

# Course Syllabus

## Syllabus: FES 4055

**Course:** Public Information and Community Relations

**Course & Section:** FES 4055

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Session:** Fall 2019

**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](mailto: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:
  - Marketing
  - Messaging
  - Audience Identification
  - SWOT Analysis
  - 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](mailto: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](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>

## Getting Help

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

- [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto: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

Read Syllabus and review course content

Class Introductions

### **Module 1: Value of Public Information, Education and Relation**

Week 1

**Read:** FEMA\_517

**Watch:** Public Information Officer PIO Seminar

**Assignment:** Four step ongoing cycle Presentation

**Discussion Forum:** Four Steps ongoing cycle

### **Module 2: Principles of Marketing**

**Read:** Media Relations & Chapter 2

Week 2

**Watch:** Crisis Communication is the Media Your Enemy

**Discussion Forum:** Positive and Negative Roles the Media can play in Disasters

**Module 3: Public Information & Education Tool Kit and SWOT**

Week 3 **Read:** Chapter 3 & SWOT pdfs.

**Watch:** SWOT Analysis

**Assignment:** Conduct a SWOT Analysis

**Module 4: Audience Identification**

**Read:** Chapter 4 & Chapter 1 (see link in module)

Week 4 **Watch:** News Media Interview Example

**Discussion Forum:** Discussing the concept of "Increased Scrutiny and the Spiral Effect"

**Module 5: Categorizing Messages by Type & Category**

Week 5 **Read:** Chapter 5 & Chapter 1

**Watch:** Exploring Garden Grove Fire Dept

**Assignment:** PIO Paper

**Module 6: Craft the Message**

**Read:** Chapter 6, PIO Checklist and Understanding Risk Communication

Week 6

**Discussion Forum:** Concept of "Special Factors in Relating to Publics.

**Mid-term Survey**

**Module 7: Deliver the Message**

Week 7 **Watch:** The Power of Story Telling in Crisis Communication

**Assignment:** Social Media Platforms Presentation

**Module 8: Writing Great Online News Releases**

Week 8 **Read:** Chapter 8 & How to Write a Press Release

**Watch:** The Accidental PIO

**Discussion Forum:** Online News Release

Week 9  
**Module 9: Press Release**  
**Read:** Chapter 8 & prweb-writing

**Module 10: Create an Information Culture in Your Agency**

Week 10  
**Read:** Chapter 9  
**Watch:** Toronto Police Service  
**Assignment:** Create A Visual Aid (Public Agencies Communication Plan)

**Module 11: Fire Service Reputation Management**

Week 11  
**Read:** Fire Service Reputation Management & Customer Service for Fire Department  
**Watch:** Crisis Spokesperson  
**Discussion Forum:** Personal Feedback

**Module 12:**

Week 12  
**Final Presentation**  
**End-of Semester Survey**

## 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.

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Points</u>
Week 1- Four Step Cycle Presentation	100
Week 3 - SWOT Anaylsis	100

Week 5 - PIO Paper	100
Week 7 - Social Media Platform Presentation	100
Week 10- Creating a Public Agency Plan	100
Week 12- Final Presentation	200
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>700</b>

<b><u>Discussions</u></b>	<b><u>Points</u></b>
**Class Introductions	0
**Syllabus Quiz	0
Week 1: Discuss Four-Step Ongoing Cycle	50
Week 2: Positive and Negative Roles in the Media	50
Week 4: Increased Scrutiny and the Spiral Effect	50
Week 6: “Emergency Managers and Communicators”	50
Mid-Semester Survey	0
Week 8: Online News Release	50
Week 11: Student Feedback	50
End-of-Semester Survey	0
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>300</b>

## 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..