

# JOUR 80 Introduction to Public Relations (4 units) – Spring 2025 (Online)

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

**Name:** Gail McElroy

**Online Office Hour:** Mondays from 11 a.m. to Noon (synchronous in Canvas classroom)

**Email:** [mcelroygail@fhda.edu](mailto:mcelroygail@fhda.edu)

*This course is fully online and asynchronous, which means it does not meet on campus, have mandatory online sessions or specific times students must be online.*

## OFFICE HOUR & COMMUNICATION

I hold a "drop in" online office hour each week on Monday mornings from 11 a.m. to noon. This "virtual" office hour means you may log in to our classroom and send a message through Canvas and expect an immediate response from me. If my office hour doesn't work for you, please contact me for an appointment. When contacting me, I prefer you use the messaging system within Canvas, but I will also respond via direct email. I am alerted when you send me a message in Canvas. I check my email and our Canvas course frequently throughout the week (generally between the hours of 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.). My personal commitment is to get back to students within 24 hours of your original message. If you don't hear back from me within 24 hours, I encourage you to reach out again.

## WHAT STUDENTS CAN EXPECT FROM INSTRUCTOR

My pledge is to interact with students regularly throughout each week of the course.

- I will provide reminders and information about assignments at least three times a week through the Canvas Announcements feature.
- I will provide individual feedback on all assignments within 48 hours after each week concludes on Sunday. Students will be notified if feedback will take longer.
- I will provide progress reports for students at least twice during the quarter through group and individual messaging.

## INSTRUCTOR EXPECTATIONS

- You will strive to be an active participant in this course and aim to meet due dates.
- You will maintain an open line of communication with me, so I understand how to support you.
- You will treat others with dignity and respect.
- You will contact me if you have any concerns about assignments or due dates.
- You will give yourself grace. You may make mistakes, as a part of learning and growing.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- **Start work early in the week** to meet deadlines. Our class week begins on Mondays and ends on Sundays each week. Discussion Questions are ***always*** due on **Thursday** and Media Entries on **Sunday**.
- **Plan ahead and don't procrastinate.** Read through the assignments for the week on Monday to best plan the time needed for research and writing. Then read the assigned textbook chapter.
- **Work ahead** if you have extra time or if you know you have a busy week coming up.
- **Allow enough time to receive answers** to your questions. Emailing a question 30 minutes before the assignment is due is not enough time for the instructor to answer (especially since deadlines are at 11:59 p.m.)
- **Focus on submitting quality work.** It's more important to think critically and write thoughtfully and coherently than it is to meet or exceed wordcount. Content **quality** will always outweigh the **quantity** of words used.
- **Read instructions carefully.**
- **Use standard English grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.** (Bullet points are OK within a paragraph.) Capitalize the word "I", all proper names, and the first word of a sentence. (Stay away from "texting" language like "u" for "you" and "r" for "are.")

## **JOUR 80 COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Explores the principles, history, development and current professional practice of public relations. Covers concepts of planning and executing effective communication strategies, including message design and distribution, for any organization. Applicable journalistic writing styles are covered.

**ADVISORY:** EWRT 211 and READ 211 (or LART 211), or ESL 272 and 273.

## **OBJECTIVES**

In this course, students will:

- Examine the history, development and current practices of public relations in today's society and the global economy.
- Analyze the distinctions and compare approaches of public relations, journalism, marketing, and advertising.
- Analyze various public relations campaigns through the lenses of effectiveness and professional ethics.
- Define publics and target audiences.
- Create news releases using Associated Press style and correct grammar.
- Formulate a public relations campaign; identify multiple strategies including multimedia and social media.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

When this course is completed, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the history, role and function of public relations in today's society and global economy.
2. Compare ethical and legal case studies and distinguish which of the chosen methods for handling the issues are best aligned with the Public Relations Society of America member code of ethics and media law.
3. Research and design a public relations strategy for a specific entity and create a press release (using Associated Press style, summary lead and quote attribution) and associated media strategy, based on a stated goal and means of evaluating outcomes.

**TEXTBOOK (FREE):** <https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/stratcommwriting/>

The required textbook is an "open source" text which means it is available for free for reading online or downloading. See the link listed under instructor information (above) or access the textbook in our Canvas course.

Suggested resource: *The Associated Press Stylebook* (preferably the latest edition)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Access the course and class information in Canvas.
- Complete textbook readings and view online video links and/or files under each week's module in Canvas.
- Post weekly discussions in reply to the question or prompt.
- Contribute to and participate in online class discussions, responding to at least two other classmates each week.
- Complete four assignments (details and instructions are posted in Canvas).
- Research and write a paper on a career in PR.
- Prepare a Written PR Plan and Presentation.

*All requirements have specific due dates. Be prepared to spend a minimum of 24 hours a week studying and using the course materials.*

## **LATE POLICY**

Unless the instructor waives it, a late penalty of 10% will be deducted for each calendar day late. If there are unavoidable circumstances, such as a family emergency or illness, the issue will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Generally, only one late assignment or discussion response will be accepted for the quarter. If you do have an emergency, contact the instructor as soon as possible. It is much easier to be understanding and accommodating *before* a deadline rather than after.

**DROPS:** Make sure to check the Academic Calendar for deadlines. The instructor may drop any student who does not post any assignments for two or more consecutive weeks and/or has not logged into the classroom for 10 or more consecutive days. Students who “disappear” but do not drop the course will receive an “F.” Please see [“How to Drop a Class”](#) for regulations, dates and procedures for dropping classes.

**Important Deadlines (dates are strictly enforced): Saturday, April 20** – Last day to add quarter-length classes; **Friday, May 30** – Last day to drop with a “W.”

**PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism (copying work or cheating) is grounds for probation and/or suspension from the college. Any student who cheats on an exam, plagiarizes from somebody’s work (including their own) or lifts information from sources without citing those sources will receive a zero for that assignment and a grade no higher than a C for the course. If you are uncertain about the college’s policy on academic misconduct, please refer to the [Academic Integrity](#) section on the college website.

### **COURTESY/EQUITY**

In online discussions, students are expected to be professional and courteous. Students who exhibit inappropriate behavior may be docked points or have other consequences. All persons, regardless of gender, age, class, race, religion, physical disability, sexual orientation, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this course. Problems with or questions about harassment can be discussed in confidentiality with the instructor via email.

### **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced and use 12-pt. font. Always include your name and the name of the assignment at the top of the page. If the assignment has more than one page, use page numbers.

### **DISCUSSION POSTS**

Posts should be in the same format as work you would hand in for a college class, except paragraphs should be shorter. Discussion posts are due on Thursdays each week and replies to other classmates by Saturdays.

- Use complete sentences (bullet points are OK within a paragraph).
- Use standard English grammar and sentence structure.
- Use upper case for the word “I”, for all proper names, and for the beginnings of sentences. (Stay away from phonetic spelling and “texting” type language like “u” for “you” and “r” for “are.”)
- Read the instructions carefully.
- Read/view any resources needed to respond to the question.
- Most DQ posts should be 200-300 words, depending on the scope of the prompt. Do not aim for exact word count. If your post seems too short, consult the resources more closely, or think more deeply, to come up with more ideas to write about.
- Replies to your classmates do not have to be structured as formally as initial posts but should show some thought (more than just “good post” or “I agree”).
- You are welcome to reply to more than two classmates' posts. **(Two is the minimum.)**

### **GRADING**

Syllabus Quiz – 10 points

Discussion Questions (10 @ 30 points) – 300 points

Assignments (4 @ 75 points) – 300

Career Research Paper – 100 points

PR Plan Proposal – 25 points

Written PR Plan\* – 100 points

PR Plan Presentation\* – 65 points

Participation (earned by responding to two classmates each week) – 100 points

Review for Future Students – 15 points

**Assignment grades** are based on accuracy, following directions, thoroughness and quality.  
Points will be deducted for an excessive amount of grammar, typos and/or punctuation errors.

\*Students who do not turn in both a Written PR Plan and Presentation will not earn higher than a “C” for the course. In addition, students who do not turn in these assignments forfeit any extra credit.

### **Grade Scale**

A+* = 990-1000 points	A = 926-989 points	A- = 900-925 points
B+ = 875-899 points	B = 826-874 points	B- = 800-825 points
C+ = 775-799 points	C = 700-774 points	
D = 600-699 points		
F = 600 points or less		

\*To earn an A+ you must have a score of 990 or above *excluding* extra credit points.

### **EXTRA CREDIT**

Students are limited to a maximum of 50 extra credit points. Extra credit opportunities may be posted periodically. Students who do not turn in both a Written PR Plan & Presentation are not eligible to earn extra credit points.

### **CANVAS INFORMATION**

This course utilizes Canvas. Students can log in by going to <https://deanza.instructure.com> and using your My Portal credentials. Please note that you will be unable to log into our classroom until the **Saturday before our first day of class**. Additional instructions and assistance can be found on the [Online Education](#) website.

### **LIBRARY SERVICES**

De Anza College Library Services are available for all students, both on and off campus. Please consult the [library website](#) for a complete description of the library services.

The library subscribes to several [electronic databases](#) which provide access to thousands of full-text journals, newspapers, and magazine articles. To use the article or research databases from an off-campus computer, log in with your **eight-digit student ID number**.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** The [Disability Support Programs and Services \(DSPS\)](#) includes on- and off-campus programs and services offering students with disabilities a comprehensive array of accommodations, educational assistance classes and support services. Once you have identified the service(s) you need, follow the process to apply for and submit accommodations through the ClockWork app under MyPortal.

Please see next page for Course Calendar of Assignments.

## COURSE CALENDAR OVERVIEW FOR JOUR 80 (SPRING 2025)

Wk	Dates	Topics & Required Reading	DQs & Assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DQs Due Thursdays</li> <li>Assignments Due Sundays</li> </ul>
1	April 7 – 13	<b>Review of Syllabus</b> <b>Introductions</b>	Discussion (DQ) #1
2	April 14 – 20	<b>Introduction to Public Relations</b> (PR) – history, role & function, industry, trends, careers <b>Read:</b> Read: Ch. 7 (Public Relations Industry)	Discussion #2
3	April 21 – 27	<b>Communications Strategies</b> <b>Read:</b> Ch. 1 (Defining Strategic Communication) & Chapter 2 (Media Writing)	Discussion #3 Assignment #1
4	April 28 – May 4	PR Tools <b>Read:</b> Ch. 9 (PR Writing)	Discussion #4
5	May 5 – 11	Media Relations & News Releases <b>Read:</b> Ch. 8 (Media Relations), Ch. 4 (News Value), and Ch. 5 (News Writing Basics)	Discussion #5 <b>Career Research Paper Due</b>
6	May 12 – 18	PR Plans/Campaigns <b>Read:</b> Ch. 6 (Feature Writing)	Discussion #6 Assignment #2
7	May 19 – 25	Crisis Communications	Discussion #7 <b>PR Plan Proposal Due</b>
8	May 26 – June 1 (Memorial Day May 26)	Social Media & Social Marketing <b>Read:</b> Ch.10 (Social Media Uses and Messaging) & Ch. 11 (Advertising Industry)	Discussion #8 Assignment #3
9	June 2 – 8	Special Events	Discussion #9
10	June 9 – 15	Professional Ethics & Legal Issues <b>Read:</b> Ch. 3 (Strategic Communications Ethics)	Discussion #10 Assignment #4
11	June 16 – 22	Written PR Projects	<b>Written Report Due</b>
12	June 23 – 27	<b>Presentations Due (June 24)</b>	<b>Class Ends Friday, June 27</b>