COM CM 305 – Public Relations Inside the Beltway  
Fall 2013

Instructor: Xxxx X. Xxxxxxxx  
(office) ###-###-#### (mobile) 202-###-####; XxXxxx@bu.edu;  
Office Hours: By appointment, or before class (5:30-7:00 p.m.)

The course meets Wednesday evenings from 7:00 - 9:30/10:00 p.m.

NATURE OF THE COURSE & ITS OBJECTIVES

**Description:** Public Relations Inside the Beltway is a course specially designed for BU’s  
Washington, D.C. program. The course will provide students with an overview of professional principles and practice for public relations in the Washington area with a special emphasis on governmental public relations. The course includes an examination of the history, organization and scope of the public relations field throughout the nation and in D.C. Theories, strategies, and tactics of current public relations practice will be emphasized as will opportunities and requirements for work in the field.

**Objectives and Purpose of the Course:** The primary purpose of this course is to familiarize students with basic concepts and principles of public relations within the context of Washington, D.C. At the end of the course students should have attained knowledge and understanding of the following concepts:

- The role and functions of public relations within the Washington, D.C. market.

- The historical evolution of public relations throughout the nation and in Washington, D.C.

- The basic process of public relations activities – research, strategic planning, communication and evaluation – and the use of communications strategies to achieve organizational goals.

- Career opportunities in the field.
The relationships between public relations and other fields – journalism, marketing, advertising, etc. – in and around Washington, D.C.

Professional/ethical/legal responsibilities.

Concepts of public relations, audiences analyses and persuasion.

The important role played by public relations in organizational decision-making.

An idea about a variety of case-study examples that explain the basic concepts and theory behind modern public relations practice in and around Washington, D.C.

Practical guidelines for utilizing written, spoken and visual techniques to reach selected target audiences.

The course also will include several guest speakers, and at least one local field trip.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Regular attendance is required as is diligent preparation for class sessions. Students will be expected to attend all class sessions (unless you have cleared it first with the instructor), participate in class discussions, complete all readings, and submit assignments on time.

Final grades will be assessed as follows:

Research Paper I (20%)  Mid-term Exam (25%)
Research Paper II (25%)  Final Project (30%)

REQUIRED COURSE READINGS

- Bowen, Shannon A.; Rawlins, Brad & Martin, Thomas, An Overview of the Public Relations Function (Business Expert Press, 2010).
- Additional readings as listed in the syllabus.

COURSE TOPICAL OUTLINE

I. Week One

II. Week Two
How public relations works with various organizations
(Bowen, Rawlins & Martin, Chapters 5-9)

III. Week Three

IV. Week Four

V. Week Five

VI. Week Six
Public relations law and ethics (Caywood, Chapters 4 & 6)
VII. Week Seven

VIII. Week Eight
Mid-Term Exam plus Employee Communications (Caywood, Chapter 8)

IX. Week Nine

X. Week Ten

XI. Week Eleven
XII. **Week Twelve**  
Working with public relations firms in Washington (Caywood, Chapter 20)

XIII. **Week Thirteen**  
Student project presentations

XIV. **Week Fourteen**  
Student project presentations

XV. **Week Fifteen**  
Wrap-up and final class period on Capitol Hill

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students may miss two classes with no penalty. Every class missed thereafter will impact a student’s participation grade. With that noted, students are strongly encouraged to attend every class and to “save” any absences should they be “needed” due to illness, etc., later in the semester.

**COMPUTER & LIBRARY USE**

The Instructor will communicate with the class via email and Blackboard. The DC Program also provides you with access to the DC University Library Consortium, thus library take-home privileges will be made available to you in addition to the usual BU online library access. The BU Center at 1776 will also be available to you for eight hours every Saturday in case you’d like to take advantage of computers and library access here.

**PLAGIARISM POLICY/USE OF RECORDING DEVICES**

Plagiarism is the act of representing someone else’s creative and/or academic work as your own, in full or in part. It can be an act of commission, in which one intentionally appropriates the words, pictures or ideas of another, or it can be an act of omission, in which one fails to acknowledge/document/give credit to the course, creator and/or the copyright owner of those works, pictures or ideas. Any fabrication of materials, quotes or sources, other than that created in a work of fiction, is also plagiarism. Plagiarism is the most serious academic offense that you can commit and can result in probation, suspension or expulsion.

Please note that classroom proceedings for this course might be recorded for purposes including, but not limited to, student illness, religious holidays, disability accommodations, or student course review. Note also that recording devices are prohibited in the classroom except with the instructor’s permission.

Be sure to read and comply with Boston University’s Universal Academic Conduct code for undergraduates. It is available at: bu.edu/academics.