will be held accountable through disciplinary action for any intentional damages they cause in classrooms. (e.g., writing on tables). Disruptive behavior is not tolerated (e.g., arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, talking on the phone, texting or game playing, making inappropriate comments, ringing cellular phones/beepers, dressing inappropriately).

SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION, HARRASSMENT, AND ASSAULT

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT's Dean of Students' websiteLinks to an external

site. (http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0Links to an external site.) offers a range of oncampus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate, and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

UNT provides mental health services to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

Student Health and Wellness Center

- (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center#programsLinks to an external site.)
- 1800 Chestnut St. (Chestnut Hall)
- 940-565-2333
- M-Th, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Counseling and Testing Services. – Free to UNT Students

- (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-servicesLinks to an external site.)
- 801 N. Texas Blvd., Suite 140 (Gateway Center)
- 940-565-2741

• M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

UNT CARE Team – Free to UNT Students

- https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/careLinks to an external site.
- Dean of Students, University Union
- 940-565-2648
- careteam@unt.edu

Psychiatric Services

- (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatryLinks to an external site.)
- 940-565-2333

Individual Counseling

- (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counselingLinks to an external site.)
- 940-369-8773

If at any time you are feeling alone or in jeopardy of self-harm, reach out to any of the following:

- National Suicide Hotline 800-273-8255
- Denton County MHMR Crisis Line 800-762-0157
- Denton County Friends of the Family Crisis Line (family or intimate partner violence) 940-382-7273
- UNT Mental Health Emergency Contacts
 - o During office hours, M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m: Call 940-565-2741
 - o After hours: Call 940-565-2741
 - o Crisis Line: Text CONNECT to 741741
 - o Live chat: http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/