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**PR 538: Image Management in Entertainment**

**Number of Units 3.0**

**Fall 2016 – Wednesdays – 6:30-9:10**

**Section:** 21563D

**Location: ANN 309**

**Instructor: Paula Askanas**

**Office:** By arrangement

**Office Hours:**Arranged in writing,

usually immediately before class

**Contact Info:** [**paskanas@usc.edu**](mailto:paskanas@usc.edu)

**310-244-3790**

**I. Course Description**

This class will examine the role of public relations and publicity in managing the public images of performers, executives and entertainment companies.  Through the real life experiences of some of the top journalists, executives and public relations practitioners in the entertainment field, we will discuss the role of PR and the importance of creating and maintaining a personalized, positive image in the media.  Analysis of current news stories will be an integral element of these discussions.

**II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment**

Objectives

* Familiarize students with the concept of image management, it’s importance and execution in the  entertainment industry
* Familiarize students with the unique aspects of public relations as practiced in various sectors of the entertainment industry.
* Bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical execution of PR strategies and tactics in entertainment by discussing terminology, common practices and idiosyncrasies specific to the industry.

Assessment

* Students will be expected to demonstrate proficient communication skills, including efficient and effective writing.

**III. Description of Assignments**

* Preparatory reading and questions for guest speakers, class discussions.  Questions are due by 6pm Tuesdays prior to each class.
* Written assignments: Students will write and be prepared to discuss a total of three, written assignments covering a variety of entertainment-related topics described later in this syllabus.
* Midterm: In 15 pages or less, analyze a real entertainment-related communication program that has occurred within the last two years. Include all of the following elements of the Strategic Planning Model: Background, Business Goal; Statement of the Problem or Opportunity; Communication Goal(s); SWOTS Analysis; Objectives;  Key Audiences; Key Messages; Strategies; Tactics; and Evaluation. In Evaluation, include your own detailed assessment of the extent to which the program succeeded or failed.
* Final Presentation: Groups of students (to be randomly assigned) will organize competing public relations agencies with the assignment of devising the most effective strategic and comprehensive plan of action around the communications challenges of a specified entertainment industry “client.”  Both a full text document and a presentation based on that document are to be submitted. Rather than grading the project as an entirety and having all members of a particular group receive uniform grades, each student will be graded for this assignment based on the group document, their individual presentation and a required Peer Evaluation Forms.  Current, professional media and methods must be used in presentations.

Submit both a document detailing your plan and your presentation.

Submit Student Final Project Evaluation Form.

**IV. Grading**

**a. Breakdown of Grade**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Points** | **% of Grade** |
| Class participation\* | 15 | 15 |
| Written assignments | 20 | 20 |
| Midterm | 25 | 25 |
| Final Project | 40 | 40 |
|  |  |  |
| **Total** | **100** | **100%** |

**\***As the majority of information will be discussed within the class meeting time, three or more absences will result in a grade of 0 for class participation.

**b. Grading Scale**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 95 to 100: A | 70 to less than 75: C+ | 45 to less than 50: D- |
| 90 to less than 95: A- | 65 to less than 70: C | 0 to less than 45: F |
| 85 to less than 90: B+ | 60 to less than 65: C- |  |
| 80 to less than 85: B | 55 to less than 60: D+ |  |
| 75 to less than 80: B- | 50 to less than 55: D |  |

**c. Grading Standards**

***Public Relations*“A” projects** have writing near professional quality; one or no mistakes; clearly proofread and edited material.  All required elements included (catchy headline, solid lead, varied vocabulary; supporting facts/figures; quotes as required).  Excellent organization and flow; original thinking.  Showed creativity in packaging/distribution method. High end of scale: publishable today as is.

**“B” projects** have two to five spelling, grammar or AP Style mistakes.   One or more required elements missing or poorly displayed (i.e., boring headline; confusing lead, etc.). Shows potential as a good writer.  Adhered to inverted pyramid. High end of scale will have at least one extraordinary element such as astonishing lead or little-known facts or pithy quote.  Some creativity shown.  Publishable with minimal editing.   
  
**“C” projects** have more than five errors (spelling, grammar, AP style).  Poorly edited and/or proofread.  May have adhered to inverted pyramid but strayed at beginning or end.  Hackneyed elements such as trite headline or uninteresting lead.  Little or no facts/figures included.  Passive rather than active verbs become the norm.  Little or no creativity shown.  Publishable with major editing.  
  
“**D” projects** have more than 10 errors (spelling, grammar).  Needs to be completely rewritten.  Poorly organized with little or no understanding of journalistic style/standards.  Needs to work with writing coach.  
  
**“F” projects** are not rewritable, late or not turned in.

**V. Assignment Submission Policy**

* All assignments are due on the date and times specified.  Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of zero.
* Assignments containing grammar or punctuation errors are subject to a 10 point deduction.
* All assignments must be submitted by email, with the exception of the final, which will also be submitted in person.

**VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

While no textbook is required, numerous readings – all of them required - will be posted to Blackboard, and others will be circulated as the semester progresses. The instructor expects students to read all of these materials, even though some of them will serve as background for classroom discussion and may not be specifically discussed in class. Students will be expected to be current with breaking entertainment-related news, both consumer and business, by reading the online versions of major general and entertainment news sources (i.e. Variety, The Hollywood Reporter, Deadline,  The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, etc.)

**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**](http://vc.uscannenberg.org/) for more information. To connect to USC’s Secure Wireless network, please visit USC’s [**Information Technology Services**](http://itservices.usc.edu/wireless/support/) website.

**Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 08/22/16 – 12/2/16)**

**Friday, September 9:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, September 9:** Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

**Tuesday, September 13**: last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

**Friday, October 7:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript.  [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the week three equivalent for short sessions) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Friday, November 11:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

**VIII. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

***Important note to students:*** *As is true of all aspects of the entertainment industry, this syllabus is subject to change and adjustment throughout the semester in order to accommodate timely, late-breaking topics and events, the progress of the class, and/or guest speaker availability.*

Students having any doubt or questions regarding assignments, schedules, etc. *should immediately check with their fellow students and/or the instructor.*

***Session One -- August 24:  Introductions***

Introduction to class and instructor.  Assumptions and expectations.   Discussion of importance of image management across the industry and tools available to public relations professionals.  Entertainment lingo.  Introduction of students.

* Assignments:
  + Send: email confirmation and questions
  + Assigned readings: Taylor Swift and Kim Kardashian, daily entertainment coverage
  + Conduct research on and learn all you can about next week’s speaker.  *Note: There will be no questions about the diversity story controversy.*
  + Write: A minimum of five questions you would like to ask next week’s speaker.

***Session Two – August 31: Trade Publications and their roles in entertainment; The Players***

* Guest speaker:  Nellie Andreeva, Co-Editor in Chief, *Deadline Hollywood*
* Discussion topics:  The stakeholders.  Who has a say in various entertainment PR efforts and why they are influential.  Consultation vs. approval.  How these stakeholders may influence choices of platforms and techniques.  How is a story generated, by whom, and why that’s important.  *Taylor Swift and Kim Kardashian.*
* Assignments:
  + Assigned readings : Bill Cosby, daily entertainment coverage
  + Conduct research on and learn all you can about next week’s speaker.
  + Write: A minimum of five questions you would like to ask next week’s speaker.

***Session Three -- September 7: The Creation of Content ; Group Think and How it Impacts Image***

* Guest speaker:  Lauren Moffat, senior vice president, comedy development, SPT
* Discussion Topic: How projects come to your living room/local theater.
* Where do you get your news and how do you determine its credibility. The difference between publicity and public relations. Why is image important in entertainment?  The dangers of group thinking.  *Bill Cosby and trial by social media.*
* Assignments:
  + Assigned readings and daily entertainment coverage.
  + Conduct research on and learn all you can about next week’s speaker
  + Write: A minimum of five questions you would like to ask next week’s speaker.

***Session Four --  September 14: Feature Film Marketing and Publicity; Distribution Strategies***

* Guest Speaker:  Andre Caraco, co-president of domestic marketing, Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group
* Discussion Topics:  Relationships and exclusives. How to create and maintain strong media ties.  Distribution strategies, from press releases to leaks, as well as timing for long lead publications and breaking news.  What is ‘on the record’?
* In class writing assignment: your pitch
* Assignments:
  + Assigned readings and daily entertainment coverage
  + Conduct research on and learn all you can about next week’s speaker
  + Write: A minimum of five questions you would like to ask next week’s speaker.

***Session Five -- September 21: The Golden Age of Television***

* Guest Speaker:  Chris Ender, executive vice president, communications, CBS
* Discussion Topic:  Television.  Is it the Golden Age, and for who?  PR opportunities in the life of a series.  What PR opportunities influence the perception of a show and those attached to it.  Why does it matter?
* Assignments:
  + Read:
  + Assigned readings and daily entertainment coverage
  + Conduct research on and learn all you can about next week’s speaker.
  + Write: A minimum of five questions you would like to ask next week’s speaker.
  + Three talking points and one uncomfortable question

***Session Six -- September 28: Working with the Media: How mainstream business publications fit in; Media Training***

* Guest speaker: Brooks Barnes, Staff Reporter/Entertainment, *The New York Times*

Discussion topics: How mainstream publications interact with the entertainment industry;  Relationships and exclusives. How to create and maintain strong media ties. Media training: expressing yourself for the media; making it memorable and controlling the takeaway; common pitfalls.

* Midterm assignment
* Assignments:
  + Work on midterm
  + Assigned readings: Roger Ailes and daily entertainment coverage
  + Conduct research on and learn all you can about next week’s speaker
  + Write: A minimum of five questions you would like to ask next week’s speaker.

***Session Seven – October 5: Corporate and Crisis Communication in the Entertainment Industry***

* Guest speaker:  Paul McGuire, Senior Vice President, Worldwide Corporate Communication,  Warner Brothers
* Discussion Topic:  Crisis Communications; critical thinking during a potential PR crisis; statements vs. reactive statements vs. no comment, and considering the consequences.
* In class writing assignment: your statement
* Assignment:
  + Assigned readings and daily entertainment coverage
  + Conduct research on and learn all you can about next week’s speaker
  + Write: A minimum of five questions you would like to ask next week’s speaker.

***Session Eight -- October 12: Pitching the Wide Variety of Entertainment Outlets***

* Guest Speaker:  Mylin Watkins, senior producer, Entertainment Tonight
* Discussion Topic:  Changing your pitch to match the recipient
* In class assignment:  Pitching the decision makers.
* Assignments:
  + Work on midterm
  + Assigned readings and daily entertainment coverage

***Session Nine – October 19: Midterm***

* All papers must be emailed and time stamped by 7pm/PT.
* No class meeting
* Assignments:
  + Assigned readings: Rene Zellweger and daily entertainment coverage
  + Conduct research on and learn all you can about next week’s speaker
  + Write: A minimum of five questions you would like to ask next week’s speaker.

***Session Ten -- October 26: The Revolution in Creation and Distribution of Content***

* Guest Speaker:  Karen Barragan, Director of Publicity, Netflix
* Discussion Topic:  How creation and distribution of content have changed and will continue to change; emerging platforms. How Netflix has changed TV AND PR.
* Designing your plan.  How different media cover entertainment, how they are used, how they fit into a campaign.
* Assignments:
  + Assigned readings: and daily entertainment coverage
* Conduct research on and learn all you can about next week’s speaker
  + Write: A minimum of five questions you would like to ask next week’s speaker.

***Session Eleven -- November 2: Working with Magazines***

* Guest Speaker:  Lisa Love, West Coast Editor, Vogue Magazine
* Discussion Topic:  Elements of print assignments; current entertainment news stories and how they are affecting the images of their subjects.
* Assignments:
  + Assigned readings: entertainment PR firms and daily entertainment coverage
  + Conduct research on and learn all you can about next week’s speaker
  + Write: A minimum of five questions you would like to ask next week’s speaker.

***Session Twelve -- November 9: Working with Personal Publicists***

Guest speaker:  Annett Wolf, Founding Partner, Wolf-Kasteler Public Relations

* + Discussion Topic:  Working with talent; celebrity vs. fame; A vs. B vs. C list talent; how publicity choices impact image
  + Assign groups for final project
* Assignments:
  + Assigned readings: Crackle, Miley Cyrus and daily entertainment coverage
  + Conduct research on and learn all you can about next week’s speaker
  + Write: A minimum of five questions you would like to ask next week’s speaker.
  + Work on Final

***Session Thirteen -- November 16: The Disruptors***

* Guest speaker:  Naomi Paul, Senior Vice President, media relations, Crackle
* Discussion Topics:  Pluses and minuses of being a disruptor.  Big change or epic fail?
* Assignments:
* Prepare questions for Session Fifteen’s speaker
* Work on Final

***Session Fourteen- November 23: No Class***

*Thanksgiving eve*

***Session Fifteen- November 30:  How to See and Be Seen***

* Guest speaker:  Madelyn Hammond, President of Madelyn Hammond & Associates
* Discussion Topics:  How to be seen in Hollywood, the elevator pitch, is your resume helping you? What is your image and how are you managing it?
* Class time to work on final presentations
* Complete course evaluations

***Session Fifteen -- December 7: Final***

Final Presentations: Submit both a document detailing your plan and your presentation.

Submit Student Final Project Peer Evaluation Form.

**IX. Policies and Procedures**

**Additional Policies**

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

**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 into the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must by 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://dps.usc.edu/contact/report/>. This is important for the safety of the 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://ali.usc.edu/> 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>provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

Students requesting test-related accommodations will need to share and discuss their DSP recommended accommodation letter/s with their faculty and/or appropriate departmental contact person at least three weeks before the date the accommodations will be needed. Additional time may be needed for final exams. Reasonable exceptions will be considered during the first three weeks of the semester as well as for temporary injuries and for students recently diagnosed. Please note that a reasonable period of time is still required for DSP to review documentation and to make a determination whether a requested accommodation will be appropriate.

*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**

Paula Askanas is executive vice president, communications, Sony Pictures Television (SPT). In this role, she oversees business and trade press, and internal communication for the television company worldwide, disseminating information about the developments, positions and scope of SPT's operations to US and international media and to SPT employees. Her oversight includes work on behalf of the businesses and executive teams for production, channels and distribution in the United States, EMEA, Latin America, Asia-Pacific and India, as well as US advertiser sales. Additionally, Askanas handles the media relations for SPT's digital businesses, including SPE's premium video website Crackle, and SPT's worldwide television networks portfolio, including branded networks AXN, Sony Entertainment Television, and Animax. Askanas interacts closely with SPT's department heads to deliver the company's position and activities to both domestic and international media outlets.   
  
Most recently, Askanas served as senior vice president, media relations for SPT. She joined the company as a director, working on consumer press for the studio's television series, and was subsequently promoted to vice president and senior vice president. Her duties expanded when Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE) merged its U.S. television operations in 2001 to create Columbia TriStar Domestic Television, which then became SPT. Askanas' role transitioned from consumer to business communications in 2005 and then expanded again when the group's US and international groups were combined. Before joining the studio, Askanas held posts with CBS and NBC News. She is a graduate of Pepperdine University in Malibu