



PR 250: Strategic Public Relations: An Introduction
4 units

Spring 2022 – Wednesdays – 6-9:20 p.m.

Section: 21077D

Location: ANN 211

Instructor: Jacqueline Liu

Office Hours: 5 p.m. on Wednesdays or Zoom by appointment

Course Description

PR 250 will familiarize you with strategies and practices in the growing field of public relations/strategic communication through analysis of current public relations issues, landmark cases with special emphasis on historical roots, evolution, current and future practices. It is the foundation of the public relations program.

Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to introduce you to public relations as a professional practice. How is public relations defined? What disciplines make up the public relations profession? What are the tenets of the public relations field? Where might you fit in? How is public relations practiced here and abroad; in a corporation and in an agency; in government, in politics, and in the non-profit sector?

Public relations means different things to different people. We will define what it means to be a public relations professional, how you learn the public relations craft and how you develop and hone your public relations skills. We will also cover the basic process of public relations – research, planning, communication, evaluation – and the use of communications strategies to achieve organizational goals.

Through lectures, reading, practical exercises, guest speakers, research, writing, teamwork, and individual effort, we will explore the world of PR.

Upon completion of PR 250, students can expect to achieve:

1. A solid grasp of how public relations is defined and practiced by career, by discipline, and by personal interest.
2. A strongly developed awareness of the myriad specialized areas that exist for public relations professionals.
3. Practical knowledge of the rationale for the public relations planning processes.
4. A basic grasp of the profession sufficient to succeed in USC Annenberg's undergraduate Public Relations Studies major or minor.

Course Notes

Lecture slides are posted on Blackboard within 24 hours of each class session (if applicable). It's your responsibility to check for updated content before and after each class session. Blackboard is used for updates and turning in homework and assignments. Quizzes are given in-person or via Blackboard as needed.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Every class will consist of several of the following (when applicable):

- **Lecture/discussion** – Everyone must participate. I will ask you to share your thoughts.
- **Case studies** – We will study PRSA Silver Anvil award-winning case studies, as well as current events, to understand what the best PR programs entail. Participation during case study reviews counts towards your participation grade.
- **Industry news/updates** – It’s impossible to succeed in this class and the PR profession without reading topical news and feature writing and watching quality news broadcasts. You must stay informed of current topics in the public relations industry. You are required to read PR industry news and be prepared each week to discuss something interesting you came across. Each week, I may randomly select 2-3 students to share a news item. This will be part of your participation grade.
- **Quizzes and midterm exam** – Based on the textbook and class lectures.
- **Final group project/presentation** – Development of a public relations campaign to be presented during the final class.

Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Homework/Assignments/Quizzes	15%
Midterm Exam	35%
Final Project / Presentation (group)	40%
Participation	10%
TOTAL	100%

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

A rubric will be provided for each written assignment/project.

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. A grade of F also will be assigned for any plagiarized and/or fabricated material that is submitted.

d. Grading Timeline

Assignments, quizzes and the midterm will be graded by the next class session. Grades are updated and tracked in Blackboard.

Assignment Rubrics

Rubrics for assignments will be provided with assignments.

Assignment Submission Policy

1. 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. **I do not accept make-up assignments.**
2. Assignments must be submitted exactly as instructed.

A note about attendance: Class time and timeliness are important. If you are late, YOU are responsible for finding out what was missed. The instructor won't repeat advice, instructions, quizzes or explanations.

Missing a single class is 7 percent of the term. Because much of the learning takes place in class and participation counts toward the grade, lateness or an absence can adversely affect your final grade.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Textbook:

Introduction to Strategic Public Relations: Digital, Global, and Socially Responsible Communication

Authors: Janis Terrugi Page, Lawrence J. Parnell

Publisher: Sage

Some reading materials may be posted on Blackboard. Besides reading the required textbook, you must keep up with current events. This means you should read newspapers, magazines, trade publications, websites and other publications as required by assignments or your own interests and listen to podcasts.

Please familiarize yourself with these PR publications:

- prweek.com (Annenberg students receive a free subscription)
- publicrelationstoday.com
- prnewsonline.com
- prdaily.com
- odywerpr.com
- adweek.com

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.

Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/10/2022 – 4/29/2022; Final Exam Period: 5/4-11/2022)

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20221/calendar/>

Last day to add: Friday, January 28, 2022

Last day to drop without a mark of "W" and receive a refund: Friday, January 28, 2022

Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit: Friday, January 28, 2022 [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

Last day to add/drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund or change to Audit: Tuesday, February 1

Last day to withdraw without a "W" on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade: Friday, February 25, 2022 [Mark of "W" will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply.]

*Please drop any course by the end of week three for session 001 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]

Last day to drop with a mark of "W": Friday, April 8, 2022

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 1/12	PR 250 Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course overview • Syllabus review • Expectations • Policies and procedures 	Preface, chapters 1 and 2	
Week 2 1/19	The Origins of Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Public Relations? • Misconceptions about public relations • The history of PR – How it got started; how it has evolved into a strategic function • The functions of PR • The model of public relations 	Chapter 4	PR/industry news discussion
Week 3 1/26	The Public Relations Process: Beginning with Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is research so important; how is it done; how to use it • Common PR research methods • The role of strategy with regard to research 	Chapter 5	
Week 4 2/2	The Public Relations Process: Planning, Objectives and Tactics	Chapter 5	PR/industry news discussion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning: The importance of a PR/communications plan; how to develop a plan • The role of strategy with regards to planning • Putting the plan into action • The role of strategy with regards to tactics 		
Week 5 2/9	The Public Relations Process: Evaluation and PR Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to know if PR objectives were met • Common PR evaluation methods 	Chapters 6, 7, and 8	PR/industry news discussion
Week 6 2/16	Reaching Audiences through Mass Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collateral materials: What are they? How are they used? • Mass media: print/online, TV, newspapers, blogs, radio, etc. 		PR/industry news discussion
Week 7 2/23	Public Opinion/Persuasion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why public opinion matters • Tips/best practices to help tell our story and persuade audiences Midterm Prep		PR/industry news discussion
Week 8 3/2	Midterm		
Week 9 3/9	TBD		PR/industry news discussion
Spring Break 3/16	No Class		
Week 10 3/23	PR in Corporations Corporate Social Responsibility, community relations, reputation management, social responsibility, employee communications, diversity initiatives and investor relations. Final Group Project Overview	Chapters 10 and 11	PR/industry news discussion
Week 11 3/30	Meeting and Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR campaigns often include large and small meetings and events. We'll review types of events, event planning concepts, and best practices. 	Chapters 3 and 12	PR/industry news discussion
Week 12 4/6	Issues Management and Crisis Communications	Chapters 3 and 12	PR/industry news discussion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are conflicts and crisis situations? • Conflict management lifecycle • Strategies for dealing with issues, risks and crisis • Restoring corporate reputation <p>Ethics and Law in Public Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical guidelines in PR • How does law affect PR 		
Week 13 4/13	<p>The Future of PR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss changes PR executives, professionals, scholars and students foresee in the PR industry in the future • Review research studies conducted by USC Annenberg Center for Public Relations. Reports include: Relevance Report / Global Communications Report 		PR/industry news discussion
Week 14 4/20	TBD		
Week 15 4/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class Group Working Sessions to Prepare for Final Presentation 		
FINAL PROJECT 5/4, 7-9 p.m.	Final Project Presentation		

Policies and Procedures

Email Me

This is the best way to reach me: liuj@usc.edu. I try to respond within the same day, but please give me up to 24 hours.

Scheduling Meetings

I use Calendly so students can see my availability to meet via Zoom. Simply go to www.calendly.com/liuofficehours to schedule a time (15- and 30-minute sessions available). I have office hours on-campus from 5 – 6 pm on Wednesdays.

Ask me a “Dumb” Question

There are no dumb questions, but some may seem embarrassing or uncomfortable to ask in a large setting. I use a [Google Form](#) for students to ask whatever they want. I will do my best to answer it during our next class. If I don't know the answer to your question, we will find it together as a class. I also use the form as a safe channel for students to 'check' me. If I've said something offensive, off-color or inappropriate in class, I am committed to fixing that right away.

Approved Absences

Students may not make up quizzes unless there's a legitimate and approved absence for illnesses with a doctor's note, athletes with an approved request, or for religious holidays.

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

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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" 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, 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.symlicity.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 Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776

osas.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

uscса.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/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

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.

About Your Instructor

Jackie Liu is Senior Vice President at The Pollack Group and provides strategic guidance on managing public relations campaigns, creating integrated marketing campaigns, branding, corporate messaging and reputation management. Prior to that, she spent 12 years working as a communications professional in the automotive industry and consultant, executing regional and national events for global automotive, food and beverage companies. She also teaches PR 209: Writing for Strategic Public Relations and PR 535: Persuasive Writing. Jackie is an LA native and hates mayonnaise, cilantro and having her picture taken.