



PR 452: Public Relations in Entertainment 4 units

Spring 2025 – Mondays – 2-5:20 p.m.

Section: 21272D

Location: ANN406

Instructor: Jennie O'Hagan

Office: ANN classroom or lobby

Office Hours: by appointment

Contact Info: ohaganko@usc.edu (48 hour return rate)

Course Description

Public relations has become an integral part of modern entertainment and sports industries. Particularly with owned, earned, and shared media, entertainment PR is the key driver that can shape the audience experience and can ultimately dictate the success of the brand or product.

This course explores how public relations is used in the design, promotion, and presentation of popular entertainment. With a focus on representation for celebrities, films, television, streaming, events, music, and sports, students will learn tactics and strategies with the use of real-world examples. There is no textbook for this course, so class attendance is necessary to receive all of the required information.

Designed to be an interactive experience, the class includes weekly discussion requiring extensive class participation. Lectures will be supplemented by in-class guest speakers who are working professionals in the fields of media and/or entertainment public relations.

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate extensive knowledge in all areas of the career of an entertainment publicist and strategic communications executive
- Discuss major areas of the entertainment industry and the role of public and media relations.
- Analyze modern entertainment PR campaigns
- Develop strategies for developing effective campaigns, content and brand partnerships
- Analyze entertainment philanthropy activities and plans
- Practice a variety of tools for negotiating on set interviews and on the red carpet
- Create multimedia material for entertainment PR campaigns
- Bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical execution of PR strategies and tactics in entertainment by discussing terminology, common practices and idiosyncrasies specific to the industry.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Students will be expected to demonstrate proficient communication skills, including efficient and effective writing. In addition, they will be able to demonstrate their understanding of both the entertainment context and PR processes involved in current stories, as well as evaluate PR tactics and resulting outcomes.

- **Participation:** is a major component of this class but how you participate is (in part) up to you. In-class discussions, weekly contribution of speaker question and thank you notes and correspondence with me will all be factored into participation. **What is NOT graded is whether or not what you say is right or wrong — if you already knew everything, you wouldn't have had to COME to college. You SHOULD be wrong sometimes.** That's how we learn together. Students will be asked to discuss pop culture and entertainment news of the week, topics relevant to the day's discussion, ask questions of guest speakers, etc.
- **Speaker Question:** Students will provide ONE (1) question for each guest speaker IN BRIGHTSPACE NOTES by noon on Thursday. The question will be specific to the speaker's job, company and or personal experience. Selected questions will be chosen by the professor to be asked of the speaker and students may be called on to ask their Q aloud. Not every Q will be chosen each week. (Included in participation points)
- **Thank You Notes:** Students will be required to write a thank you note to each speaker specifically detailing two or three key learnings from the talk. The thank you will be due IN BRIGHTSPACE NOTES by noon on the Friday after class so the speaker can get a timely response of gratitude for their time. Instructor will pass an email with ALL notes to the speaker. (Included in participation points)
- **Written Assignments:** Students will write and be prepared to discuss five (5) written assignments covering a variety of topics described later in this syllabus and assigned throughout the semester.
- **Case Study:** Each group will give an Entertainment Public Relations presentation about their chosen subject - successes and failures (PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezzi and Google are all acceptable) that includes an overview of the campaign, key findings, and PR implications (e.g. what should a PR practitioner take away from this case) ***Please keep your case study to 5-7 minutes - every person in the group must have measurable participation in the project.**
- **Midterm:** Create entertainment public relations campaign for person or entertainment product with a class group. Present to class. Instructions and rubric will be provided. Peer analysis will be included.
- **Final Exam:** Class will participate in-class discussion re: all subjects covered over the term. Questions will be given in advance. Specific case studies will be required as answers to questions, with a clear understanding of how class learnings have affected the subject. Every student will be expected to participate in conversation when called upon or by volunteering and be able to provide a thorough understanding and defense of image management skills and practical applications for public relations. There will be a written component, as well.

Grading:

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Participation / Thank You Notes / Speaker questions	15	15%
Writing Assignments	25	25%
Case Study	15	15%
Midterm	20	20%
Final (Oral 20 / Written 5)	25	25%
TOTAL	100	100%

b. Course Grading Scale

Letter grades and corresponding point value ranges.

Letter grade and corresponding numerical point range		
95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B- (B minus)	67% to 69%: D+ (D plus)
90% to 94%: A- (A minus)	77% to 79%: C+ (C plus)	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+ (B plus)	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D- (D minus)
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C- (C minus)	0% to 59%: F

c. Grading Standards

Public Relations

“A” projects have near professional production quality; one or no mistakes; clearly error-checked and edited material. All required elements included (varied vocabulary; supporting facts/figures/graphics/videos/audio segments; quotes as required). Excellent organization and flow; original thinking. Showed creativity in packaging/distribution method. High end of scale: publishable today as is; client-ready

“B” projects have two to five spelling, grammar mistakes. One or more required elements missing or poorly displayed (i.e., poorly illustrated graphic, confusing chart, misleading language, etc.). Shows potential as a good content producer. All elements are well organized. High end of scale will have at least one extraordinary element such as astonishing lead or little-known facts or stunning graphic element. Some creativity shown. Publishable with medium editing; nearly client-ready

“C” projects have more than five errors (spelling, grammar). Poor production quality, poorly edited and/or proofread. Confusing or uninteresting content. Little or no facts/figures included. Passive rather than active verbs become the norm. Little or no creativity shown. Publishable with major editing; not client-ready

“D” projects have more than ten errors (spelling, grammar). Needs to be completely rewritten/reproduced. Poorly organized with little or no understanding of public relations and advertising standards. Needs to work with an

official writing coach.

“F” projects are not rewritable/reproducible, are late or not turned in. material show no understanding of PR/ advertising approaches or standards. A grade of F also will be assigned for any submitted work that is found to be plagiarized, fabricated and/or uses AI tools in unattributed ways.

d. Grading Timeline

Grades for the group project assignments and the individual interview assignment will be made within two weeks following the due date. Grades will be updated and tracked in Brightspace. Questions about grades can be directed to ohaganko@usc.edu.

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: 1/13/2025 – 5/2/2025; Final Exam Period: 5/7-14/2025)

Link: <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20251/registration-calendar/>

Last day to add: Friday, January 31, 2025

Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund: Friday, January 31, 2025

Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit: Friday, January 31, 2025 [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 4, 2025

Last day to withdraw without a “W” on transcript or change pass/no pass to letter grade: Friday, February 28, 2025 [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 11, 2025

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.

Week/Date	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
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Week 1 Date: 1/13	INTRODUCTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What’s IN and OUT for #PR in 2025? 	Begin the practice of watching / reading entertainment media - watching for PR strategy and campaigns Read: <u>The Evolution of Entertainment PR</u>	WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1: (a) Analyze the Critic’s Choice Awards and the role PR played in shaping narratives DUE JANUARY 27 IN BRIGHTSPACE.
Week 2 Date: 1/20	NO CLASS MLK Jr DAY		
Week 3 Date: 1/27	ENTERTAINMENT PR OVERVIEW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is “entertainment public relations” ▪ What is the goal of EPR ▪ Key Sectors ▪ Top agencies & publicists ▪ EPR Toolbox - media list 	Read: <u>What an Entertainment Publicist does in a Workday</u>	Writing Assignment #1 due
Week 4 Date: 2/3	FILM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The role of PR in a film release ▪ Red carpet strategies ▪ Press tours ▪ Film Analysis ▪ Case Study Intro 	Blake Lively PR Battle – is mud-slinging all part of the entertainment PR game? (PR Week)	
Week 5 Date: 2/10	RETAIL COLLABS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anatomy of a winning collab relationship ▪ Failed collabs ▪ Future of collabs 	Create a collaboration between a favorite entertainment person or product (TV/Film) of yours and a retail item/corporation. GUEST SPEAKER: Matt Prince, Head of PR Taco Bell Read: <u>The Art of Masterful Brand Collaborations</u>	WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2 Create a collaboration between an entertainer and a product. Explain the collaboration, why this collaborate is a good business strategy, and a proposed social media launch tactic. 3-5 pages DUE FEBRUARY 24 IN BRIGHTSPACE

Week 6 Date: 2/17	NO CLASS PRESIDENT'S DAY		
Week 7 Date: 2/24	SPORTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Intersection between sport and entertainment ■ Celebrity athletes ■ Successful post-sports career transitions 	Learn about interview project Read: <u>Sports Public Relations: How to Do Sports PR</u> <u>Ten Athletes with Great PR Skills</u> <u>The Power of Athletes to Become Media Companies and Transform the Game</u>	WRITING ASSIGNMENT #5 Interview & analysis DUE APRIL 21 ON BRIGHTSPACE
Week 8 Date: 3/3	TELEVISION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ History of TV PR campaigns ■ Modern TV PR campaigns ■ Analysis of creative TV campaigns 	Reading to be assigned by instructor GUEST SPEAKER: Vanessa Anderson, Founder and President at AM PR Group	
Week 9 Date: 3/10	MIDTERM WORKDAY & DUE DATE		MIDTERM WORKDAY & DUE DATE
Date: 3/17	NO CLASS SPRING BREAK		
Week 10 Date: 3/24	MIDTERM PRESENTATIONS		MIDTERM PRESENTATIONS WRITING ASSIGNMENT #3 PEER ANALYSIS ON MIDTERMS DUE MARCH 31 ON BRIGHTSPACE
Week 11 Date: 3/31	BOOK CAMPAIGNS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Book launch campaigns ■ Book tours ■ Celebrities as authors 	Reading to be assigned by instructor GUEST SPEAKER: Alyson Stoner, actor & author "Semi-Well-Adjusted Despite Literally Everything"	

Week 12 Date: 4/7	PITCHING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Media pitching strategies and tactics ▪ Pitching traditional media ▪ Pitching 	Create your own pitch	WRITING ASSIGNMENT #4 FOLLOWING PITCH CONVERSATION, CREATE YOUR OWN PITCH DUE APRIL 14 ON BRIGHTSPACE
Week 13 Date: 4/14	MEDIA RELATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key media outlets and reporters ▪ Approaches to relationship building 	Reading to be assigned by instructor	
Week 14 Date: 4/21	AWARDS SEASON <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key award shows ▪ Red carpet media training ▪ The role of fashion 	Reading to be assigned by instructor	
Week 15 Date: 4/28	FINAL PRESENTATIONS		
Final Exam Period Date: 5/12, 2-4 p.m.	FINAL PAPER DUE		

Policies and Procedures

Communication

Please feel free to contact me via email throughout the semester with questions about class, the industry or where to eat in Los Angeles. I look forward to being of help. I don't check my USC email every day so it could be up to 48-hours before a reply.

Course Evaluations

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. A student in this class will proctor the 15-minute exercise (without me present) near the end of the semester. It's a great help to me to hear what you like, aren't as fond of and ideas for creating a more challenging, engaging class.

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.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation, is prohibited. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

The USC Student Handbook (<https://policy.usc.edu/studenthandbook/>)

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity https://catalogue.usc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=20&ent_oid=4369

“Since its founding, the 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.”

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.

Academic Integrity violations (academic dishonesty) include, but are not limited to: Plagiarism and Cheating

- The submission of material authored by another person or entity (such as an AI tool – see below) but represented as the student’s own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.
- Re-using any portion of one’s own work (essay, term paper, project, or other assignment) previously submitted without citation of such and without permission of the instructor(s) involved.
- Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers, including drafts. Also, all students involved in collaborative work (as permitted by the instructor) are expected to proofread the work and are responsible for all particulars of the final draft.
- Acquisition of academic work, such as term papers, articles solutions, or other assignments, from any source and the subsequent presentation of those materials as the student’s own work, or providing academic work, such as term papers, solutions, articles or assignments that another student submits as their own work.

Generative AI Policy

The USC Annenberg Public Relations and Advertising program views generative AI as an addition to USC’s digital literacy tools that students are encouraged to experiment with and use inside and outside the classroom. Students may use generative AI tools such as Chat GPT to help complete their class assignments but must disclose such use in the bibliography or notes section. Students are solely responsible for the quality and the accuracy of their submissions, regardless of whether they were completed with the aid of generative AI.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the Financial Aid Office webpage for undergraduate- and graduate-level SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:

USC Annenberg has an embedded student health counselor, Dr. Kelly Greco. Dr. Greco helps students prioritize their mental health and emotional well-being. In this video, she shares a few tips for how to "Fight On" every day. Students may schedule sessions with her through MySHR or by calling (213) 740-9355 (WELL). USC Student Health services are also available to support student's mental health journey by visiting: <https://sites.usc.edu/counselingandmentalhealth/>

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

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

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086

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.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-2500

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

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411

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

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101

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

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

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.

Annenberg Student Emergency Aid Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

Awards are distributed to students experiencing unforeseen circumstances and emergencies impacting their ability to pay tuition or cover everyday living expenses. These awards are not intended to cover full-tuition expenses, but rather serve as bridge funding to guarantee students' continued enrollment at USC until other resources, such as scholarships or loans, become available. Students are encouraged to provide as much information in their application, as well as contact their academic advisor directly with questions about additional resources available to them.

About Your Instructor

Jennie O'Hagan is a multi-E Emmy winning Television Producer and Public Relations Professional. Jennie was the original Entertainment Producer for the *KTLA Morning News* in Los Angeles and Executive Producer of KTLA's broadcast of the *ROSE PARADE*. Jennie has just returned to LA after two years at the Boston Globe, building a TV studio and debuting a daily newsmagazine. She often produces Red Carpet Awards Season coverage and is an Executive Consultant for clients like Disneyland; in both publicity and video production. Jennie is proud to work with Harvest Home in Venice, CA, helping to promote healthy families out of homelessness. She is married to Dan, has two adult stepchildren and her daughter, Madeline graduated USC class of 2023.