



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

Spring 2020 – Wednesdays – 6-8:30 p.m.

Section: 21318D

Location: ANN 211

Instructor: Dave Quast

Office: ANN classroom or lobby

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 4:45-5:45 p.m. or by appointment

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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.

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 and Assessment of Assignments

- Presentation of Case Study/ Article (20%): Bring and present two or three (for extra credit) case study/articles to class pertaining to recent/current “real life” events or issues involving ethical, legal or social aspects of public relations, tracking the subject matter on the syllabus for the current week or previous weeks. Prepare a PowerPoint-style (you may use the software of your choice) presentation with a detailed description and a list of three questions to engage the classroom in conversation. You will be in charge of the discussion, including calling on your fellow students. Dates will be chosen during our first class session. If you have a conflict, you can switch with a classmate. Both of you will need to advise the professor of the change. You must email the professor with your topic choice no later than one week prior to your presentations. There may be opportunities for extra-credit presentations, but this is not guaranteed.
 - 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? Are there any legal considerations that GM’s communications team need to take into consideration?

- One short paper (5%): This 1-2 paper will apply a Potter Box analysis to an ethical dilemma a student may have faced and to reflect on whether this analysis changed the way the student now thinks about the issue.
- Quizzes (20%): Two quizzes, one take-home and one in-class, will assess student comprehension of class materials by allowing them to apply concept learned to real situations in the news.
- Take-home Midterm Exam (20%): Students will be given a choice of three scenarios that present ethical questions. The midterm will consist of a of 500-1,000 words “deep dive” into a Potter Box analysis to determine the “best” course of action, as well as two press releases, one announcing the “best” course of action and one announcing a different conclusion. Additional details will be discussed in class.
- Final Paper (25%): Students will be given a choice a variety of “clients” and will analyze several proposed PR campaign ideas through the prism of U.S. law pertaining to media and communications. The final paper must reference key concepts and cases in the history of relevant law (First Amendment, copyright, defamation, etc.) and Potter Box concepts as appropriate. 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.

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	Contributions to class generally support claims and opinions with	Contributions to class do not support their claims with either evidence or

	rational argument or evidence.	evidence or argument, but may leave some gaps where unsupported opinions still appear.	argument. The contributions contain largely unsupported opinion.
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IV. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Case Study Presentations - grade includes not only your actual presentation, but participation in classmates' presentations.	200	20%
Short Paper	50	5%
In-class Quiz	100	10%
Midterm Exam (take home)	200	20%
Quiz (take home)	100	10%
Final Paper	250	25%
Class Discussion/Participation	100	10%
TOTAL	1,000	100%

b. Grading Scale

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

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

"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

Grading and feedback for papers, quizzes and exams will take place within one week of the due date.

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 50 percent (F).

- A. **Unless otherwise specified, all assignments must be submitted directly to the instructor via email prior to class on the due date.**
- B. All assignments will be discussed in class, and written instructions will be posted on Blackboard.

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 Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

VIII. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/13/20 – 5/1/20)

Friday, January 31: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, January 31: Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

Tuesday, February 4: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, February 28: 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, February 28: 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, April 3: 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 1/15	Course Overview, Expectations and Introductions Introduction to the Potter Box	Fitzpatrick & Bronstein (F&B) – Introduction and Ch. 1	
Week 2 1/22	Industry Codes of Ethics and Working with Activist Publics	F&B Ch. 4, Supplemental Reading(s)	Assigned Student Presentations Short Paper Assigned
Week 3 1/29	Truth, Transparency and Strategic Risk Communication	F&B Chs. 6 and 8 Supplemental Reading(s)	Assigned Student Presentations Short Paper Due
Week 4 2/05	Cultural Considerations in Ethics	Podcast: Episode 648 of This American Life “Unteachable Moment”	Assigned Student Presentations
Week 5 2/12	Responsible Online Communication and Influencers	F&B Ch. 7 Supplemental Reading(s)	Assigned Student Presentations
Week 6 2/19	Ethics of Public Diplomacy	F&B Ch. 9	Assigned Student Presentations Take-home Quiz Assigned
Week 7 2/26	Responsible Advocacy for Non-Profits	Supplemental Reading(s)	Assigned Student Presentations Take-home Quiz Due
Week 8 3/04	The First Amendment: What is Protected?	Supplemental Reading(s)	Assigned Student Presentations Midterm Paper Assigned
Week 9 3/11	Defamation, Product Disparagement and Privileges	Supplemental Reading(s)	Assigned Student Presentations Midterm Paper Due
Spring Break 3/18	No Class		
Week 10 3/25	Commercial Appropriation, Rights of Publicity & False Light	Supplemental Reading(s)	Assigned Student Presentations
Week 11 4/01	Endorsements, Misrepresentation & CA Bus. & Prof. 17200	Supplemental Reading(s)	Assigned Student Presentations
Week 12 4/08	Trademark and Copyright	Supplemental Reading(s)	Assigned Student Presentations

Week 13 4/15	Conflicts of Interest and Whistleblowing; Review and Final Preparation	Supplemental Reading(s)	Assigned Student Presentations
Week 14 4/22	Communications Law Bootcamp: Issue-spotting	Supplemental Reading(s)	Bring in one news article or video (less than one year old) that concerns one of the legal principles we have studied. Final Paper Assigned
Week 15 4/29	Communications Ethics Bootcamp: Review Final Thoughts	Supplemental Reading(s)	Bring in one news article or video (less than <i>two weeks</i> old) that concerns a current event involving an ethical quandary, to be analyzed using the Potter Box. USC Course Evaluations
FINAL EXAM WEEK 5/6, 7-9 p.m.	Summative Experience		Final Paper Due by 6 p.m.

IX. Policies and Procedures

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).

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.

Respect

Expect to discuss a wide range of issues in class including those that are controversial and about which students (and the professor) may have strongly held, and possibly differing, views. There are virtually no topics off-limits as long as they advance understanding of the course material and as long as discussions are characterized by civility and mutual respect. You are expected to act as adults at all times, being courteous and sensitive to the interests of your fellow classmates.

You are expected to be well prepared for each class meeting and to provide value to the class discussion.

Students having any doubt or questions regarding assignments, schedules, etc. should consult this syllabus first, then check with fellow students and only then contact the professor if something remains unclear.

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

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.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

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 and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

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

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by 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. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
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
uscsa.usc.edu

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

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, 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

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.

X. About Your Instructor – Dave Quast

I am an adjunct professor at USC Annenberg with 25 years of experience as a public relations practitioner, counseling clients in the corporate, legal and political arenas. My expertise includes corporate communications; corporate positioning and messaging; issues, crisis and reputation management; litigation support; and, media and presentation coaching.

As a working public relations practitioner who has worked in almost every environment (corporate, agency, politics, government, etc.) on challenging and often controversial assignments, I try to bring a “real world” perspective to my classes so that students understand how the concepts we discuss and skills we develop will apply after graduation.

I am currently Managing Director at Confluence Partners, a boutique public relations and public affairs consultancy. I have led engagements in a variety of sectors including energy, industrials, professional services, financial services, health care, technology and non-profit.

In addition to work, teaching, and being a father of four (including triplets), I also serve on the Board of Directors of both Planned Parenthood of Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley and Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California. I hold a B.A. in politics and government from the University of Puget Sound, an M.A. in British Government from the University of Essex (U.K.) and I attended the Georgetown University Law Center.

I am committed to being readily available to my students. My goal is to ensure that you learn the course material – and have fun doing it – and I encourage you to talk to me if you have questions at any time. Please write (quast@usc.edu) or call (213.452.6348) and if I cannot respond immediately, I promise to get back to you within 24 hours; it will usually be much sooner! Please feel free to track me down on Twitter @davequast or on LinkedIn.