Course Syllabus

Course: Public Information and Community Relations

Course & Section: FES 4055

Credit Hours: 3

Session: Spring 2020

Course Format: Web-based Distance Learning

Instructor: Dr. Chris Reynolds, CEM

Office Hours: Mon 9am-10am, Wed 9am-10am (through scheduled appointment). You can email me at any time.

Required Text: EMS Public Information and Community Relations (2015) e. Mund & J. Lindsey; Brady Publishing (Pearson) ISBN: 978-0135074633

Course Communications: There is a general discussion tab that can be used, or send me an email through the course email. Urgent messages can be sent to me directly chris.reynolds@ufl.edu.

Additional Resources: Use resources on the course site: https://dcp.ufl.edu/rinker/academics/fes-course-descriptions/

Course Description

This course introduces the FES professional to benefits of community information and community relations. Students explore issues in marketing, crafting the message, identifying the audience, developing programs, and creating press releases.

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills: None

Purpose of Course: The course provides the concepts of marketing, public relations and communication to the community.

Course Goals and/or Objectives: By the end of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate understanding of public information and community relations as it pertains to EMS.
2. Explain the various components of the public information and community relations:
   o   Marketing
   o   Messaging
   o   Audience Identification
   o   SWOT Analysis
   o   Press Releases

3. Benefits of public information and community relations.

How This Course Relates to the Student Learning Outcomes in the Fire & Emergency Services program: Demonstrate strong verbal and written communication skills for leadership in fire and emergency services.

Teaching Philosophy: I am looking for students to demonstrate a working knowledge of the subject. You need to be creative when you complete your assignments but maintain a professional appearance of your work. Your work needs to be complete and in such a manner that someone can pick up your document and understand what you are trying to convey. Most of your work needs to be supported with research and cited in properly in APA format.

Instructional Methods: The course is designed for individual and group interactivity. It is important to post and respond to discussion questions in the course within the time frame allotted. This provides a learning environment by networking with other students in the course. The assignments are individual base to give you the opportunity to do a variety of activities, in many cases, similar to what you will be doing in role as a leader in the emergency services profession.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy: The course is designed in module format. You should check the site at least once a week. You are required to complete the assignments including discussion questions within the time period designated on the module. There will be meetings set up throughout the course. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Instructor Response: I will respond to all student inquiries within 24-48 hours. If it is urgent, please contact me immediately.

Quiz/Exam Policy: There is a final project for this course. There are no exams or quizzes.

Make-up Policy: You must contact me if you are going to be late on any assignment to receive credit.

Assignment Policy: All assignments have a due date. Please be sure to check the date and time it is due in each module.

Course Technology: The course resides in the web-based Canvas learning management system, requiring access to the internet. Class meetings will require a web camera and mic/audio. If you are not able to use a web camera you will need to at least provide audio/mic, you can call in on a phone also.

UF's Honesty Policy: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-

content/uploads/2018/05/4.040_18_revised2.pdf specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of in this class.

Technical support: If you experience difficulties with accessing components of the site, including lectures, quizzes or tests, contact the UF help desk immediately. **(352) 392-HELP (4357)** | *helpdesk@ufl.edu*

If they are not able to resolve your problem, contact Dr. Lindsey with your help desk ticket number and a description of the problem and steps taken to resolve it. Extensions for due dates will be granted for documented technical problems, as needed.

UF Policies

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/ . The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.
University Policy on Academic Misconduct: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/4.040_18_revised2.pdf specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of in this class.

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Netiquette: Communication Courtesy: All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. [Describe what is expected and what will occur as a result of improper behavior] http://teach.ufl.edu/docs/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf

Gator Evals: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period

opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/."

Getting Help

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints to submit a complaint.

Course Schedule

Module 1	Read Syllabus and review course content Class Introductions Weeks 1 & 2: Value of Public Information & Principles of Marketing **Read:** • FEMA_517_ Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers • Media Relations & Role of the PIO • Chapter 2: *Principles of Marketing* **Watch:**

	Public Information Officer (PIO Seminar) Crisis Communication: Is the Media Your Enemy **Assignment:** Powerpoint Presentation
Module 2	**Module 2 - Weeks 3 & 4 Overview** **Read:** - Chapter 3: *Public Information & Education Tool Kit* - SWOT.pdf - SWOT_Example.pdf - Chapter 4: *Audience Identification* - TakingResponsiblity4PositivePublicPerception (1).pdf **Watch:** - SWOT Analysis - News Media Interview Example **Discussion Forum:** Taking Responsibility for a Positive Public Perception
Module 3	**Module 3 - Weeks 5 & 6: Categorizing Messages & Crafting the Message** **Read:** - Chapter 6: *Craft the Message* - PIO_Checklist-1 - Understanding_Risk_Communication_Best_Practices **Watch:** - Exploring Garden Grove Fire Department's Social Media & Electronic Communication **Assignment:** **PIO Checklist Analysis**

Module 4	**Module 4 -Weeks 7 & 8 Overview: Audience Identification & Writing Great Online News Releases** **Read:** • Chapter 4: *Audience Identification* • TakingResponsiblity4PositivePublicPerception • Chapter 8: *Writing Great Online News Releases* • How_to_Write_A_Press_Release **Watch:** • News Media Interview Example • The Accidental PIO **Discussion Forum:** Online News Release Critique
Module 5	**Module 5- Weeks 9 & 10: Overview: Create an Information in Your Agency** **Read:** • Chapter 8: *Press Releases* • prweb-writing_great_online_news_releases • Chapter 9: *Create an Information Culture in Your Agency* **Watch:** • *Toronto Police Service, Their Customer Service and Crisis Preparedness* **Assignment:** Presentation - Your Public Agency's Communication and Community Plan
Module 6	**Module 6 Weeks 11 & 12: Fire Service Reputation Management & FINAL PRESENTATION** **Read:** • Reputation Management White Paper.pdf • Customer Service for Fire Depts.ppt ***Watch:***

	• Crisis Spokesperson Training **Discussion Forum:** Class Critique Concept of "Special Factors in Relating to Publics. **Mid-term Survey**
Module 6-2	**Module 6-2 - Week 12 FINAL PRESENTATION** Prepare a 10 slide Powerpoint presentation that you would present to a ***local community association*** that describes a department, its mission, and why it is important to the community. You want your presentation to "sell" your department and convince the community of your commitment to the community. For this assignment, be sure to use course materials, evidence and other additional sources to develop your presentation. Your Powerpoint presentation must include a maximum of (10) slides. Do not exceed (10) slides or points will be deducted. It is highly encouraged to be creative, using graphics, imagery, photos, screen shots, etc, to convey a clear understanding of a local community association and how to "sell" the department. Use your experience and expertise. Also, think about the course work completed throughout the semester and use those as a guide to help you be more innovative while completing this final project. Be sure to use APA format when citing your references. Use this opportunity to be persuasive!!

Grading Policies

The grade is based on a point system. You divide the total number of earned points into the total amount of points available to determine your grade.

Module 1: The Four Step Cycle Presentation	100
Module 2: Public Perception Discussion	50
Module 3: Public Information Officer Paper	100
Module 4: Online News Release Critique & Discussion	50
Module 5: Community Relations Plan Visual Aid	100
Module 6: Class Critique Discussion	50
Module 6-2: FINAL PRESENTATION	200

| End-of-Semester Survey | 0 |
| **Total Possible Points** | 650 |

Grading Scale

A = 93.0 to 100%	C = 73.0 to 76.9
A- = 90.0 to 92.9	C- = 70.0 to 72.9
B+ = 87.0 to 89.9	D+ = 67.0 to 69.9
B = 83.0 to 86.9	D = 63.0 to 66.9
B- = 80.0 to 82.9	D- = 60.0 to 62.9
C+ = 77.0 to 79.9	F = below 60

Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open.Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site..