



**PR 428: Social, Legal and Ethical
Foundations of Public Relations
4 Units**

Fall 2017 – Wednesdays – 6:30-9:50 p.m.

Section: 21240D

Location: ASC 228

Instructor: Monique Rad-Stein, Esq.

Office: ASC – location TBD

Office Hours: Wednesday, 5:30 -6:30 PM (email for location)

E-mail: Monique@TheRadFirm.com

Phone: 213-908-5188 (office)

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. PR 428 provides an applied, working understanding of those interconnecting concepts and responsibilities, with an emphasis on personal decision-making. Prerequisites: JOUR/PR 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 his or her career. Through reading and written assignments, in-class exercises and discussion, lectures, supplemental learning through readings/multimedia materials, reflective learning activities and group presentations, 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. Description of Assignments

- Presentation of News Articles to Class (10%): Bring and present one article to class pertaining to recent/current “real life” events or issues involving ethical, legal or social aspects of public relations. Prepare a list of three questions to engage the classroom in conversation. You must e-mail the professor with your topic choice no later than one week prior to your presentation.
 - Example: GM launches large scale recall of its cars due to defective ignition switch
 - What should be said and done going forward? What PR mistakes did GM make or not make in handling the crisis?
- Ethics Food For Thought Briefs (10%): 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 (20%): Students will be able to choose from several different topics, and will be asked to write a long-form blog article of 500-750 words, demonstrating critical thinking and applying concepts learned in class by analyzing an ethical and/or legal challenges faced by an organization. Additional details will be discussed in class.
- Final Group Paper and Presentation (35%): 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 hypothetical situation in which an organization faced ethical challenges having reputational implications. Additional details will be discussed in class.
- Class Discussion/Participation (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 in discussions, contributing questions and comments about the materials. Classes begin promptly, so please arrive on time. If you are unable to attend a class for some reason, please notify me as soon as possible and assume personal responsibility for gathering notes from other classmates.
 - At the end of the semester, points will be allocated base upon:
 - Consistent demonstrating 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); and
 - Mature classroom behavior that supports learning.

IV. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Article Presentation	40	10%
Ethics Food for Thought Briefs (2)	40	10%
Journal Summaries (3)	60	15%
Mid Term Paper	80	20%
Final Group Presentation	140	35%
Class Discussion/Participation	40	10%
TOTAL	400	100%

b. Grading Scale

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

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

“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 medium 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 dates specified unless otherwise stated. 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 through Blackboard 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

- 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 from handouts, multimedia/websites and other sources to be provided in class and/or found on Blackboard.

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.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/21/17 – 12/1/17)

Friday, September 8: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, September 8: 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 12: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, October 6: Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

Friday, October 6: Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Friday, November 10: Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

VIII. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Important note to students: 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.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 8/23	Course Overview, Expectations and Introductions	Fitzpatrick & Bronstein (F&B) – Introduction and Ch. 1	
Week 2 8/30	Industry Codes of Ethics and Working with Activist Publics	F&B Ch. 4, Supplemental Reading(s)	Journal #1 Due
Week 3 9/6	Truth, Transparency and Strategic Risk Communication	F&B Chs. 6 and 8 Supplemental Reading(s)	
Week 4 9/13	Cultural Considerations in Ethics	F&B Chs. 3 and 10	Journal #2 Due
Week 5 9/20	Responsible Online Communication and Influencers	F&B Ch. 7 Supplemental Reading(s)	
Week 6 9/27	Ethics of Public Diplomacy	F&B Ch. 9	FFT #1 Due
Week 7 10/4	Responsible Advocacy for Non-Profits	F&B Ch. 5 Supplemental Reading(s)	
Week 8 10/11	The First Amendment: What is Protected?	Supplemental Reading(s)	Mid-Term Paper Due
Week 9 10/18	Defamation, Product Disparagement and Privileges	Supplemental Reading(s)	
Week 10 10/25	Commercial Appropriation, Rights of Publicity & False Light	Supplemental Reading(s)	FFT #2 Due
Week 11 11/1	Endorsements, Misrepresentation & CA Bus. & Prof. 17200	Supplemental Reading(s)	

Week 12 11/8	Trademark and Copyright	Supplemental Reading(s)	Journal #3 Due
Week 13 11/15	Conflicts of Interest and Whistleblowing; Review and Final Preparation	Supplemental Reading(s)	
Week 14 11/22	NO CLASS – Happy Thanksgiving!		
FINAL PRESENTATIONS 11/29	Final Presentations		USC Course Evaluations
FINAL PAPER 12/6	Final Paper Due by 7 p.m.		

IX. Policies and Procedures

i. Research, Attribution and Citation

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 sources 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).

ii. 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.

iii. 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 be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

iv. 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://dsp.usc.edu/>) 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

Monique Rad-Stein, Esq. is both an attorney and serial entrepreneur who runs her own law firm, The Rad Firm, APC, where she practices business and real estate law for start-ups. Monique's business savvy and Los Angeles upbringing give her both first-hand of the challenges entrepreneurs face on a daily basis and a large network of professionals who can aid her clients in overcoming those challenges. She believes in a holistic approach to practicing law that manages both the court of law and court of public opinion.

Prior to pursuing law, Monique worked in public relations for Focus Features, BWR Public Relations and The Anderson Group before attending law school overseeing various entertainment and corporate accounts. Monique received her J.D. from Loyola Law School, Los Angeles and earned her B.A. in Public Relations with minors in Business Law and Cinema-Television at USC.