**COURSE CODE:** ISC 3339  
**COURSE TITLE:** Introduction to Public Relations

**CREDITS:** 3cr.

**SESSION:** Winter 2016  
**PROFESSOR:** Stephen A Stuart PhD  
ssstuart@ustpaul.ca  
Guiges 269  
Office Hours: by appointment

**DESCRIPTION**
This course will explore the history, theory and practice of public relations in society. The role of public relations within Western society will be examined, as will the techniques used by organizations to communicate with external audiences, media relations, and the notion of establishing and maintaining corporate image. Specifically, this course will look at the development of public relations through the twentieth century and explore various possible definitions, theoretical approaches, and key concepts that allow the practice to burgeon in today’s complex environment. The course will also illustrate the techniques used in the practice to adequately target relevant stakeholder groups. Finally, it provides methods for evaluation of public relations that fit into the scope of intervention of social communications.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
This course aims to familiarize students with the approaches and methods of public relations and define the basic concepts used by practitioners. It seeks to develop their ability to identify issues of public relations and understand the workings of the industry and its current dynamic. The course will enable students to actively participate in public relations projects. In particular, students will:
- Understand the nature and evolution of the two main roles of public relations: (i) the management of organizational image, and (ii) establishing and maintaining bilateral communication links between an organization and its publics.
- Master the basic techniques of public relations.
- Adapt the methods of evaluation of public relations concept of social communications.
- Develop critical thinking in relation to the practice of public relations.

**SCHEDULE**

**Week 1** – 12 Jan: Introduction, overview, and evaluations.  


**Week 6** – 16 Feb: Study Week: No Class.

**Week 7** – 23 Feb: Public Relations in Practice: Presenting, Pitching, Public Speaking –
The assessment integrates all elements taught in the course and relates to all the learning objectives.

There are several distinct elements to the overall assessment:

1. Attendance and Active Participation (10%) – Preparation for participation in class is essential: all required reading must have been completed prior to the class.
2. In weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, and 12 there will be a discussion focusing on the required reading. Each student will be required to contribute to the debate to demonstrate his or her understanding of the paper and its relevance to the modern world of PR.

In particular, one student each week will be selected to make a formal presentation on the substance of the paper, highlighting its main points: this presentation will form the basis of the ensuing discussion. Students not presenting must submit a 1-page summary of the paper in class (25%)

3. In weeks 1, 8, 9, and 11 a documentary film will be shown. Each student must submit a 4-page critique of the film clearly stating the objective of the film and detailing how the film attempted to achieve its aim (20%)

4. The final paper (45%) will select a real event (natural or corporate) where the ethical nature of PR comes under scrutiny. Students will identify the key issues and describe how they were dealt with by the PR company. They will then identify the ethical issues and propose alternate courses of action the company could have taken.

Hand-in: 8th April @ 17:00 via e-mail to sstuart@ustpaul.ca
Submitted papers will be 10 pages long, 1.5 spaced, 12 point. Margins 2.5”.

The quality of your written work is an important element of the overall evaluation. Such work is evaluated on the basis of the criteria below. No separate mark is given for each criterion; approximate percentages are given here as a general indication of their relative weight.

A – Clarity, relevance, depth and accuracy of content: c. 40%.
B – Structure and logic of the presentation: c. 20%.
C – Quality of writing: c. 20%.
D – Critical apparatus (bibliography, notes, support material, etc.): c. 10%.
E – Visual presentation: c. 10%.
| **TIMETABLE** | Tuesday 09:00 – 12:00 |
| **LOCATION** | Guiges 1140 |

**TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

- The course is based mainly on lectures and discussions based on a series of journal articles in association with material from the key texts. A series of critical documentary films will also be screened to help inform the discussions.
- The articles will be available on BlackBoard Learn.
- Students are required to participate in the discussion during class based on the readings.
- Additional multimedia material will be presented in class to facilitate a broad-based critical discussion on the nature of public relations.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

- Please make yourselves familiar with:
  - And also the guidelines and regulations surrounding academic fraud, and, in particular, plagiarism: [http://www.uottawa.ca/administration-and-governance/academic-regulation-14-other-important-information](http://www.uottawa.ca/administration-and-governance/academic-regulation-14-other-important-information)