

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA SYLLABUS

Course: Public Information and Community Relations

COURSE & SECTION: FES 4055

CREDIT HOURS: 3

SESSION:

** ON-LINE

** THERE WILL BE TIMES SCHEDULED FOR ON-LINE MEETINGS.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Chris Reynolds, CEM – (chris.reynolds@ufl.edu)

OFFICE HOURS: *Mon 9 am – 10 am Wed 9 am – 10 am. You can email me any time.*

****COURSE WEBSITE:** <http://iss.at.ufl.edu>

**** 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 my drbarbk@hotmail.com email.*

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

****ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:** *Use resources on the course site under the Resource tab*

****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: *This 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. The student will demonstrate an understanding of public information and community relations as it pertains to EMS.
2. The student will be able to explain the various components of the public information and community relations:
 - a. Marketing
 - b. Messaging
 - c. Audience identification
 - d. SWOT analysis
 - e. Press releases

3. The student will be able to discuss the 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. And most of all 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>.*

****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:** *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://www.dso.ufl.edu/scsr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) 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.

UF POLICIES:

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://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://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>.

****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>

GETTING HELP:

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Sakai, 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.

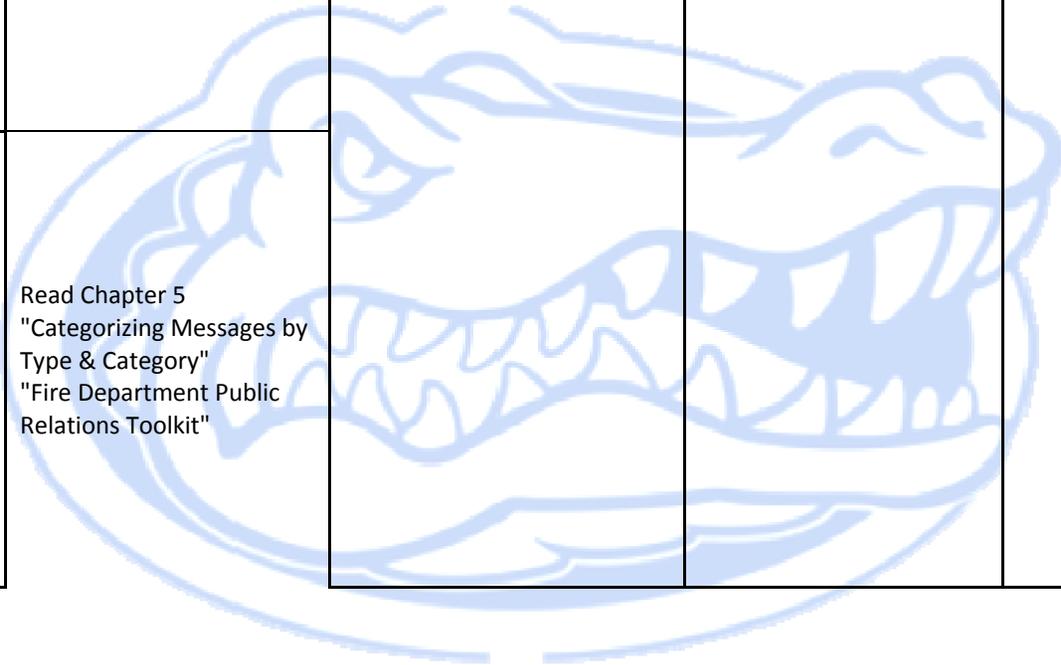
Week	Forum	Assignment	Topics	Objectives	Readings
1	Intro Discuss the four steps involved in the ongoing cycle of Informing the public and additional audiences during an incident. This is found on p.11 of the Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers (FEMA-517) booklet. Your initial post must be 250 words, with a 150 word reply posting to a fellow student.	Read Chapter 1 "Value of Public Information, Education, and Relations" "Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers"	Definitions & Differentiation - Public Information - Public Education - Public Relations - Multiple Audiences - Stakeholders - Partners - Public - Employees - Press - Be the Expert - Benefits of Gained Time - Marketing Defined - How Marketing Relates - Essential Functions - Marketing Environments - Microenvironmental - Macroenvironmental - Economic Forces - Demographic Forces - Financial Forces - Competitive Forces - Analyze Your Agency's Situation - SWOT Action Plan - Marketing Research - Seven Steps - Research Techniques - Data	1. Analyze the nature, origins and limitations of public information. 2. Critique and interpret multiple audiences as it relates to public education. 3. Compare & contrast different marketing models.	Readings: Chapter 1 "Value of Public Information, Education, and Relations" Chapter 2 "Principles of Marketing" Chapter 3 "Public Information & Education Tool Kit" "Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers" "Media Relations and the Role of the Public Information Officer: What Every DMAT Member Should Know" "SWOT Analysis" "A SWOT Analysis for the Jackson Township Fire District # 3"

2	After reading the "Media Relations and the Role of the Public Information Officer: What Every DMAT Member Should Know" article, visit the Week 2 forum and post both the positive and negative roles that the media can play in disasters. Your initial post must be 250 words, with a 150 word reply posting to a fellow student.	Read Chapter 2 "Principles of Marketing" "Media Relations and the Role of the Public Information Officer: What Every DMAT Member Should Know"	Analysis - Targeting - Four Step Process		
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3	No Forum this Week	<p>Read Chapter 3 "Public Information & Education Tool Kit" "SWOT Analysis" "A SWOT Analysis for the Jackson Township Fire District # 3"</p> <p>Paper Assignment 1 Due Conduct a SWOT Analysis of your department's public relations with local media and the community. If you are not employed with a department, you can choose one. Your Analysis must be a minimum of five pages, double-spaced pages.</p>			
4	<p>After reading "Taking Responsibility for a Positive Public Perception", visit the Week 4 forum and discuss the concept of "increased scrutiny and the spiral effect". Your initial post must be 250 words, with a 150 word reply</p>	<p>Read Chapter 4 "Audience Identification" "Taking Responsibility for a Positive Public Perception"</p>	<p>Four Step Process - Audience Identification - Stakeholders - Targeting Public Groups - Message Categorizing - System Component Identification - System Design - Agency Financing - Special Programs - Crafting the Message - Writing to the Audience - Writing to the Medium - Using Data to Add Context - Human Interest Stories - Oral Presentations - Written Presentations - Audio Presentations - Video</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the steps in the four-step process. 2. Determine the effectiveness of stakeholders. 3. Interpret the appropriate message to the audience. 4. Assess the importance of writing to the audience. 	<p>Readings:</p> <p>Chapter 4 "Audience Identification" Chapter 5 "Categorizing Message by Type and Audience" Chapter 6 "Craft the Message" "Taking Responsibility for a Positive Public Perception"</p>

	posting to a fellow student.		Presentations - Internet Presence		
5	After reading the, "Fire Department Public Relations Toolkit", visit the Week 5 Forum and discuss the "General Media Guidelines" found on p.5. Your initial post must be 250 words, with a 150 word reply posting to a fellow student.	Read Chapter 5 "Categorizing Messages by Type & Category" "Fire Department Public Relations Toolkit"			



6	<p>After reading, "Understanding Risk Communication Best Practices: A Guide for Emergency Managers and Communicators" visit the Week 5 Forum and discuss the concept of "Special Factors in Relating to Publics". Your initial post must be 250 words, with a 150 word reply posting to a fellow student.</p>	<p>Chapter 6 "Craft the Message" "Public Information Officer Position Checklist" "Understanding Risk Communication Best Practices: A Guide for Emergency Managers and Communicators" <i>...need to upload and add to reading.</i></p>			
7	<p>Read "Social Networking for Emergency Management and Public Safety" and visit the Week 7 Forum. Discuss your thoughts of the significance of social media and networking in communicating with the public. Your initial post must be 250 words, with a 150 word reply</p>	<p>Read Chapter 7 "Deliver the Message" "Social Networking for Emergency Management and Public Safety" <i>...need to add to reading and assignment</i></p>	<p>Press Releases - Written Leads - Clear Writing - Feature Stories</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the state of your agency's public message. 2. Analyze the press release examples. 3. Interpret proper tools for success. 4. Appraise the information culture that your agency presents. 	<p>Readings:</p> <p>Chapter 8 "Press Releases" Chapter 9 "Create an Information Culture in Your Agency" "Writing Great Online News Releases" "Writing Press Releases"</p>

	posting to a fellow student.				
8	<p>Visit the Week 8 Forums. Find and critique an online news release from an emergency services agency. In your discussion, point out the at least three positive elements and one negative element. Your initial post must be 250 words, with a 150 word reply posting to a fellow student.</p>	<p>Read "Writing Great Online News Releases" "Writing Great Online News Releases"</p>			

9	No Forum this Week	<p>Read Chapter 8 "Press Releases" "Writing Press Releases"</p> <p>Paper Assignment 2 Due: Write a press release on an actual incident from either your department or a department of your choosing. Your press release MUST be a minimum of 500 words and written as if you were submitting it to the local media.</p>			
10	<p>Visit the Week 10 Forum and discuss your agencies public communication and community relations plan. In your posting, be sure to include whether you believe your agencies plan is effective. Your initial post must be 250 words, with a 150 word reply posting to a fellow student.</p>	<p>Chapter 9 "Create an Information Culture in Your Agency"</p>	<p>Tools for Success - Define Your Authority - Public Relations Plan - Engage Partners - Empower Agency Staff - Assess Impacts - Active Observers - Ongoing PR Plan Evaluation - Report to Superiors</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the effectiveness of your agency's public relations plan. 2. Interpret your role as a public information officer. 3. Analyze the tools for success. 	<p>Readings:</p> <p>Chapter 9 "Create an Information Culture in Your Agency"</p>

11	<p>Visit the Week 11 Forum and post your thoughts on the class. Please include any recommendations you may have for improvement. Your initial post must be 250 words, with a 150 word reply posting to a fellow student.</p>	<p>"Fire Service Reputation Management: White Paper" "Customer Service for Fire Departments (Powerpoint)"</p>	<p>Reputation Management - Customer Service to the Community - Excellence in Service</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess your department's commitment to managing its reputation. 2. Analyze your department's level of customer service. 3. Determine your capability to be a positive change agent. 	<p>Readings: "Fire Service Reputation Management: White Paper" "Customer Service for Fire Departments (Powerpoint)"</p>
12	<p>No Forum this Week</p>	<p>Final Assignment Due 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.</p>	<p>Final Assignment</p>	<p>Final Assignment</p>	<p>Final Assignment</p>

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. A grading rubric for the final project is under the Resource Tab on the course.

Week 3 Paper Assignment 1 (300 Points)

Conduct a SWOT Analysis of your department's public relations with local media and the community. If you are not employed with a department, you can choose one. Your Analysis must be a minimum of five pages, double-spaced pages.

Week 9 Paper Assignment 2 (300 Points)

Write a press release on an actual incident from either your department or a department of your choosing. Your press release MUST be a minimum of 500 words and written as if you were submitting it to the local media.

Final Assignment Due (400 Points)

Week 12 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.

You have 10 graded forums worth 50 points each as follows:

Topic	Points
Week 1 Forum 1 - Introduction	50
Week 1 Forum 2 - Four Step Cycle	50
Week 2 Forum - Positive & Negative Roles	50
Week 4 Forum - Taking Responsibility	50
Week 5 Forum - General Media Guidelines	50
Week 6 Forum - Special Factors	50
Week 7 Forum - Social Media	50
Week 8 Forum - News Release Critique	50
Week 10 Forum - Your Agency's Plan	50
Week 11 Forum - Thoughts & Recommendations	50

Total Points Possible 1500

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>.

