

Media Relations

(GAFL 561 900)

Instructor: C. Frank Igwe, PhD
Meeting: May 20-August 5, 2016

Office Hours: By appointment
Term: Summer 2016

In person classes: May 20, 21; June 24, 25; July 22, 23 (9:30am-12:30pm)

On-line sessions: Mondays 7:45-8:45pm

Course Description

This course is designed to teach you how to THINK like a media relations professional. Whether you operate in the nonprofit, government, or corporate sectors, it is critical to learn how to navigate and understand the role of the media relations expert, and the art of effective messaging. Among other things, the course will help you understand what creates and qualifies as news, identify key factors that create the need for a media relations plan within an organization and managing these relations as a result, how effective messages are developed, how to identify your key audiences, the characteristics of the audience, and how best to target this audience. You will learn how to build media plans for both traditional and new media outlets, and will hear from media professionals and public figures who will give practical first hand insight into media relations strategies that worked, and those that did not.

Course Objectives

By the end of the term, you will be able to:

- To learn to identify "news", and what drives it
- Gain an understanding of the strategic and purposeful nature of media relations
- Be able to understand different techniques to effectively target different audiences
- Understand how media relations are being changed with emerging platforms, such as social media, citizen journalism, and niche news markets
- Communicate more effectively and persuasively, in both written and verbal forms

Class Philosophy

There is no official textbook for this class, given the dynamic and ever-changing landscape of media and media relations. However, it is expected that the students be well versed in current affairs, and come to class prepared to discuss the week's pressing issues, along with who the key players shaping and controlling the message are. Some good media outlets to monitor include: The New York Times, The Washington Post, Politico, CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, NPR, Huffington Post, amongst others. The course will be comprised of guest speakers who will provide context and nuance to the dialogue, but class participation (which will include in-class presentations), is essential to help you successfully wrestle and understand those concepts and principles of media relations that may be opaque. Keys to successful class contributions include being able to make connections between what is presented in class, and real world situations, as well as being able to offer a counter viewpoint to the lecturer, guest speakers, or other students in an articulate and respectful manner.

Work Submitted and Presented

All assignments should be turned in at the beginning of class, on the day that they are due, preferably in hard copy format. Assignments are expected to be of a quality befitting graduate level students, free of grammatical and spelling errors, along with proper structure and citations. The content should be germane to the topic at hand, and you should be prepared to contribute to the class discussion if called upon.

ATTENDANCE

It is the hope that students will attend all class sessions, which includes live and online. However, if you must miss class, it is expected that you will make arrangements to catch up on all materials presented in the aforementioned missed session.

ATTENDANCE -In-class

In-class sessions will be held one weekend a month (Friday & Saturday Mornings), and it is the expectation that students will come to class prepared to discuss all assigned readings, and actively participate in class activities pertaining to the material.

CANVAS

During this course we will make extensive use of the web-based program "Canvas" to distribute or refer you to additional readings, or to give you feedback on your assignments, and more. Content that would normally be delivered in class through lectures will be provided through self-paced modules on Canvas. Please make sure you are able to log on to this course site here: <https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1315910>

ATTENDANCE Online – Live

The live online sessions will be held every Monday, from 7:45pm-8:45pm (except on Mondays following an in-class session), and will be designed to review and reinforce the in class sessions.

ATTENDANCE Online-Asynchronous

The online-asynchronous sessions will be retrievable via links that will be available within the course online space.

Assignments

Assignments for the semester will be given on the first day of class, along with formation of teams for the class final project.

Grading Scale

A+: 96%-100%	C+: 65%-69%
A: 90%-95%	C: 60%-64%
A-: 85%-89%	C-: 55%-59%
B+: 80%-84%	D+: 50%-59%
B: 75%-79%	D: 45%-49%
B-: 70%-74%	F: less than 45%

Tentative Class Schedule

- Week 1:** Course Overview, and Introduction
- Week 1:** What Makes a Story Newsworthy?
- Week 2:** Deciphering the Media Agenda and how Niche Markets Influence the Corporate Reputation
- Week 3:** Media Training
- Week 4:** Conducting Media Intelligence and Preparing for Interviews
- Week 5:** Working with Reporters
- Week 6:** Writing for the Media
- Week 6:** Perfecting the Media Pitch
- Week 6:** Effective Messaging
- Week 7:** Crisis Communication
- Week 8:** Social Media and Media Relations
- Week 9:** Media Relations Measurement and Evaluation
- Week 10:** Non-Profit Media Relations