

University of North Texas

College of Education



EDLE 5610 - School Communications and Public Relations

Course Syllabus

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Catalog Number, Credit Hours — EDLE 5610, 3 hours Fully Online Course using Canvas LMS – AOP Program

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From the UNT Catalog:

Every administrator in an educational organization has a responsibility to engage in public relations on a daily basis. The primary objective of this course is to examine school-based public relations with the context of life in an information age, practice in schools shared decision making, and sustained demands for school improvement. Students study three critical dimensions of school public relations: informing the public; modifying attitudes and opinions; and integrating the actions and attitudes of an organization with those of its public.

PREREQUISITES FOR THIS COURSE

This course assumes that you are currently working in a school setting or have a general knowledge of EC-12 Schools. You should also have a general understanding about the impact of public relations and effective communications on the leadership functions of school administrators. If you do not have a current relationship with a school, it will be necessary to do research and interview people who have knowledge about EC-12 schools. You will need to submit all of the assignments for this course even if you are not working in a school at this time. If you have questions, contact your instructor during the first week of the course.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of the course, you will be able to do the following:

- 1. Describe the public's current perception of American schools.
- 2. Describe the importance of an effective school-community relations plan and distinguish between a centralized plan, a decentralized plan, and a coordinated plan for school and community relations.
- 3. Identify specific ways that school administrators can reach out to parents and the community for engagement with and support for the schools.
- 4. Describe the roles of educators at the district and campus level related to an effective school-community relations program.
- 5. Identify the steps in the communication process and to apply those steps given a scenario.
- 6. Identify barriers to communication and how they might be overcome.
- 7. Identify in writing each of the member groups of a school's Internal Publics (those inside the organization) and describe at least one specific action that can be taken to effectively communicate with each member group.
- 8. Identify and describe in writing the member groups of the school's External Publics (those stakeholders spending most of their time outside of the school's walls) and identify at least three ways or opportunities where information is best communicated to them.
- 9. Describe in detail at least three strategies for enhancing the school's relationship with the news media and their representatives.
- 10. Compare your school's experiences with the best practices identified in the text related to at least one of the following: Open House events, Parent Teacher Conferences, and Convocations and Celebrations.
- 11. Describe the skills and behaviors necessary for the campus administrator who can communicate most effectively with a variety of audiences, in writing and when speaking.
- 12. Demonstrate competencies in written and oral communications, along with judgment in determining priorities when presented with multiple tasks needing responses in a simulated in-basket activity.
- 13. List both benefits and cautions when communicating electronically and using social media as a means for keeping stakeholders informed.
- 14. Describe best practices related to leading during a crisis, including:
 - Designing a Crisis Management Plan
 - Implementing the Plan
 - Communicating during a crisis
 - Dealing with the aftermath of a crisis
- 15. Complete a simulation that creates a Parent and Community Involvement Plan for the school where the student is employed or a fictional or "real" school that meets the criteria for effectiveness that is described in the rubric for the assignment. (You may collaborate with others in the class while working on this assignment.)
- 16. List and describe at least three ways to collect data to evaluate the results of the school-community relations efforts.

Selective Principal Domains and Competencies Addressed

The descriptors below each competency are all important, but the ones with "TExES" in front are crucial skills for an entry-level principal.

Domain I—School Culture (School and Community Leadership)

Competency 002: The entry-level principal knows how to work with stakeholders as key partners to support student learning.

Implements effective strategies to systematically gather input from all campus stakeholders, supporting innovative thinking and an inclusive culture

Uses consensus-building, conflict-management, communication, and information-gathering strategies to involve various stakeholders in planning processes that enable the collaborative development of a shared campus vision and mission focused on teaching and learning

(TExES) Ensures that parents and other members of the community are an integral part of the campus culture

Domain IV—Executive Leadership (Communication and Organizational Management)

Competency 007: The entry-level principal knows how to develop relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including selecting appropriate communication strategies for particular audiences.

(TExES) Understands how to effectively communicate a message in different ways to meet the needs of various audiences

(TExES) Develops and implements strategies for systematically communicating internally and externally

Develops and implements a comprehensive program of community relations that uses strategies that effectively involve and inform multiple constituencies

Establishes partnerships with parents, businesses, and other groups in the community to strengthen programs and support campus goals

Domain V—Strategic Operations (Alignment and Resource Allocation)

Competency 010: The entry-level principal knows how to provide administrative leadership through resource management, policy implementation, and coordination of school operations and programs to ensure a safe learning environment.

(TExES) Applies strategies for ensuring the safety of students and personnel and for addressing emergencies and security concerns, including developing and implementing a crisis plan

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

You will be provided reading materials for each week from the textbook and other sources, along with an introductory narrative for the topics for each week. You also will be provided activities related to the topics and have the opportunity to apply the learning gained each week. I will review and respond to responses to the assignments and discussions. I expect each student to participate fully in order to gain new or enhanced skills or knowledge related to the course objectives.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading assignments

Refer to each week's course Module for the assigned readings for each week.

Textbook

The **textbook** for the course is **School-Community Relations**, **Fifth Ed.**, by Douglas Fiore, published by Routledge.

Assignments

Assignments for each week are described in detail in each week's Module. See the *Course Schedule* in this syllabus and, within the course, each week's *Weekly Overview*, the individual assignments for each week, and the *Calendar*. You will complete two major assignments, the "Principal's In-Basket" and the "Parent and Community Involvement Plan."

Class Discussions

Each weekly module contains its assigned discussions for the week, where you can see all details of the topics for assigned postings, to review the postings of classmates, and to make postings of your own. You are expected to provide substantive responses to the *Discussions AND* respond to the postings of your classmates as assigned. Please read and consider the content of the message before responding. Please extend the readers of your postings the same courtesy you would expect when communicating.

Application of Learning

Every other week will include the opportunity for you to apply learning by investigating or reviewing the topics with your campus or district administrator.

Final exam

There will be a final exam in this course that will provide the opportunity to demonstrate your skills and knowledge gained in the course. The Final Exam will be available to you in advance on Saturday of Week 7, and due the following Friday of Week 8 by 11:59 pm Central time, the last day of the course.

Each student must complete the Final Exam independently. There should be no collaboration with other students in the course. You may use any resources you need to develop substantive and accurate responses to each question or task on the exam.

ASSESSMENT and GRADING

Assessments

This course will use the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course.

- Responses to prompts and classmates in the *Discussions* conversations
- Responses to Assignments
- Responses to Application of Learning exercises, in the form of both discussions and assignments
- Two major assignments
- Online final exam

Assignment Submission Instructions

Assignments requiring compositions should be saved in either Word or PDF format and submitted by the deadline noted in each assignment found in each week's module or from *Assignments* on the course menu.

Grading Procedure

Grades will be determined by the following points:

Item	Number	Points Each	Points Available
Weekly Discussions	8	10	80
Weekly Assignments	5	10	50
Bi-Weekly Application Assignments	4	10	40
Major Assignment: Week 5 Principal's In-basket Activity	1	60	60
Major Assignment: Week 7 Parent and Community Involvement Plan	1	60	60

Final Exam	1	60	60
TOTAL			350

Grade	А	В	С	F
Points Earned	315 - 350	280 - 315	245 - 280	Below 245

Accessing Grades

You will see all of your grades by selecting *Grades* from the course navigation menu.

- You can see my comments and feedback by clicking on the comment icon to the right of your grade.
- You can view the rubric for assignments by clicking the square icon on the far right of an activity's row.
- Grades will typically be visible by the week following their due date, unless I notify you otherwise.
- See the Canvas Student Guide for information and instructions on *Grades* features (available in text and video).

COURSE SCHEDULE

- The course officially begins on Monday of Week 1, and concludes on Friday of Week 8

 a total of eight weeks in length.
- You will find the activities for each week (readings, assignments, discussions, etc.) within each week's Module.
- Due dates for assignments are normally by Sunday 11:59 pm Central time of each week. For example, assignments for Week 1 are due no later than 11:59 pm Central time on the Sunday of Week 1.
- Your initial weekly discussion postings are normally due no later than Wednesday night, with conversations occurring throughout the week on different days and concluding Sunday night of each week.
- Please note: If your time zone differs, please adjust your submissions to Central time or your submission could be considered late.

Each week's module contains most of these elements:

- Weekly Overview
- Learning Objectives
- Readings
- Assignment
- Discussion
- Application of Learning

Areas of Focus for Each Week

Week One Required Reading

Course orientation, Course Overview, Syllabus Principal Standards and Principal Testing Requirements Information on Advising, Degree and Certification Plan, Graduation, Internship

Week One "Orientation to Course and Engaging the School Community"

Welcome, Building Community
Framework for Texas Principal Competencies
Texas Educator Code of Ethics

Most Recent Kappan article with polling results of the public perception of schools

Week Two "Everyone can be an Effective School Communicator"

Week Three "Working Effectively with Internal and External Publics"

Week Four "Working with Media Organizations and Special Events"

Week Five "Effective Written and Oral Communications"

Activities for this week include submission of the first major assignment for the course – "Principal's In-Basket Activity."

Week Six "Communicating Electronically in the Era of Social Media"

Week Seven "The School-Community Relations Plan and Effective Communications in Crisis Situations"

Activities for this week include submission of the second major course assignment — "Parent and Community Involvement Plan.

Week Eight "Putting It All Together"

Assignments for this week include the completion of the Final Exam for the course.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Access and Log in Information

This course was developed and utilizes the University of North Texas' Learning Management System, Canvas. To get started with the course, please go to: https://canvas.unt.edu. You will log in using your EUID and password to log in. If you do not know your EUID or have forgotten your password, please go to: http://ams.unt.edu.

How to Proceed Each Week for Class Activities

After you have read the Start Here section within Modules, then continue on to the Week 1 module. All assignments, resources, and links to other areas and sites are contained within each week's module. You should access your Canvas course daily to read announcements and discussions, and work on assignments required for the course.

COMMUNICATIONS

Review this information about the communication tools in the course and how we will use them:

- For all course-related questions, please read this syllabus carefully before seeking assistance.
- Use your *Inbox* from the dark gray global menu for all private electronic communications with me. You can expect a response from me within 24-hours of sending a message. If your concern is urgent, please call by phone or leave a message.
- For assignment clarification questions, see the *Ask Questions Here* discussion, located on the *Home* page.
- Our program teaching assistant, Kira Dehnel, is available for technical help and monitors the Ask Questions Here discussion. For urgent needs, use your course *Inbox* to contact her (Kira.Dehnel@unt.edu).
- Dr. Linda Stromberg is your advisor, and Marilyn Deuble is our Student Services coordinator. If you have advising questions, contact linda.stromberg@unt.edu or marilyn.deuble@unt.edu.

Announcements

Please check the course *Announcements* each day for updated information and changes. You'll find a link to the latest announcement at the top of the course Home page, and Announcements are also auto-emailed to students' EagleConnect address. You MUST NOT disable your Canvas Notification Preferences for Announcements or Administrative Notifications or risk missing critical information.

Course Communication via EagleConnect

When I post an announcement or send you email using the Canvas *Inbox* tool, it will also automatically be emailed to you through the EagleConnect Email System. Replies you make

to email sent from the course will also return and display in your course *Inbox*. You must activate and regularly check your EagleConnect email account. EagleConnect is used for official communication from the University to students and many important announcements are sent to you via EagleConnect. See EagleConnect for information, including how to activate an account and how to have EagleConnect forwarded to another email address.

Course Evaluation

The Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is expected for all organized classes at UNT. This brief online survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Please respond as soon as feasible after you receive your message. Your anonymous feedback is essential to me as I work to continually improve my teaching and online course design. I consider the SPOT to be an important part of your participation in this class. You will receive an invitation to complete the SPOT toward the end of the course. The message will come through your UNT EagleConnect mail account.

Accessibility

It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course or encounter any barriers, please let me know immediately so we can determine what design changes are possible.

TECHNICAL INFO AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

Minimum Technical Skills Needed

Navigating and using basic tools of Canvas
Using email and attaching documents
Creating, saving, and submitting files in DOC and PDF formats
Use of Zoom for synchronous class meetings or office hours, as assigned

Canvas Information

Canvas student guide featuring text and video instructions for look-up or learning Technical requirements and information on browser compatibility, mobile app resources, and mobile device compatibility

Student Technical Support

After logging into your Canvas course, click the *Help* icon on the bottom of the Global Navigation menu (the dark column on the left border of your browser window), which provides links to these resources:

Student Helpdesk — See contact details or submit a ticket
Online Student Resources
Ask Your Instructor a Question — Questions are emailed to your instructor
Search the Canvas Guides — Find guides and look up answers

UNT Student Helpdesk

Make a note of this information now in case of a situation where you can't login to the course.

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu Phone, email, ticket, or chat

Phone: 940.565-2324 support:

Chat: UIT Help Desk Live Chat Monday—Thursday: 8 am—9 pm

Site: UIT Help desk Friday: 8 am–5 pm
Help: Submit a Help Request Saturday: 11 am–3 pm
Sunday: 12 pm–9 pm

Additional Support Resources

Graduate Student Support Services of the Toulouse Graduate School CLEAR Online Student Resources
UNT UIT Helpdesk
Change or update your AMS password
UNT Portal

UNT Library Information

On and Off-Campus Users

For assistance, please contact our College of Education librarian, Jo Monahan at Jo.Monahan@unt.edu or 940.565.3955.

ADVISING INFORMATION

Educational Leadership Master's Degree, Principal as Instructional Leader Certification, and Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TEXES)

Please read the Week 1 Required Readings pages Advising Information about the Master's Degree and Certification and Principal Certification and Principal Testing Requirements. These pages have important information and deadlines that will help you as you complete degree and certification requirements. Also, you can find our Educational Leadership Master's Handbook there. Please read that thoroughly. The Handbook and Week 1 pages have information and deadlines that will help you as you complete degree and certification requirements.

Degree/Certification Plan

If you have not already submitted a degree/certification plan, submit that right away. You are required to submit that within your first class, and you have to have it on file before you can take the TExES exam, do the Internship, or graduate. Fill out the top part of the plan. **Do not fill in the courses you have taken or plan to take. We will fill those in as you complete the courses**. At the very top of the plan, check off Principal as Instructional Leader Certification (see requirements below for Certification), Master's Degree, or both. Send the plan to Marilyn.deuble@unt.edu.

If you already have a master's degree and are just getting principal certification, you will need to take six regular courses and one full semester internship, for a total of seven classes. The degree/certification plan has asterisks beside the ones we generally use for certification, but we can have some flexibility in course choice. If you have questions, contact your advisor at linda.stromberg@unt.edu or our Student Services Coordinator, Marilyn.deuble@unt.edu. You can download a blank degree/certification plan from the Advising Information about the Master's Degree page at the top of the course Week 1 module.

See the ETS PASL site, where you can learn about the TEXES 268 for Principal as Instructional Leader certification.

See the ETS PASL overview site for information about the PASL.

Graduation

Deadlines for application to graduate are very early each semester. It is your responsibility to apply for graduation. You have to apply even if there is no ceremony, or if you are not going to attend the ceremony. You can find the application by going to the Graduation Information page and following the link under "Apply to Graduate." The deadline for the spring Graduation is **February 15.** See the Information for Graduates page for details.

See the information above about submitting a degree plan. If you are ready to graduate and have not submitted a degree plan, your graduation application will be delayed. Remember that you must have at least a 3.0 to graduate. Also, if you have any courses with grades of D or F, you will have to retake those courses and earn a passing grade.

You can graduate once you have completed the 10 courses for the Master's degree. You can do the internship during your master's or after you have graduated.

Principal Internship

For the Texas Principal as Instructional Leader Certificate, you will need to do a one semester Principal Internship, EDLE 5500, at the end of your Master's classes. You must apply in advance. The due dates to apply are October 1 for spring and March 1 for fall. We no longer offer the summer internship. You have already missed the deadline for fall, but, if you wish to do the Internship in the fall, we may be able to accept some late applications. Send in your application immediately. The internship is a 3-hour class, with tuition.

If you graduate with your degree before the Internship, you become a certification-only student, and you are not eligible for financial aid. There is a Graduate Academic Certificate Program you can apply for with the Graduate School that may help with financial aid eligibility during the Internship. Contact marilyn.deuble@unt.edu to learn about that. However, as with all financial aid, you have to be enrolled in 2 classes, and, most of the time, you only have the internship left to finish your certification. The internship is very time-consuming, especially with the PASL requirements; so being enrolled in only one class is very helpful.

You can read about the Internship and get a blank Internship application by looking on the Certification Page at the beginning of Week 1 or by looking in our Educational Leadership Handbook. Send your internship application to Marilyn.deuble@unt.edu.

DEPARTMENT AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Eagle Connect

All official correspondence between UNT and students is conducted via Eagle Connect and it is the student's responsibility to read Eagle Connect email regularly. See details at the EagleConnect Email System site.

Disabilities Accommodation

"The University of North Texas complies with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The University of North Texas provides academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to individuals with disabilities, as defined under the law. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please see the instructor and/or contact the Office of Disability Accommodation at 940-565-4323 during the first week of class." Dr. Barbara Pazey is the compliance officer and contact person for the Department of Teacher Education and Administration.

Grade of Incomplete

The only time an instructor in our College can give an incomplete is if a student is passing the course, but has a severe illness/situation during the last third of the course. The student must submit a form requesting an incomplete and provide documentation supporting the need for an Incomplete. Students can get these forms by contacting Marilyn Deuble, our Student Services Coordinator, at marilyn.deuble@unt.edu.

Progress in Class/Dropping a Class

If you are having difficulties with assignments or the pace of the class, please keep in touch with your instructor through the course Inbox in the class. If you think you might need to drop the class, be sure you keep track of the last dates you can drop a class. You can find these dates on the UNT Registrar's site. If, by dropping a class, you will not be enrolled in any classes during an 8-week period, you will need to withdraw from the university. Don't worry, you can come back during the next 8 week period or semester. To withdraw, you have to contact the Dean of Students, deanofstudents@unt.edu. That office will send you a link to some paperwork. Send that back right away.

If you are dropping a class, be sure you do that through the registrar. Just telling your instructor or the Educational Leadership office that you are dropping is not sufficient. Also, please be aware that dropping classes may affect financial aid. However, if you are going to drop or withdraw, be sure you do it as soon as you know that is what you plan to do. If you

stay in the class until the end, but have not submitted assignments, your instructor will have to give you a failing grade.

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. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be referred to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct.

Virtual Classroom Citizenship

The same guidelines that apply to traditional classes should be observed in the virtual classroom environment. Please use proper netiquette when interacting with class members and the professor. For instance, when responding to individuals, address them by their name before beginning your commentary.

Copyright Notice

Some or all of the materials on this course site may be protected by copyright. You may use the materials for the duration of the course only, and may not re-use them for other purposes when the course ends. Federal copyright law prohibits the reproduction, distribution, public performance, or public display of copyrighted materials without the express and written permission of the copyright owner, unless fair use or another exemption under copyright law applies. Additional copyright information can be located here Copyright Advisory Services site.

Writing Policy

Educators are judged on the accuracy of everything they write, whether it is a letter to parents or an email to a colleagues or staff. Your written products – including, but not limited to, papers, letters, and email – should include appropriate and accurate spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, format, and English usage. You should expect that all assignments will be evaluated on these writing skills, in addition to any other expectations of a particular assignment. **Activities in this class, including discussions, have high expectations for effective written communication skills.** The UNT Writing Lab (Sage Hall 152) offers one-on-one consultation to assist students with their writing assignments. To use this resource, call 940-565-2563 or visit the writing center.

Observation of Religious Holidays

If you plan to observe a religious holy day that interferes with a class assignment, please notify your instructor as soon as possible.

Ethical Behavior and Code of Ethics

The Teacher Education and Administration Department expects that its students will abide by the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators (Chapter 247 of the Texas Administrative Code) and as outlined in Domain IV: Fulfilling Professional Roles and

Responsibilities of the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES); and as also addressed in codes of ethics adopted by professionals in the education field such as the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to become familiar with UNT's policy on Student Standards of Academic Integrity. Academic dishonesty, in the form of plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication, will not be tolerated in this class. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported, and a penalty determined, which may be probation, suspension, or expulsion from the university.

Cheating and Plagiarism Policy

The UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline provides penalties for misconduct by students, including academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism. The term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to, (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; and (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use of the published or unpublished work of another person, by paraphrase or direct quotation, without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

If a student engages in academic dishonesty related to this class, the student will receive a failing grade on the test or assignment and a failing grade in the course. In addition, the case may be referred to the Dean of Students for appropriate disciplinary action.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR F-1 STUDENTS

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

Federal Regulation

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the at Electronic Code of Federal Regulations site. The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or

computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

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 an 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 Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS 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, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940565-2195 or email.

This syllabus is subject to change with notice publicized by course announcement and EagleConnect email.