



JOUR 428: Social, Legal and Ethical Foundations of PR
4 Units

Fall 2014—Tuesdays 2:00-5:20 pm

Section: 21240D

Location: ANN408

Instructor: Laura Min Jackson, MSOD

Office: ANN – location TBD

Office Hours: By appointment on Tuesdays, 1:00-2:00 pm

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I. Course Description

As the field of Strategic Public Relations continues to grow in size, complexity, and the ability to interact directly and on a two-way basis without mass media intermediaries, practitioners must be increasingly cognizant of their responsibilities to society at large, the legal and regulatory environment in which they function, and the ethical standards and decision-making processes on which they must rely. JOUR 428 provides an applied, working understanding of those interconnecting concepts and responsibilities, with an emphasis on personal decision making.

Prerequisites: JOUR 250

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

This course explores principles and concepts of legal, ethical and social issues that a PR professional may encounter during their career. Through reading and written assignments, in-class exercises and discussion, lectures, supplemental learning through readings/multimedia materials, reflective and other learning activities, and group presentation(s), this course is intended to:

- Help students understand fundamental U.S. legal concepts in media and communications
- Enable students to develop an understanding of principles of moral reasoning and ethical problem-solving/decision-making
- Offer experiential and reflective opportunities for students to explore their personal values and ethical perspectives
- Examine concepts related to social responsibility programs, and provide an opportunity to develop social media/marketing recommendations

III. Assignments and Assessment

- **Ethics Food For Thought Briefs (15%):** 1-2 page written analyses of and recommendations pertaining to recent/current "real life" events or issues involving ethical, legal, or social aspects of public relations. Details will be discussed in class.
- **Journal Summaries (15%):** The study of ethics and comprehension of our own standards for moral behavior can be enhanced through self-reflection; ergo, you will be asked to regularly record your thoughts and feelings associated with select assignments (based on either your own personal/professional experience or that of others), and submit brief summaries. Guidelines for Journal Summaries will be provided in class.
- **Mid Term Paper/Presentation (20%):** Write and be prepared to discuss a 500-750 word paper in which you:
 - Describe, analyze, and compare the Codes of Ethics of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ).
 - Develop your own personal Code of Ethics.
 - Present a summary of your personal Code of Ethics in class.

- **Final Group Presentation (25%):** Working in small groups, you will research, write and deliver a presentation in which you demonstrate critical thinking and apply concepts you have learned in class, by analyzing a current or recent situation in which an organization faced ethical challenges having reputational implications. Additional details will be discussed in class.
 - **Final Paper/Blog Submission (20%):** Students will be able to choose from several different topics, and will be asked to write a long-form blog articles of 750 words, demonstrating critical thinking and applying concepts learned in class by analyzing an ethical and/or legal challenge faced by an organization. Additional details will be discussed in class.
 - **Class Discussion/Participation/Case Study (10%):** It is important to attend class and actively participate, since class activities and interaction with peers encourage creative dialogue and diversity of perspective, and help enhance your learning. It is expected that you will come to class having read the assignment(s) and prepared to join class discussions, contributing questions and comments about the materials. Classes begin promptly, so please arrive on time. If you are unable to attend class for some reason, please notify me as soon as possible, and assume personal responsibility for gathering notes from other classmates.
 - **For the weekly Case Study, students will be asked to identify and summarize a current situation in which an organization is grappling with some kind of legal/ethical/social challenge. Additional details regarding these presentations will be discussed in class.**
- At the end of the semester, points will be allocated based upon:
- ✓ Consistent demonstration that students have read the material for scheduled class discussion
 - ✓ Contribution to class discussion; answering questions, asking relevant questions
 - ✓ Demonstrating respect for fellow classmates, guest speakers, and instructor (including appropriate use of personal technologies during classroom time)
 - ✓ Mature classroom behavior that supports learning

IV. Grading & Evaluation

Following is a breakdown of the contributions made to the final grade by each assignment.

Assignment	% of Grade	Points
Ethics Food For Thought Briefs (4)	15%	60
Journal Summaries (4)	15%	60
Mid Term Paper/Presentation	20%	80
Final Group Presentation	25%	100
Final Paper/Blog Submission	15%	60
Class Discussion/Participation	10%	40
TOTAL	100%	400

The Grading Scale for this class is based on the following percentages:

A+: 97-100	C+: 77-79
A: 94-96	C: 74-76
A-: 90-93	C-: 70- 73
B+: 87-89	D+: 67-69
B: 84-86	D: 65-66
B-: 80-83	F: 0-64

Written Materials Rubric

As PR practitioners, we strive for impeccable quality, and materials will be evaluated against that aspiration. All written materials should represent your best quality work, and reflect proper editing, grammar, spelling, and formatting. Students who struggle with language, grammar, spelling, or writing should meet with the Annenberg School's designated Writing Coaches (details posted on Blackboard). With the exception of the Journal Summaries, written materials will earn points based on overall quality, encompassing: (1) proper organization, style and presentation; (2) appropriate research and citation of sources; (3) demonstration of sound PR judgment; (4) creativity; and (5) timely submission. Journal Summaries will be graded on full/half/no credit, as they are intended primarily for personal reflection.

Confidentiality

In this class, case studies and projects of a sensitive nature are likely to be discussed; unless already public, the information is considered confidential and should not be shared outside of the classroom without the explicit consent of the person(s) involved.

Research, Attribution And Citation

On occasion, students may be asked to prepare materials on topics with which they have little knowledge. Many online resources are available to provide assistance, and thorough secondary research is encouraged. Please note, however, that the largely subjective nature of "wiki's" makes them unacceptable primary resources for this course. Additionally, all public relations writers must learn to create original work, and inappropriate use of existing resources/materials – including failure to provide proper citation and attribution, verbatim usage of other materials, presenting existing material as one's original work, lack of proper citation, and/or similar practices – may be construed as an act of plagiarism, and subject to the university's disciplinary policy on acts of academic dishonesty (see below).

V. Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.

- A. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments must be formatted as PDFs and submitted via email to laurajac@usc.edu on or before the respective deadline.
- B. All assignments will be discussed in class, *and* written instructions will be posted on Blackboard in the "Assignments" folder.

VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials/Resources

- Fitzpatrick, Kathy and Bronstein, Carolyn (ed.). (2006). Ethics in Public Relations – Responsible Advocacy. Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE Publications. ISBN: 1-4129-1798-0
- Block, Peter (2002). The Answer to How is Yes. San Francisco. Berrett-Koehler, ISBN: 1-57675-168-6
- Additional content from handouts, multimedia/websites, and other sources.
- **Blackboard** – Announcements, assignments, lecture PowerPoint slides, supplemental readings, interim Gradebook scores, and other information will be posted on the site for this class. It is the student's responsibility to download slides, supplemental readings and assignments that are posted on this class' Blackboard Site. Announcements and important information may be communicated to students via Blackboard's email function. It is the student's responsibility to check the email account associated with Blackboard for updates, assignments, and new information. The instructor will communicate exclusively through this email account.

VII. Laptop Policy

Effective fall 2014, all undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors will be required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the Annenberg [Virtual Commons](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

Add/Drop Dates for 15-week courses

September 12: Last day to register and add classes

September 12: Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund

September 16: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund

November 14: Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W"

***For shortened/condensed courses (e.g.: 7-week courses), please find your course on the [Fall 2014 Schedule of Classes](#) and click the "Info" button for different add/drop dates.**

VIII. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Topics by Week (subject to change)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title of Topic(s)</u>	<u>Readings/Assignments</u>
Aug. 26	Course Overview, Expectations & Introductions	None
Sept. 2	"From the Ancients to PR Today" Philosophical Foundations of Ethics A Critical View of PR & Media Practices	Fitzpatrick & Bronstein (F&B) – Ch. 1 Supplemental Reading(s) (posted on Blackboard)
Sept. 9	Industry Codes of Ethics & Working With Activist Publics <i>FFT #1 Due</i>	F&B - Ch. 4 Supplemental Reading(s)
Sept. 16	Responsible Advocacy for Nonprofits <i>J-SUMM #1 Due</i>	F&B - Ch. 5 Supplemental Reading(s)
Sept. 23	Personal, Professional & Organizational Values	Supplemental Reading(s) / Assessments
Sept. 30	Ethical Decision-Making Models	Supplemental Reading(s)
Oct. 7	Responsibility and Accountability & Cultural Considerations in Ethics <i>FFT #2 Due</i>	F&B - Ch. 2, 3 & 10 Supplemental Reading(s)

Oct. 14	MID-TERM PRESENTATIONS “Values-Based Recommendations” <i>Group Presentations/In-class Experiential</i>	
Oct. 21	Legal Issues in PR/Communications I <i>J-SUMM #2 Due</i>	Supplemental Reading(s)
Oct. 28	Legal Issues in PR/Communications II <i>FFT #3 Due</i>	Supplemental Reading(s)
Nov. 4	Legal Issues in PR/Communications III <i>J-SUMM #3 Due</i>	F&B - Ch. 7 Supplemental Reading(s)
Nov. 11	Corporate Social Responsibility	Supplemental Reading(s)
Nov. 18	Truth and Transparency	F&B - Ch. 6 Supplemental Reading(s)
Nov. 25	Crisis & Strategic Risk Communications <i>FFT #4 Due</i>	F&B – Ch. 8 Supplemental Reading(s)
Dec. 2	FINAL PRESENTATIONS	
Dec. 9	FINAL PAPER DUE	

CHANGES TO SYLLABUS: This syllabus is subject to change. Announcements in class take precedence over any other communication.

IX. Policies and Procedures

A. Plagiarism

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Please see the *SCampus* (<http://scampus.usc.edu/1300-academic-integrity-review/>) for the university's Student Conduct Code.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

"Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an 'F' on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism." All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators."

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

B. Additional Policies

Instructor: Add any additional policies specific to your class that students should be aware of: missed classes, attendance expectations, checking USC e-mail, use of technology in the classroom, dress code, etc.

C. Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office.

The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned in to the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

D. Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP:

http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

E. Stress Management

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

F. Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

X. About Your Instructor

Laura Min Jackson is an award-winning communications pro who's worked with global corporations, start-ups and nationally-ranked PR agencies. Her independent consultancy clients include **Beckman Coulter; Miocean; Össur** and **Sony Pictures Entertainment Corp.**

Laura was VP/Global Communications for **Baxter Healthcare** and **Edwards Lifesciences**, overseeing Corporate Branding; Internal Communications; Media and Community Relations and Crisis Management, as well as the \$50 million nonprofit **Edwards Lifesciences Fund.**

Previously, she was SVP/West Coast Director of the national Healthcare practice at **Porter/Novelli**. As VP at PainePR, she specialized in Healthcare and Crisis Communications, and helped grow the agency from a 2-person operation to a nationally ranked firm. She also worked at **Burson-Marsteller**, and in the Government and Nonprofit sectors.

Laura earned her M.S. in Organization Development from Pepperdine University, and her bachelor's in Communications/PR from Cal State Fullerton. In addition to teaching at USC, she's been a consultant, guest speaker and facilitator for public health, educational and policy organizations worldwide.

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