

**PR 510: Legal, Ethical and Social
Foundations of Strategic Public Relations
3 Units**

Spring 2018 — Thursdays — 6:30-9 p.m.

Section: 21320D

Location: ANN 210

Instructor: Laura Min Jackson, MSOD

Office: ANN TBD

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1-2 p.m. and
Thursdays, 5-6 p.m. by appointment.

Please call/email at least 24 hours in advance to schedule

Contact Info: laurajac@usc.edu/714-234-9267

I. Course Description

This course explores the origins of, effects of, and processes for understanding and adhering to the complex network of legal, ethical and social responsibilities of the contemporary PR practitioner. It includes an exploration of the philosophical foundations of ethical thought, analysis of contemporary (and in some, cases, real-time) case studies, and opportunities for self-exploratory and experiential learning opportunities that enable the student to define for themselves what it means to be a “good” practitioner of strategic PR.

II. Overall Learning Objectives

This course explores principles and concepts of legal, ethical and social issues that a PR professional may encounter during their career; students will be able to:

- Identify and explain fundamental U.S. legal concepts, particularly in the media and broader communications landscape
- Apply ethical reasoning models based on principles of moral reasoning and ethical problem-solving and decision-making
- Explore their personal values and ethical perspectives
- Examine concepts related to PR and social responsibility, and use their skills and knowledge to develop strategic PR recommendations for an organization dealing with significant legal, ethical and/or social challenges

III. Assignments and Assessment

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)

Participation in Class Discussions (12.50% of Grade)

It is important to attend class and actively participate, since class activities and interaction with peers encourage creative dialogue and diversity of perspective, which helps enhance your learning. It is expected that students will come to class having read/viewed the materials and be prepared to join class discussions, contributing questions and comments.

Classes begin promptly, so please arrive on time. If you are 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. At the end of the semester, points will be allocated to students based upon:

- Consistent demonstration that they 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

PR 510 - Participation in Class Discussion Grading			
CRITERION	EXEMPLARY 15-13 pts	SATISFACTORY 12-9 pts	UNACCEPTABLE 8-0 pts
Frequency	Frequent contribution to class discussion.	Regular contribution to class discussion.	Seldom or no contribution to class discussion.
Relevance	Contributions to class directly address key issues, questions, or problems related to the text and the discussion activity.	Contributions to class address key issues, questions, or problems related to the text and the discussion activity, but in some cases only.	Contributions to class do not directly address the question or problem posed by the discussion activities.
Insight	Contributions to class offer original or thoughtful insights, analyses, or observations that demonstrate a strong grasp of concepts and ideas pertaining to the discussion topics.	Contributions to class offer some insight, analysis, or observation to the topic but may not demonstrate a full understanding or knowledge of concepts and ideas pertaining to the discussion topics.	Contributions to class do not offer any significant insight, analysis, or observation related to the topic. No knowledge or understanding is demonstrated regarding concepts and ideas pertaining to the discussion topics.
Support	Contributions to class support all claims and opinions with either rational argument or evidence.	Contributions to class generally support claims and opinions with evidence or argument, but may leave some gaps where unsupported opinions still appear.	Contributions to class do not support their claims with either evidence or argument. The contributions contain largely unsupported opinion.

Description of Assignments

“Food For Thought” (25.00%): Throughout the semester, students will be asked to complete (4) brief written papers related to specific events and/or issues involving public relations. The details of each FFT assignment will be discussed in class, and due according to the schedule below. Evaluation will be based on the “Written Assignments” rubric below.

Journal Summaries (J-Summ’s) (18.75%): The study of ethics and comprehension of one’s own standards for moral behavior can be enhanced through self-reflection; as such, students will be asked to regularly record their thoughts and feelings associated with their work and/or select assignments, and submit brief summaries in this regard. Specific guidelines for J-Summ’s will be provided during class, and due according to the schedule below. Evaluation will be based on the “Written Assignments” rubric below.

Application Assignment Midterm Presentation & Experiential (12.50%): Students will be asked to demonstrate critical thinking and apply concepts learned in class to provide recommendations intended to solve two designated situations, which will be detailed in class. The first will be related to developing and presenting recommendations to help an organization struggling with a significant legal/ethical/social issue, and the latter will be a real-time experiential that requires classroom attendance and participation on the designated date.

PR 510 – Evaluation Rubric for Mid-Term Presentation			
CRITERION	EXEMPLARY 4-5 pts	SATISFACTORY 2-3 pts	UNACCEPTABLE 0-1 pts
Demonstration of Sound PR Judgment	Achieves desired outcome; provides innovative AND feasible recommendations relevant to client’s needs	Uses checklist approach; shows neither serious missteps nor any real demonstration of insight	Lacks clarity; disorganized; unprofessional; most content unrelated to client situation
Appropriate Supporting Reasoning/Rationale	Provides compelling support for recommendation; appropriately supports and addresses client’s questions	Recommendations are not compellingly supported	Recommendations are incomplete and/or not appropriately supported
Proper Organization, Style & Presentation	Presentation is of professional caliber; language is clear, concise, and coherent; demonstrates clear understanding of client’s challenges. All presenting members appear competent and knowledgeable	Presentation is serviceable, with rare jargon or clichés, few typographical or grammatical errors. Not all members appear competent and knowledgeable	Multiple grammar, syntax and/or typographical errors; unacceptable, unprofessional quality level; 1 member dominates while others appear less competent or knowledgeable
Required Elements	Includes all 8 elements as requested by client; ideas are well-supported	Misses 1 major element and/or has 1+ significant factual errors	Misses 2+ major elements; appears to be misinterpretation of assignment

Final Project – Strategic PR/Social Marketing Program Recommendations/Presentation (12.50%):

Students will be asked to participate with 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.

PR 510 Final Presentation – Evaluation Rubric for Social Marketing Program	Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group produces sound, thought-provoking recommendations that are likely to appeal to target publics.• Thoroughly examines all pertinent aspects of the organization per the instructions, and delivers a clear, compelling strategy.• Effectively delivers engaging, informative multimedia presentation.• All team members demonstrate familiarity with content and present competently.• Content is optimally structured and organized.• Delivers professional quality materials, free of grammatical errors, typos, etc.• Accurately cites all source material in accordance with APA style standards.• Meets all posted deadlines for project deliverables.	Exemplary 17-20 pts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group produces sound albeit somewhat boilerplate recommendations lacking in innovation, creativity, strategic thinking, making it less likely to appeal to target publics.• Examines most pertinent aspects of a given organization per the instructions• Delivers informative but not very engaging multimedia presentation.• Some but not all team members demonstrate familiarity with content and present competently.• Content is effectively structured and organized.• Delivers reasonable quality materials with a total of 1-3 grammatical errors, typos, formatting errors, etc.• Accurately cites all source material in accordance with APA style standards.• Meets all posted deadlines for project deliverables.	Satisfactory 13-16 pts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group produces incomplete, less-than-sophisticated and/or “boilerplate” recommendations.• Examines some pertinent aspects of a given organization but fails to identify a singular, clear strategy.• Delivers poor quality materials with 4+ grammatical errors, typos, formatting errors, etc.• One team member dominates; other team members demonstrate less familiarity with content and/or do not present competently.• Materials lack the professional quality and standards expected of today’s PR professionals.• Misses posted deadlines for project deliverables.	Unacceptable 0-12 pts

Individual Contribution to Group Presentation (6.25%): In addition to the overall Group presentation score, students' individual contributions to the development of the final Project/Presentation will be assessed and up to 20 individual points will be allocated according to a peer evaluation process.

Final Paper (12.50%): Students 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 their critical thinking and comprehension of key concepts presented during the course. Details will be discussed in class.

Rubric for Written Assignments

PR510 Writing Assignment Scoring Rubric				
	Exemplary (9-10 pts)	Proficient (6-8 pts)	Partially Proficient (3-5 pts)	Incomplete (1-2 pts)
Writing Mechanics	No grammar, punctuation or sentence structure errors observed	Minor grammar, punctuation or sentence structure errors observed (max of 3)	Grammar, punctuation and/or sentence structure errors distract from overall quality and impact (4-5 errors)	Excessive grammar, punctuation and/or sentence structure errors (6+ errors)
Structure	Paper was well organized and flowed well.	Paper was fairly well organized and flowed reasonably well.	Paper was mediocre in organization and flow.	Paper was not well organized and flowed poorly.
Organization	Ideas were clear, well-devised, and had solid structure. Reader could readily follow along and understand content.	Ideas were fairly clear, demonstrated forethought, and were structured. Reader could more or less readily follow along and understand content.	Ideas were not as clear as they could have been, were average in development. Had mediocre structure such that reader might have trouble understanding the paper's content.	Ideas were unclear and/or not well-devised Poor structure resulted in reader not easily understanding the paper's content.

IV. Grading Breakdown and Scale

Assignment	Points Possible	% of Grade
Food For Thought (4)	40	25.00%
Journal Summaries (3)	30	18.75%
Application Assignment (Midterm & Experiential)	20	12.50%
Final Project	20	12.50%
Group Contribution	10	6.25%
Final Paper	20	12.50%
Class Discussion/Participation	20	12.50%
TOTAL	160	100%

Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

V. Assignment Submission Policy

- A. All assignments are due on the date specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.
- B. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments must be submitted as PDF documents via email to laurajac@usc.edu using the file naming convention of **Student Last Name.Assignment Name**
- C. All papers must be supported by citations and footnotes as appropriate.

Research, ATTRIBUTION and Citation

On occasion, students may be asked to prepare materials on topics with which you have little knowledge. Many online resources are available, 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).

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 Digital Lounge](#) 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. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/7/19 – 4/26/19)

Friday, January 25: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, January 25: Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Tuesday, January 29: last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, February 22: 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, April 6: Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

IX. 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. ***All readings noted are for the current week’s class session; please read all materials prior to class. Readings outside of the designated textbook will be posted in the “Contents” folder on Blackboard unless otherwise noted.***

	Topics	Readings and Preparations	Deliverable/ Key Activity
Week 1 Jan. 10	Introductions & Expectations Defining Ethics & Ethical Decision-Making in PR; Exploring Personal Values – What’s Important to You? An Overview of Values, Attitudes & Behaviors	None <i>In-class Assessment</i>	
Week 2 Jan. 17	<i>From the Ancients to PR Today</i> 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>Fitzpatrick & Bronstein (F&B): Ch. 1</i> <i>Supplemental Reading(s)</i> <i>(posted on Blackboard)</i>	
Week 3 Jan. 24	<i>Working with Activist Publics</i> Identifying Stakeholders & Their Perceptions; Autonomy and Activism; Approaches to Assessing Relationships With Publics (Grunig & Hon, F&B models)	<i>F&B: Ch. 4</i> <i>Supplemental Reading(s)</i> <i>posted on Blackboard</i>	FFT #1 Due
Week 4 Jan. 31	<i>Responsible Advocacy for Nonprofits</i> Overview of Charities & Foundations; PR’s Role in Nonprofit Communications & Compliance; Corporate Giving and Strategic Philanthropy – Outputs vs. Outcomes	<i>F&B: Ch. 5</i> <i>Supplemental Reading(s)</i> <i>posted on Blackboard</i>	
Week 5 Feb. 07	<i>Personal, Professional & Organizational Values</i> How Organizational Values Impact Cultures and PR Practices; Going Deeper on Personal Values (Schein)	<i>Supplemental Reading(s) posted on Blackboard /</i> <i>In-class Assessment</i>	J-SUMM #1 Due
Week 6 Feb. 14	<i>Contemporary Ethical Decision-Making Models</i> “Ethics for the Real World” – Models Based on 20 th -21 st Century Philosophers/Thinkers (Noddings, Rawls, Fitzpatrick & Gauthier, Bagley, Bennis, Swain, Potter)	<i>Supplemental Reading(s)</i> <i>posted on Blackboard /</i> <i>In-class Assessment</i>	

Week 7 Feb. 21	<i>Responsibility & Accountability; Cultural Considerations in Ethics</i> Definitions; Exploring Moral Excuses; Creating Bias-Free Communication; New Literacy Initiatives and PR Considerations	<i>F&B - Ch. 2, 3 & 10 Supplemental Reading(s) posted on Blackboard</i>	FFT #2 Due
Week 8 Feb. 28	<i>MID-TERM PRESENTATIONS "Values-Based Recommendations"</i>		Group Presentations & In-class Experiential
Week 9 Mar. 07	<i>Legal Issues in PR/Communications</i> "Newsjacking;" FTC Guidelines & Disclosure Requirements; Product Placement and Consideration Fees; Top 10 "Legal Watch- outs" in PR and Communications – Part 1	<i>Supplemental Reading(s) posted on Blackboard</i>	J-SUMM #2 Due
March 14	<i>SPRING BREAK</i>		
Week 10 Mar. 21	<i>Legal & Ethical Issues in Social Media</i> Top 10 "Legal Watch-outs" in PR and Communications – Part 2	<i>F&B: Ch. 7 Supplemental Reading(s) posted on Blackboard</i>	
Week 11 Mar. 28	<i>Legal & Ethical Issues in Social Media</i> Top 10 "Legal Watch-outs" in PR and Communications – Part 3; Handling Conflicts	<i>F&B: Ch. 7 Supplemental Reading(s) posted on Blackboard In-class Assessment</i>	FFT #3 Due
Week 12 Apr. 04	<i>Corporate Social Responsibility</i> Strategic Considerations for CSR; "B" Corps and Social Enterprises; UN Global Compact; Evaluating CSR Programs	<i>Supplemental Reading(s)</i>	
Week 13 Apr. 11	<i>Crisis & Strategic Risk Communications</i> Issues Management; Risk Communications and Community Relations; Guidelines for Responsible Risk Communications; Crisis Communications and Ethics	<i>F&B: Ch. 8 Supplemental Reading(s) posted on Blackboard</i>	J-SUMM #3 Due
Week 14 Apr. 18	<i>Truth & Transparency</i> Truth, Trust & Transparency – PR Practices in the Web 2.0 World; Moral Judgments & Principles of Harm	<i>F&B: Ch. 6 Supplemental Reading(s) posted on Blackboard</i>	FFT #4 Due
Week 15 Apr. 25	<i>The Corporate (or Client) Conscience</i> Influencing and the PR Practitioner's Role in Speaking Truth to Power	<i>Supplemental Reading(s) posted on Blackboard</i>	Final Paper Due
FINAL EXAM PERIOD May 02, 7-9 p.m.	Final Group Presentations	<i>In-class Assessment</i>	Final Presentation Due

X. Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

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.

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.

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."

b. Support Systems

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

XI. 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 consulting clients have included Beckman Coulter; Johnson & Johnson; 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 \$200 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.

Ms. 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, professional and policy organizations globally.