1. Course description and objectives
Provides a conceptual framework for understanding public relations and its role in present-day social and business environments. You will briefly learn about the evolution of public relations practice from its beginnings to its present professional status. This course will emphasize both the principles as well as the nuts-and-bolts of planning and implementing a public relations campaign, including planning, selecting and developing appropriate publicity tools and evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

You will also learn techniques for managing the public relations function within organizations, the public relations process as well as professional and legal issues.

Prerequisite: Students must pass the English Placement Test or complete ENGL 201 Graduate Writing II (formerly ENGL 301) with a grade of B or better before registering for this course.

Students will receive 3 units of credit for successful completion of this class. Students can expect to spend 2 hours 40 minutes in class each week plus an additional 8-12 hours each week completing homework and preparing for the next class. Students can expect to spend more time studying some weeks and less time other weeks, but the overall average is between 11 and 15 hours each week for the entire term.

Contemporary Public Relations (PR 320) provides a general graduate level overview of the practice of public relations. Serving as an introduction to the field, the emphasis of PR 320 is on understanding the key competencies and technical skills necessary to become a successful public relations professional, including problem solving, decision making, written and oral
communications, and strategic planning. This course also shows how public relations fits into the overall marketing mix of an organization.

PR 320 is the core public relations course for the Master of Science degree in Integrated Marketing Communications. The course also provides essential knowledge for those planning other professional and managerial careers that require an understanding of public relations, organizational communications and communication management.

The primary objective of PR 320 is to provide students with a perspective on the nature of public relations and how it contributes to the success of U.S. businesses, non-profit and government organizations.

Following completion of the course, students will be able to:
- Describe the historical evolution of public relations and its role in integrated marketing communications
- Identify legal, ethical and moral considerations inherent in public relations and recommend appropriate actions that are consistent with responsible and ethical PR practices
- Describe and utilize the communications principles underlying successful public relations practices
- Develop public relations strategies to achieve organizational goals
- Identify the variety of publics addressed by the public relations practitioners and describe the role public relations can perform with each of them
- Describe and utilize the technical skills needed by public relations practitioners such as writing, media relations, planning, counseling, researching and publicity
- Describe the various environments in which public relations practitioners function and recommend appropriate PR practices for each of these environments.

At the completion of the course, students will be able to develop and implement a strategic public relations plan, including analysis of a given situation and implementation of a program of action.

2. Course textbook and other readings
- Case studies (AT&T, BMW, Community Relations, Dove, Molson Canada, New Balance, Nike, PETA/Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pixar). Available through the GGU bookstore.
- Other readings as assigned (class handouts).

Please bring the textbook to class as we will be referring to case studies highlighted in the text.

Please note complete list of business cases and articles below. HBR articles (not cases) may be obtained from the GGU Library databases online at no cost:

- HBR Article – “Causes and Effects” by Carol L. Cone, Mark Feldman, Alison Dasilva R0307H-PDF-ENG
- HBR Article – “Gilded and Gelded: Hard-Won Lessons from the PR Wars” by Dick Martin R0310B-PDF-ENG
- Case Study – “PETA’s ‘Kentucky-Fried Cruelty, Inc.’ Campaign” by Gerard Seijts 903C45-PDF-ENG
3. Prerequisites
Students must pass the Graduate Writing Proficiency Exam or complete ENGL 201 Graduate Writing (formerly ENGL 301) with a grade of B or better before registering for this course.

4. Class format
The course will be conducted through lecture, interactive class exercises, required reading assignments, class discussion, presentation of case studies, guest presentations, and written assignments requiring application of course content.

5. Term project
The term project for this course is a strategic communications plan. The strategic plan will cover the four specific public relations functions: (1) research, (2) action - strategy, (3) communication – execution, and (4) evaluation.

Each student must select a business, political campaign, government entity or nonprofit organization and prepare a written communications plan to support its business objectives. Students should consider choosing a local organization with current public relations needs that will provide access to individuals who are knowledgeable about the organization’s business issues.

Small businesses and not-for-profit organizations with limited resources can be an excellent source of practice clients. The focus for the plan can be an existing product or service, a key executive or a key issue facing the organization.

The strategic communications plan will be a written report, maximum of 15 pages excluding appendices. The plan should include the various public relations tactics, as appropriate for the client, that are discussed in class and in the textbook. Please note: marketing tactics – including advertising – are not appropriate for this communication plan. Tactics should focus on PR practices. Papers are due on Monday, July 30. Late papers will not be accepted.

6. Grading policy
- Term project 25%
- Written analysis of case studies 40%
- Final exam 20%
- Class participation 15%
Late assignments will not be accepted more than one week after their original due date – no exceptions.

Opportunities for extra credit include:

- Preparing case analyses on current events (topics include Netflix, Costa Concordia, Paula Deen and many others). Students may choose from preparing a written analysis or presenting an analysis in class (time permitting).

- Attending a meeting of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) and/or San Francisco Public Relations Roundtable and writing an executive summary about the event/speaker. You are responsible for making your reservation and paying for your meal. The local chapters of both PRSA and IABC can be found at http://www.prsasf.org/phoenix.zhtml?c=200502&p=irol-overview and http://sf.iabc.com/. The San Francisco PR Roundtable is located on the web at www.sfprrt.org.

7. Attendance
Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes. Although health, business and personal issues may make it necessary to miss a class or two, it will be difficult to pass the course without consistent attendance. Please note that attendance will be factored into your grade.

8. Contacting instructor
Students are welcome to contact me via phone or email, although email is preferred.

9. Academic integrity policy
Golden Gate University requires students be honest in their academic work. Academic dishonesty is viewed as an ethical issue and the violation of principles expressed in the University’s Statement of Educational Mission. Academic dishonesty defrauds all those who depend upon the integrity of the University, its courses and its degrees. Definitions of academic dishonesty, identification and reporting procedures, academic and administrative sanctions and appeal procedures are outlined in detail in the student handbook, are available from the Division of Student Affairs and can be found online at http://www.ggu.edu/media/about-ggu/documents/policies/policy-on-academic-integrity.pdf

Therefore, for this particular course, all work submitted must either be original work produced by each student or a team of students, or must be specifically identified as coming from another source. It is not acceptable to copy from other sources without disclosing the source with usual in-text parenthetical citation and reference page entry.

10. Special needs
Golden Gate University affirms its commitment to its applicants and students who identify and express their special needs. Information regarding The Americans With Disabilities Acts and the University’s policies and services may be obtained from the University Advising Center.

11. Instructor biography
Susan is an award-winning communications professional with experience honed at leading Fortune 100 companies. She has served in senior roles – at The Walt Disney Company she provided communications leadership for Disney’s publicly-traded Internet unit, positively
positioning the business and management as credible leaders. As head of global communications for Hewlett-Packard Company’s $8 billion consumer technology business (all products based on the inkjet printing platform as well as scanners and digital cameras), she raised the profile of this significant operation and its executives as strong contributors to HP’s profits – a key goal.

As a communications consultant, she has represented United Airlines, re-establishing United’s corporate communications function in San Francisco in a post 9/11, bankruptcy environment. She is currently employed as communications consultant to Cisco Systems.

Susan has also worked in the financial services sector for nearly 15 years. As vice president, public affairs for Visa U.S.A., she had responsibility for driving communications campaigns that addressed potential legislation that could adversely impact the payment card industry. She served as the liaison to special interest groups, creating positive relationships to mitigate negative viewpoints. Susan developed communications programs and messaging to address legal, government/regulatory and competitive issues, both in the U.S. and worldwide. During her Visa tenure, she supported the chief executive officer of Visa International on all communications matters.

In addition, Susan served in communications positions at TRW Information Services (now Experian) and Union Bank of California. She has been a frequent guest on TV and radio news programs, and a speaker at forums on the subject of wise credit use and financial privacy. She received the Silver Anvil, the public relations industry’s highest honor, from the Public Relations Society of America for her work at Visa.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in broadcast journalism with honors from the University of Southern California, and a Master in Business Administration from St. Mary’s College of California. Susan started her career as a writer at a public relations agency.

12. Course outline

Note: Read Chapters 1 and 2 before the first class.

Session 1 – Monday, April 30

Topics:
- Class introductions
- Review of class requirements and syllabus
- Defining public relations
- The growth of public relations
- Introductory in-class case study: “Da Vinci Code”

Homework:
- Read the AT&T case study – write a three-page paper based on questions provided.
- Read Chapters 3, 5.

Session 2 – Monday, May 7

Topics:
- Communication
- Management
- Discuss AT&T case study

Homework:
- Read Pixar case study, write a 3-page paper based on questions provided.
- Read Chapters 4, 8.
Session 3 – Monday, May 14
Topics:
- Public opinion
- Research
- Discuss Pixar case study
Homework
- Read Chapter 9.
- *Disney* reading assigned in class – write a 3-4-page paper based on questions provided.

Session 4 – Monday, May 21
Topics:
- Print media relations
- Electronic media relations
- Serving as a media spokesperson
- Discussion of *Disney* case
- Guest speaker: Bay Area journalist
Homework:
- Read Dove case study; write a 3-4 page paper based on questions provided.
- Read Chapter 10.

No class Monday, May 28 in observance of Memorial Day.

Session 5 – Monday, June 4
Topics:
- Discuss Dove reading
- The employee public
- Employee communications exercise
Homework:
- Read Chapter 17
- Read *BMW* case study; write a 3-4-page paper based on questions provided.

Session 6 – Monday, June 11
Topics:
- Integrated marketing communications
- Discuss *BMW* case
- Guest speaker: join PR 334 / Mark Toney, Executive Director, TURN (consumer group)
Homework:
- Read *Nike* case study; write a 4-page paper on your observations
- Read Chapter 19.

Session 7 – Monday, June 18
Topic:
- Crisis management
- Discussion: *Nike* case study
- Guest speaker: join PR 334 / Lynn Jimenez, Business Reporter, KGO Radio
Homework:
- Read Chapter 11
- Read community relations case study; write a 4-page paper based on questions provided.
Session 8 – Monday, June 25
Topic:
- Community relations
- Corporate social responsibility
- Discuss case study
- Guest speaker on corporate social responsibility
Assignment
- Read Chapters 12 and 13, also see references to Investor Relations on pages 12, 90.
- Investor relations assignment (provided in class): go online and listen to a recent quarterly financial results webcast by a publicly traded company. Write an analysis based on questions provided.
- Consumer relations assignment (provided in class): study one of several suggested consumer relations providers and write an analysis based on questions provided.

Session 9 – Monday, July 2
Topic:
- Government relations
- Consumer relations
- Investor relations
Homework for next week:
- *Hewlett-Packard* reading (provided in class); write a 3-4 page paper on your observations based on questions provided.
- Read Chapters 6 and 7.

Session 10 – Monday, July 9
Topics:
- Ethics, the law and discussion of *Hewlett-Packard* reading
Homework:
- Read *New Balance / CSR* case study; write 3-page paper based on questions provided.
- Read Chapters 15 and 16

Session 11 – Monday, July 16
Topics:
- Discuss *New Balance / CSR* case study
- Public relations writing
- Writing for the eye and ear
- Guest speaker on how to optimize news releases
Homework:
- Read Chapter 18
- Read *Molson Canada* case study; write a 4-page paper on your observations.

Session 12 – Monday, July 23
Topics:
- Discuss *Molson Canada* case study
- Public relations and social media
- Guest speaker on social media
Homework:
- Read *PETA/Kentucky Fried Chicken* case study; write a 4-page paper on your observations
- Read Chapter 14
Session 13 – Monday, July 30

Topics:
- Review of public relations tactics for term projects
- Discuss PETA/KFC case
- In-class final exam (open book, open notes)

Homework:
- Complete term projects

Sessions 14 and 15 – Monday, August 6

Note: This is a double session to make up for the Memorial Day holiday. Please plan to stay longer than usual for all student presentations.

Topics:
- Term projects due
- Class presentations of strategic communications plans