



## **JOUR (510): Legal, Ethical & Social Foundations of Strategic PR**

**3.0 Units**

**Fall 2015—Thursdays 3:00 – 5:40 pm**

**Section:** 21500D

**Location:** ASC 328

**Instructor:** Laura Min Jackson, MSOD

**Office:** Adjunct Lounge, ANN 306

**Office Hours:** 2-3 p.m. on Thursdays and by Appointment

\*24 hours' notice required

**Contact Info:** [laurajac@usc.edu](mailto:laurajac@usc.edu); (714) 745-9526

### **I. 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)

### **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. 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

### **III. Description of Assignments**

During the semester, students will be participating 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)

### **IV. Grading Breakdown**

A total of 700 points is available in this class, allocated as follows:

	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>% of Grade</b>
Food For Thought (4)	100	14%
Journal Summaries (3)	60	9%
Application Assignment (Midterm)	100	14%
Final Project	200	29%
Group Contribution	40	6%
Final Paper	100	14%
Class Discussion/Participation	100	14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	700	100%

An "A" in this class is awarded to students who achieve 93-100% of total possible points; an A- for 90-92%; B+: 87-89%; B: 83-86%; B-: 80-82%; C+: 77-79%; C: 74-76%; C-: 70-73%; D+: 67-69%; D: 65-66%; F: 0-64%. Throughout the semester, students will be asked to complete written assignments. The specifics and due date of each assignment will be discussed during class.

### **Written Materials Rubric**

As PR practitioners, we strive for impeccable quality, and all materials will be evaluated according to the same standards. All written materials should represent one's best quality work, be error-free and meet the quality standards of this school, reflecting proper editing, grammar, spelling, and formatting. Submissions 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. Students who struggle with language, grammar, spelling, or writing should speak with me about the Annenberg School's designated Writing Coaches.

A minimum grade of C (2.0) is required 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 3.0 (B) on all units attempted at USC toward a graduate degree is required for graduation. In addition, a grade point average of at least 3.0 on all graduate work attempted at USC, whether or not all such units are applied toward the degree, is required.

### **Description of Assignments:**

**"Food For Thought" (14%):** Throughout the semester, students will be asked to complete written assignments related to specific events and/or issues involving public relations. The specific details and due date of each assignment will be discussed in class.

**Journal Summaries (J-Summ's) (9%):** 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 Midterm Presentations (14%):** You will be asked to demonstrate critical thinking and apply concepts you have learned in class to a designated situation, which will be outlined in class.

**Final Project – Strategic PR/Social Marketing Program Recommendations/Presentation (29%):** You will be asked to 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 (6%):** Your contributions to the development of the final Project/Presentation will be assessed and up to 30 individual points will be allocated according to a peer evaluation process.

**Final Paper (14%):** You will be asked to submit a 1,000-word 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.

**Attendance/Class Discussion/Participation (14%):** It is important to attend class and actively participate, since class activities and interaction with peers encourage creative dialogue and diversity of perspective, and enhance learning. 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. If a student is unable to attend class for some reason, please notify the instructor as soon as possible, and assume personal responsibility for gathering notes from other classmates. Unexcused absences, tardiness, and failure to meet deadlines will have a negative impact on the student's final grade. At the end of the semester, students will be allotted points 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

## **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).

## **V. Assignment Submission Policy**

- A. 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.
- B. Unless otherwise specified, assignments must be submitted as PDF documents via email to [laurajac@usc.edu](mailto:laurajac@usc.edu) using the file naming convention of **Student Last Name.Assignment Name**

## VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- TEXT: Fitzpatrick, Kathy and Bronstein, Carolyn (ed.). (2006). Ethics in Public Relations – Responsible Advocacy. Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE Publications. ISBN: 1-4129-1798-0.
- Additional content to be provided as handouts, from multimedia/websites, and other sources (TBA).
- Blackboard – Announcements, assignments, lecture PowerPoint slides, cool supplemental resources, interim Grade Center, and other information will be posted on the site for this class.

## VII. Laptop Policy

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are 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.

## VIII. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Following is a detailed course calendar that provides a thorough list of deliverables—readings, assignments, examinations, etc

**Important note:** *Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change – and probably will change – based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

<b>Session</b>	<b>Title/Topic(s)</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments</b>
<b># 1</b>	<b>Course Overview</b>	
08-27	Introductions & Expectations Defining Ethics & Ethical Decision-Making in PR; Exploring Personal Values – What's Important to You? An Overview of Values, Attitudes & Behaviors	None
<b># 2</b>	<b>From the Ancients to PR Today</b>	<i>Fitzpatrick &amp; Bronstein (F&amp;B) – Ch. 1</i>
09-03	Philosophical Foundations of Ethics; Views of Morality & The Western Philosophers: From Plato to Mill; Do They Still Matter? Contemporary PR & Media Practices Viewed Through The Philosophic Lens	<i>Supplemental Reading(s)</i> <i>(posted on Blackboard)</i>
<b># 3</b>	<b>Working with Activist Publics</b>	<i>F&amp;B: Ch. 4</i>
09-10	Identifying Stakeholders & Their Perceptions; Autonomy and Activism; Approaches to Assessing Relationships With Publics (Grunig & Hon, F&B models)	<i>Supplemental Reading(s)</i>

<i>Session</i>	<i>Title/Topic(s)</i>	<i>Readings/Assignments</i>
# 4 09-17	<b>Responsible Advocacy for Nonprofits</b> Overview of Charities & Foundations; PR's Role in Nonprofit Communications & Compliance; Corporate Giving and Strategic Philanthropy – Outputs vs. Outcomes <b>FFT #1 Due</b>	F&B: Ch. 5 Supplemental Reading(s)
# 5 09-24	<b>Personal, Professional &amp; Organizational Values</b> How Organizational Values Impact Cultures and PR Practices; Going Deeper on Personal Values (Schein) <b>J-Summ #1 Due</b>	Supplemental Reading(s) / Assessment(s)
# 6 10-01	<b>Contemporary Ethical Decision-Making Models</b> “Ethics for the Real World” – Models Based on 20 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup> Century Philosophers/Thinkers (Noddings, Rawls, Fitzpatrick & Gauthier, Bagley, Bennis, Swain, Potter)	Supplemental Reading(s)
# 7 10-08	<b>Responsibility &amp; Accountability;</b> <b>Cultural Considerations in Ethics</b> Definitions; Exploring Moral Excuses; Creating Bias-Free Communication; New Literacy Initiatives and PR Considerations <b>FFT #2 Due</b>	F&B - Ch. 2, 3 & 10 Supplemental Reading(s)
# 8 10-15	<b>MID-TERM PRESENTATIONS</b> <b>“Values-Based Recommendations”</b> Group Presentations & In-class Experiential	
# 9 10-22	<b>Legal Issues in PR/Communications</b> “Newsjacking;” FTC Guidelines & Disclosure Requirements; Product Placement and Consideration Fees; Top 10 “Legal Watch-outs” in PR/Communications – Part 1	Supplemental Reading(s)
#10 10-29	<b>Legal &amp; Ethical Issues in Social Media</b> Top 10 “Legal Watch-outs” in PR/Communications – Part 2; Handling Conflicts <b>FFT #3 Due</b> <b>J-SUMM #2 Due</b>	F&B: Ch. 7 Supplemental Reading(s)

<b>Session</b>	<b>Title/Topic(s)</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments</b>
#11 11-05	<b>Corporate Social Responsibility</b> Strategic Considerations for CSR; Overview of “B” Corps and Social Enterprises; UN Global Compact; Evaluating CSR Programs	<i>Supplemental Reading(s)</i>
#12 11-12	<b>Crisis &amp; Strategic Risk Communications</b> Issues Management; Risk Communications and Community Relations; Guidelines for Responsible Risk Communications; Crisis Communications and Ethics	<i>F&amp;B: Ch. 8</i> <i>Supplemental Reading(s)</i>
#13 11-19	<b>Truth &amp; Transparency / The Corporate (or Client) Conscience</b> Truth, Trust & Transparency – PR Practices in the Web 2.0 World; Moral Judgments & Principles of Harm; Influencing and the PR Practitioner’s Role in Speaking Truth to Power <b>FFT #4 Due</b>	<i>F&amp;B: Ch. 6</i> <i>Supplemental Reading(s)</i>
#14 11-26	<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>	<i>Enjoy Your Break!</i>
#15 12-03	<b>FINAL PRESENTATIONS</b> J-SUMM #3 Due (email prior to class)	
12-10	<b>FINAL PAPER DUE</b>	

## **IX. Policies and Procedures**

### **Use of Technology**

Cell phones, PDAs, and other electronic equipment are to be turned off before class. Answering the phone, sending/receiving email or IMs, or any other form of electronic communication during class are a significant distraction from the learning process and should be avoided. The use of computers in class for any purpose other than taking notes and/or researching topics under discussion at the time, will result in a full grade reduction for the entire course.

### **Confidentiality**

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

## 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.

## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### a. Academic Conduct

#### *Plagiarism*

Presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/b/11-00-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

#### *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. Support Systems

#### *Equity and Diversity*

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <https://sarc.usc.edu/> describes reporting options and other resources.

### ***Support with Scholarly Writing***

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

### ***The Office of Disability Services and Programs***

[http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

### ***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.

### ***Emergency Information***

If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

## **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 have included Beckman Coulter; Miocean; Össur, and Sony Pictures Entertainment Corp.

Previously, she 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 establishing the \$50 million nonprofit Edwards Lifesciences Fund. She also was SVP/West Coast Director of the national Healthcare practice at Porter/Novelli, and specialized in Healthcare and Crisis Communications as VP at PainePR. She began her career at Burson-Marsteller, and in the Government and Nonprofit sectors.

Prof. Jackson 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.