

LEGAL, ETHICAL AND SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF STRATEGIC PR (JOUR 510)

Schedule # 21499D 1500-1740 ASC 230

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office Hours: By Appointment on Thursdays
immediately before class; *please call at least 24 hours
in advance*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Explores the origins, effects of, and processes for adhering to the complex network of legal, ethical and social responsibilities of the contemporary PR practitioner. (*Source: USC Catalog*)

PRIMARY COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING GOALS

This course explores principles and concepts of legal, ethical and social issues that a PR professional may encounter during their career. The 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 and decision-making
- Offer experiential and reflective opportunities for students to explore their personal values and ethical perspectives
- Examine concepts related to PR and social responsibility, and provide an opportunity to develop strategic PR recommendations for an organization dealing with significant legal, ethical and/or social challenges

COURSE ACTIVITIES

During the semester, students will participate in:

- Class discussion and interactive/experiential exercises
- Supplemental learning through readings/multimedia presentations beyond the assigned text
- Written assignments, including reflective writings and papers
- Interaction with guest lecturers
- A group presentation (summarized below; details will be discussed in class)

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- TEXT: Fitzpatrick, Kathy and Bronstein, Carolyn (ed.). (2006). Ethics in Public Relations – Responsible Advocacy. Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE Publications. ISBN: 1-4129-1798-0.
- TEXT: Buckley, Christopher. (2006). Thank You For Smoking: A Novel. New York. Random House. ISBN: 0812976525.
- Additional content to be provided as handouts, from multimedia/websites, and other sources.

COURSE RESOURCES

- **Blackboard** – Announcements, assignments, lecture PowerPoint slides, supplemental readings, cool resources, interim Gradebook scores, and other information will be posted on the site for this class.

GRADING POLICIES

The Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism requires a minimum grade of C (2.0) in a course to receive graduate credit. Work graded C- or below is not acceptable for subject or unit credit toward any master's or doctoral program. A grade point average of at least B (3.0) on all units attempted at USC toward a graduate degree is required for graduation, whether or not all such units are applied toward the degree.

BASIS FOR GRADING

A total of 675 points is available in this class, allocated as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>	<u>% of Grade</u>
Food For Thought (4)	100	15%
Journal Summaries (3)	45	6%
Application Assignment (Mid-Term)	100	15%
Final Project	200	30%
Group Contribution	30	4%
Final Paper	100	15%
Class Discussion/Participation	<u>100</u>	<u>15%</u>
TOTAL	675	100%

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

“Food For Thought” (15%): You will be asked to submit written assignments related to specified events and/or issues involving public relations. Details will be discussed in class.

Journal Summaries (6%): The study of ethics and comprehension of our own standards for moral behavior can be enhanced through self reflection; as such, you will be asked to regularly record your thoughts and feelings associated with select assignments, and submit brief summaries in this regard. Guidelines for J-Summ's will be provided during class.

Application Assignment (15%): You will be asked to demonstrate critical thinking and apply concepts you have learned to a designated situation, which will be outlined in class.

Final Project - Strategy PR/Social Media Program Recommendations/Presentation (30%): You will be asked participate with your colleagues in a group project, creating a strategic *social marketing* program of PR recommendations for an organization that is facing a significant legal, ethical and/or social issue. All team members will be expected to participate in developing and presenting the final proposal. Details will be discussed in class.

Group Contribution (4%): Your contributions to the research and development of the final Project/Presentations will be assessed and up to 30 individual points, which will be allocated according to a peer evaluation process.

Final Paper (15%): You will be asked to submit a final paper on a topic that requires consideration of legal, social and ethical issues in public relations, and that reflects your critical thinking and comprehension of key concepts presented during the course. Details will be discussed in class.

Class Discussion/Participation (15%): You are expected to attend all classes and actively participate, since class activities and interaction with peers encourage creative dialogue and diversity of perspective, and will help enhance learning for yourself and others. It is expected that students 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. At the end of the semester, points will be allocated to students based upon:

- Contribution to class discussion; demonstrating familiarity with the scheduled class topic and material; answering questions; asking relevant questions; actively participating in experiential learning exercises; minimizing distraction by limiting technology usage strictly to note-taking or real-time in class assignments.
- Demonstrating respect for fellow classmates, guest speakers, and instructor
- Mature classroom behavior that supports learning

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. With the exception of the J-Summs, written materials will earn points based on overall quality, encompassing: (1) proper organization, style and presentation; (2) appropriate research and proper 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 encouraging 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, you may be asked to prepare materials on topics with which you have little knowledge. Many online resources are available to assist you, and thorough secondary research is encouraged. Please note, however, that the largely subjective nature of "wiki's" makes them unacceptable 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, 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).

HONESTY/PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

1. USC 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. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located at <http://scampus.usc.edu/university-governance>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The review process can be found at <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS>

2. School of Journalism Plagiarism/Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or content from another and presenting them as one's own. The following is the School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalogue:

"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 and the school's academic integrity committee.

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.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The office is located in the Student Union room 301, and their phone number is 213-740-0776.

INTERSHIPS

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 who undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to one percent of the total available semester points for this course.

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.

Students will be expected to demonstrate appropriate use of technology (e.g., non-disruptive and related only to the content being discussed in class). Class content may NOT be recorded without instructor/speaker's prior consent.

CLASS SCHEDULE—Topics by Week (subject to change)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title of Topic(s)</u>	<u>Readings/Assignments</u>
Aug. 28	Course Overview, Expectations & Introductions	None
Sept. 4	“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. 11	Working With Activist Publics <i>FFT #1 Due</i>	F&B - Ch. 4 Supplemental Reading(s)
Sept. 18	Responsible Advocacy for Nonprofits <i>J-SUMM #1 Due</i>	F&B - Ch. 5 Supplemental Reading(s)
Sept. 25	Personal, Professional & Organizational Values	Supplemental Reading(s) / Assessments
Oct. 2	Ethical Decision-Making Models	Supplemental Reading(s)
Oct. 9	Responsibility and Accountability & Cultural Considerations in Ethics <i>FFT #2 Due</i>	F&B - Ch. 2, 3 & 10 Supplemental Reading(s)
Oct. 16	MID-TERM PRESENTATIONS “Values-Based Recommendations” <i>Group Presentations & In-class Experiential</i>	
Oct. 23	Legal Issues in PR/Communications <i>J-SUMM #2 Due</i>	Supplemental Reading(s)
Oct. 30	Legal & Ethical Issues in Social Media <i>FFT #3 Due</i>	F&B - Ch. 7 Supplemental Reading(s)
Nov. 6	Corporate Social Responsibility <i>Thank You For Smoking</i> <i>J-SUMM #3 Due</i>	Supplemental Reading(s) Buckley (optional) or DVD
Nov. 13	VIRTUAL CLASS: Crisis & Strategic Risk Communications	F&B – Ch. 8 Supplemental Reading(s)

Nov. 20	Truth and Transparency <i>FFT #4 Due</i>	F&B - Ch. 6
Nov. 27	THANKSGIVING BREAK	<i>Enjoy Your Break!</i>
Dec. 5	The Corporate (or Client) Conscience FINAL PRESENTATIONS	Supplemental Reading(s)
Dec. 12	FINAL PAPER DUE	

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

Instructor Bio

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.