



**PR 250: Strategic Public
Relations: An Introduction
4 Units**

Spring 2022 – Tuesdays – 6-9:20 p.m.

Section: 21088D

Location: ANN 405

Instructor: Dale Legaspi

Office: Classroom or ANN Lobby

Office Hours: One hour before class begins or by appointment

Contact Info: legaspi@usc.edu; cell: 650-931-7762; Skype: dale.legaspi

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 the public relations profession: defining it, identifying disciplines that comprise it, skills necessary to succeed in it. While this already-broad field is constantly expanding, this class will help you determine where you might fit and introduce the fundamental skills necessary to succeed. Some themes we will explore: corporate vs. agency, domestic vs. international, government and politics, non-profit, industry-specific, etc.

Public relations not only means different things to different people, but it means different things today than it did five or 10 years ago. We will define what it means to be a public relations professional today, explore how you learn the public relations craft and develop your skill set and look forward toward the future of the field. The entire course will be steeped in 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 a 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

The class is set up as an in-person lecture style. Students are required to participate and contribute their thoughts and insights. Blackboard will be used for updates, turning in homework and assignments, and taking quizzes and exams.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

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

- **Discussion** – Topics will generally cover relevant news and industry topics. Everyone must participate. I will ask you to share your thoughts.
- **Industry news/updates** – 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. Be prepared, as I may randomly select 2-3 students to share news items each week. This is part of your participation grade. *Note: Lively discussions are always interesting and welcome, but we will all be required to maintain professional decorum and keep any debates respectful.*
- **Case studies** – We will study real-life case studies to understand what the best PR programs entail. Participation during case study reviews counts toward your participation grade.
- **Quizzes and midterm exam** – Based on assigned readings and class lectures.
- **Final group project/presentation** – Development of a public relations campaign to be presented during the final class.

Assignments will be turned in on Blackboard, and are due regardless of whether or not you are in class. In the event of an illness, holiday or other event that requires you to miss class, you must contact me as far ahead of time as possible to request an exception to a deadline.

Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Homework/Assignments	25	15%
Midterm Exam	150	35%
Final Project / Presentation (group)	200	40%
Participation	75 (5/class)	10%
TOTAL	450	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” 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 within a week after it's due. 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 at the beginning of class on the dates indicated. I will accept early assignments, but I will not accept late assignments. Late assignments will automatically be given a grade of 0/F.
2. Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard, unless I have given you different instructions.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Besides reading the required textbook, you must keep up with current events. Please browse one or more of the following online publications.

- One major national news source (NYT, WSJ, etc.) - *Note: Your selection here can reflect your specific interest in the public relations field.*
- One major international news source (Reuters, AP, etc.)
- 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 Date: 1/11	PR 250 Overview and Self Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course overview Syllabus review Expectations Policies and Procedures Communications Styles 		
Week 2 Date: 1/18	The Origins of Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Public Relations, actually? When/Where did it start?; How has it evolved into a strategic function? What is the model of public relations? 	Preface, chapters 1 and 2	PR/industry news discussion Communication Styles Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why this style? How can this help you become a better communicator? How does this make you a better PR professional?
Week 3 Date: 1/25	The Public Relations Process: Beginning with Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is research so important?; How is it done?; How do you use it? What are common PR research methods? What is the role of strategy with regard to research? 	Chapter 4	PR/industry news discussion

Week 4 Date: 2/1	PR Theories		PR/industry news discussion
Week 5 Date: 2/8	The Public Relations Process: Planning, Objectives and Tactics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning: How do you develop a PR/communications plan? What is its importance? • What is the role of strategy in developing a plan? • How do you establish objectives and then put the plan into action? • How do you ensure that strategy informs your tactics? 	Chapter 5	PR/industry news discussion
Week 6 Date: 2/15	The Public Relations Process: Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you know if you've met your PR objectives? • What are the common methods of PR evaluation? 		PR/industry news discussion
Week 7 Date: 2/22	Reaching Audiences through Mass Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What collateral materials do PR professionals use? How do we use them? • How do you define mass media? What does it entail? • What is the PESO model? 	Chapters 6, 7, and 8 Spin Sucks blog	PR/industry news discussion
Week 8 Date: 3/1	MIDTERM		
Week 9 Date: 3/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review MIDTERM • Discuss final group project 		PR/industry news discussion
Spring Break Date: 3/14-3/18	NO CLASS		
Week 10 Date: 3/22	Public Opinion/Persuasion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does public opinion matter? • What are the best practices to help tell our story and persuade audiences? • What are the ethical implications of persuading the public? 		PR/industry news discussion
Week 11 Date: 3/29	Meeting and Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of meetings and events in effective PR campaigns? 		PR/industry news discussion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the types of events, concepts of event planning and best practices? 		
Week 12 Date: 4/5	PR in Corporations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSR, DE&I...why so many acronyms? And what do they all mean? What are the roles of community relations, reputation management, employee communications and investor relations? 	Chapters 10 and 11	PR/industry news discussion
Week 13 Date: 4/12	Issues Management and Crisis Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are conflicts and crisis situations? How do you apply the conflict management lifecycle? What are the strategies and best practices for dealing with issues, risks and crises? How do you restore corporate reputation in the wake of a crisis? Ethics and Law in Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does PR work when the lines between law and ethics become blurry? 	Chapters 3 and 12 Ethics in Public Relations Handout	PR/industry news discussion
Week 14 Date: 4/19	The Future of PR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do PR executives, professionals, scholars and students foresee in the PR industry in the future? 		PR/industry news discussion
Week 15 Date: 4/26	Final Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course evaluations FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS 		
FINAL EXAM PERIOD Date: 5/10, 7-9 p.m.	FINAL PROJECTS DUE Summative experience		Final Project Deliverable Due

Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

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.

Communication

Email me at legaspi@usc.edu. If it's urgent, please email me at dale.legaspi@zenogroup.com or text/call (650) 931-7762. Please let me know in advance if you want to meet in person. I will reply to emails within 48 hours max—usually 24.

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.symplcity.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

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.

About Your Instructor

Dale Legaspi is a two-time Annenberg graduate who has more than a decade of experience in public relations/strategic communications for various B2B tech companies. He is currently a senior account supervisor at Zeno group, where he leads four client teams that span enterprise technology and healthcare. In his previous position at telecommunications company Calix, he drove communications strategy, working directly with the C-Suite to execute their vision and position the company as a software-centric innovator—a departure from its traditional telecom hardware roots.

His previous experience includes stops at small and mid-sized agencies, where he represented clients in all areas of tech, including: enterprise data, cloud, mobile & wireless, security and semiconductors. Specializing in delivering creative programs to raise the profiles of startups and emerging companies, he prepared clients for multi-million dollar exit events and launched a startup from stealth mode.

He graduated from USC Annenberg with a BA in public relations in 2005 before returning to complete his MA in 2016.