



**PR 455: Public Relations for Non-Profit  
Organizations  
4 Units**

**Fall 2019 – Thursdays – 6-9:20 p.m.**

**Section:** 21278R

**Location:** ANN 305

**Instructor:** Zahra Nealy

**Office:** ANN lobby or classroom

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Contact Info:** [znealy@usc.edu](mailto:znealy@usc.edu) | 310.945.7249

### **I. Course Description**

Introduction to the specialized field of public relations for non-profit organizations including arts and culture, education, animal and social welfare, healthcare, scientific and advocacy-based organizations. This course is appropriate for students who want to learn the history of non-profits, the fundamentals of how they are governed and organized, the importance of strategy and fundraising, cause-marketing campaigns, and how to develop and implement a comprehensive public relations campaign for such organizations. Through lecture, special guests, group assignments and student-led discussions, this course will examine case studies and present-day scenarios, require the development of a public relations campaign, and culminate in crafting a case study assessing the effectiveness of an assigned non-profit public relations campaign.

### **II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment**

This course will equip students with the fundamental knowledge of the types of non-profits and how to develop and implement a comprehensive public relations campaign in that setting. This will include exploring the role of mission, strategies and tactics, understanding key constituencies and target audiences, attention-deserving messaging, development, media relations, the utilization of social media and digital tools, developing corporate partnerships and crisis communications planning, and the importance of using metrics and research. Students will be assessed through class participation and discussion, testing and via a final project.

### **III. Course Notes**

Letter grades will be assigned. Copies of lecture slides and other class information will be posted on Blackboard, unless otherwise noted.

### **IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments**

- **Class Participation (Homework and Discussion):** Students should attend the weekly class and be prepared to fully discuss reading assignments, homework, in-class assignments and engage with guest speakers, when applicable.
- **Midterm:** A summary of what students have learned from guest speakers and non-profit PR to date.
- **Group Case Study:** Assigned to a non-profit by the instructor's discretion, students will work in small groups to craft and present a thoughtful case study deconstructing the public relations efforts of the non-profit. The case study will need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the material presented in the class to date including a SWOT analysis and offer specific suggestions and rationale for improvement or definitive evaluation that supports success for the non-profits efforts.
- **Final Project:** Students will construct a PR campaign for a non-profit of their choice. This may include conducting basic research and/or interviewing key constituents of the organization. The final project will need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the material presented in class, including a SWOT analysis, and offer

specific suggestions and rationale for improvement or definitive evaluation that supports success for the non-profits efforts.

## V. Grading

### a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Class Participation (in-class assignments and discussion)	40	10
Homework	60	15
Midterm	80	20
Case Study Group Project	100	25
Final Project	120	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

### b. 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

### 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 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.

#### d. Grading Timeline

Graded assignments will be returned to students during the next class session. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

#### VI. Assignment Submission Policy

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. If you know you're going to miss a class (e.g., going home for Thanksgiving), please let the instructor know at least **four (4) weeks** in advance so we can arrange your assignment submission.

Assignments must be submitted via email by prior to class (by 6 p.m.), unless otherwise specified.

#### VII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

*Important note to students:* **There are no textbooks required for this course.** See course schedule below for required readings and supplementary materials. Additional readings and assignments may be given during class.

#### VIII. 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.

#### IX. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/26/19 – 12/6/19)

**Friday, September 13:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, September 13:** 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 17:** Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund for Session 001

**Friday, October 11:** 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 11:** 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 15:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001

#### X. 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
<b>Week 1</b> <b>Date: 8/29</b>	<b>Introductions, Course Description &amp; Outcomes</b>  <b>Brief Overview of Non-Profit History, Structure and Types</b>  <b>The Role of PR in Non-Profits</b>	<b>Homework:</b> Conduct PR/communications audit on two (2) nonprofits.  <b>Read:</b> <a href="#">"What is a 'Nonprofit'?"</a>	Discussion of individual student backgrounds and academic/career goals.

		<a href="#">"Myths About Nonprofits"</a>  <a href="#">A Brief History of Nonprofit Organizations (And What We Can Learn)</a>	
<b>Week 2</b> <b>Date: 9/5</b>	<p>Non-Profit Media Essentials</p> <p>Media Resources on a Shoestring Budget</p> <p><b>Guest Speaker:</b>  Kristin Marguerite Doidge, journalist</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b>  Create a sample media kit for a non-profit of your choice.</p> <p><b>Read:</b>  <a href="#">The Shocking Truth about Marketing and Development for Nonprofits</a></p> <p><a href="#">What All Nonprofit Staff Need to Know About the Development Department</a></p>	<p>Due at 6 p.m.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications audit of two (2) non-profits; be prepared to discuss.</li> <li>• Be prepared to ask guest speaker questions</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Date: 9/12</b>	<p><b>Importance of Philanthropy &amp; Fundraising</b></p> <p><b>Guest Speakers:</b>  Rachel Hall, Senior Donor Relations Officer, Cedars-Sinai</p> <p>Terra Hall, Media Advocacy Manager, American Heart Association</p> <p><b>Group Case Study Assignments</b></p>	<p><b>Homework:</b>  Identify your favorite news sources and be prepared to discuss why you enjoy reading them.</p> <p><b>Read:</b>  <a href="#">USC seeks to rebuild trust, as its president resigns amid campus sex scandal</a></p> <p><a href="#">Anatomy of Strong Crisis Communication: What Planned Parenthood Did Right</a></p> <p><a href="#">6 Essential Tips for Getting Through Any Nonprofit Crisis</a></p>	<p><b>Due at 6 p.m.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample media kit.</li> <li>• Come prepared to ask guest speaker questions</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Date: 9/19</b>	<p><b>External vs. Internal Communications</b></p> <p><b>Crisis Communications</b></p> <p><b>Media Coaching 101</b></p>	<p><b>Homework:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a non-profit that has experienced a crisis or breaking news and evaluate its PR strategy and tactics executed</li> </ul>	<p><b>Due at 6 p.m.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared to discuss your favorite news sources.</li> <li>• Come prepared to ask guest speaker questions</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Guest Speaker:</b>  Cara Martinez,  Founder,  Communications and  Content by Cara</p>	<p>using the RACE method.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring an example of a non-profit that's using digital and social media well.</li> <li>• Work on group case study outline due by 10/3.</li> </ul> <p><b>Read:</b>  <a href="#">11 Lessons that PR Professionals Need to Learn in a Digital World</a>  <a href="#">How You and Your PR Agency Can Leverage SEO</a></p>	
<p><b>Week 5</b>  <b>Date: 9/26</b></p>	<p><b>Digital Media in the Nonprofit World</b></p> <p><b>How to Conduct a SWOT Analysis</b></p>	<p><b>Homework:</b>  Write a blog post, no more than 500 words, containing headline and meta description. Include suggested multimedia and social media copy to use.</p> <p><b>Read:</b>  <a href="#">The New Volunteer Workforce</a>  <a href="#">Star Power: The Pros and Cons of Celebrity Endorsers</a>  <a href="#">4 Tips for Rock-Solid Corporate Partnerships</a></p>	<p><b>Due at 6 p.m.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a non-profit that has experienced a crisis and evaluate its PR strategy and tactics executed using the RACE method.</li> <li>• Come prepared to ask guest speaker questions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 6</b>  <b>Date: 10/3</b></p>	<p><b>Mobilizing Stakeholders</b>  (Celebrities, Influencers  Volunteers &amp;  Strategic Partnerships)</p> <p><b>Guest Speaker:</b>  Darron Ricks,  Entertainment &amp;  Influencer Marketing  Manager</p>	<p><b>Homework:</b>  <a href="#">Brandraising: How Nonprofits Raise Visibility And Money Through Smart Communications</a>  <a href="#">Four Ways to Fix Broken Communications in the Social Sector</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a non-profit</li> </ul>	<p><b>Due at 6 p.m.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blog post, no more than 500 words containing headline and meta description. Include suggested multimedia and social media copy to use.</li> <li>• Group Case Study outline</li> <li>• Come prepared to ask guest speaker questions</li> </ul>

		with a strong brand identity based upon the Brandraising video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on Group Case Study</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Date: 10/10</b>	Branding & Non-Profits  <b>Guest Speakers:</b> Lisa Gilmour, Branding & Creative Services Expert and John Parago, Multi-Disciplinary Designer	Read: <a href="#">The Wall Street Takeover of Nonprofit Boards</a>  <i>Midterm will be given on 10/24</i>	Due at 6 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared to discuss a non-profit with a strong brand identity.</li> <li>• Come prepared to ask guest speakers questions</li> <li>• Review notes from all speakers; study for midterm on 10/24</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Dates: 10/17</b>	<b>NO CLASS—FALL RECESS!</b>		<b>[Fall Recess: Thursday, October 17 and Friday, October 18]</b>
<b>Week 9</b> <b>Date: 10/24</b>	<b>Midterm</b>  <b>The Basics of Setting Up &amp; Starting a Nonprofit Organization</b>  <b>Watchdog Groups</b>  <b>Guest Speaker:</b> Julie Flygare, Founder, Project Sleep	<b>Homework:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on Group Case Study</li> <li>• Identify a non-profit for final project by 10/31</li> </ul> <b>Read:</b> <a href="#">Philanthropy and Digital Civil Society: Blueprint 2019</a>  <a href="#">Ethics and Nonprofits</a>	
<b>Week 10</b> <b>Date: 10/31</b>	<b>The Future of Giving/Industry Forecasts &amp; the Importance of Innovation</b>  <b>Showcasing Impact &amp; Measuring ROI</b>  <b>Discuss Final Project</b>	<b>Homework:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on Group Case Study</li> </ul> <b>Read:</b> <a href="#">Ten Reasons Not to Measure Impact—and What to Do Instead</a>  <a href="#">2019 Nonprofit Communications Trends Report</a>	<b>Due at 6 p.m.:</b> Turn in name of non-profit for final project.
<b>Week 11</b> <b>Date: 11/7</b>	<b>Getting a Job at a Non-Profit</b>  <b>Work on Group Case Study Projects</b>  <b>Guest Speaker:</b> Elizabeth Eun, Sr.	<b>Homework:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize Group Case Study Projects for presentations starting 11/14</li> </ul>	

	Manager, Global Marketing Best Practices, World Vision		
<b>Week 12</b> Date: 11/14	<b>Case Study Presentations &amp; Discussions</b>	<b>Homework:</b> • Work on Final Project	<b>Due at 6 p.m.:</b> Group case study presentations
<b>Week 13</b> Date: 11/21	<b>Case Study Presentations &amp; Discussions</b>	<b>Homework:</b> • Evaluation of case studies due on 11/14 • Work on Final Project	
<b>Week 14</b> Date: 11/28	<b>NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK!</b>		
<b>Week 15</b> Date: 12/5	Course Evaluations	<b>Homework:</b> Work on Final Project	
<b>FINAL EXAM PERIOD</b> Dates: 12/12, 7-9 p.m.	Final Summative Experience  <b>Final Projects Submitted</b>		<b>Due at 6 p.m.:</b> • Submit Final Projects • Instructor Nealy will meet you individually to review final projects in detail.

## **XI. Policies and Procedures**

### **Additional Policies**

If you know you're going to miss a class (e.g., going home for Thanksgiving), please let the instructor know at least four (4) weeks in advance so we can arrange your assignment submission.

The instructor will contact students via their USC emails only—students are expected to check their emails and Blackboard for announcements.

### **Communication**

The instructor encourages students to contact her via email at [znealy@usc.edu](mailto:znealy@usc.edu) to discuss any class or career-related questions and/or arrange office hours. Please allow for a response within 48 hours.

### **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 or public relations 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://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>). 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**

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

[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

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

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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

[engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086*

[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

*Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*  
[studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*  
[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

*Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]*  
<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally "breaking bread" over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

## **XII. About Your Instructor**

Zahra Nealy is a public relations and communications professional with 10 years of experience in the non-profit sector. She's worked on behalf of local and national public affairs initiatives and non-profit organizations including the Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA and Pancreatic Cancer Action Network.

Zahra is currently the development communications specialist at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

She is the recipient of [PR Daily's 2017 Digital PR & Social Media Awards - Best Multichannel Campaign of the Year: "Wage Hope Together"](#) for the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network.

Zahra has a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of California, Los Angeles and an M.A. in Strategic Public Relations from the University of Southern California. She lives in Los Angeles and enjoys traveling, movies and the beach.