

The PRactice Experience

COMM 3188

Autumn 2025

PRactice meetings: Wednesday from 5:15-6:15 p.m.

Professor: Kerry Christopher

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Office Hours: Wednesday afternoons from 4:00-5:00. If this time doesn't work for you, we can schedule a meeting anytime during the week.

Course Description

This course provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in a PR agency environment. It complements their hands-on experience as associates at the student-run PR firm, the PRactice (osuthepractice.com), by offering insights from seasoned PR professionals. Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of agency operations, covering team dynamics, client relationship management, and various project types, ultimately learning what it takes to excel as an associate.

By the end of the course, students will:

1. Grasp the strategic communication planning process, structure, and workflow within an agency setting.
2. Understand the hard and soft skills that contribute to success when working for a PR agency.
3. Learn to address common communication and client management challenges.
4. Enhance their ability to collaborate effectively with peers.
5. Strengthen their professional portfolio and expand their network.

Course Format

While this class does not have a set meeting time, as associates of The PRactice, you are expected to be present and engaged during weekly PRactice meetings. If you are unable to join the PRactice because all of the spots have been filled, it is still okay to take this class and attending the meetings is not required.

Please watch Carmen carefully for information on assignments. You are expected to spend time each week reviewing discussion topics and comment/ask questions of other students and the professor.

Required textbook

The following book is required for this course:

Johnson, Kristin & Roth, Shalon (2019). *How to Succeed in a PR Agency: Real Talk to Grow Your Career & Become Indispensable*. Routledge

The book is available for purchase on many online websites, including [Amazon](#). You can choose the e-book or printed copy. We will use this book each week and it's a great read for aspiring PR professionals like you!

Assignments

The workload for this class will vary depending on the number of credits you are working toward:

To earn a satisfactory grade, all students must:

- Participate in weekly PRactice meetings. Students are expected to actively engage in projects and attend PRactice meetings in person.
- Review weekly discussion topics and answer the related questions; engage with other students by commenting on their posts.
- Create a portfolio of your work that can be used during future job interviews. The portfolio can include links to websites you have created, blog posts, press releases, articles that have been published, etc. Each student will submit their ideas to the professor and there will be a review of each submission and the overall quality of the portfolio itself.

If you signed up for two credits, you must do all of the above, plus:

- Interview a communications or marketing professional with experience working for an agency. Use of video is encouraged.

Three credit students must do all of the above, plus:

- Write a creative brief, which is a high-level summary of a communications challenge and your recommendation for solving it. Creative briefs are used to summarize a situation and gain consensus inside an organization before there is agreement. You will make a case to a company CEO about what needs to be done.

Grading (S/U)

This is S/U course. Students will receive either a satisfactory or unsatisfactory grade. The professor will evaluate written materials on their conciseness, thoroughness, thoughtfulness, logic, and persuasion.

Attendance

If you are a member of The PRactice, attendance is taken weekly during PRactice meetings. Students with three or more unexcused absences will receive an unsatisfactory grade.

As presented in the university's "Academic Policies and Procedures," university-excused absences include "illness, death in the immediate family, religious observance, jury duty, and involvement in University—sponsored activities." Discuss any situation with the instructor, and every effort will be made to assist in this requirement.

If there's an issue with health, work or family, please let me know once the problem arises, not after the fact.

Late Work, Missing Work, Make-ups and Extension Requests

Work must be submitted by the assigned deadline. Please contact me in advance regarding an extension for an extreme circumstance like family illness or death. Work two days late (weekends included) will automatically receive an unsatisfactory grade.

Cheating and Plagiarism

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleix@osu.edu.

Disability services

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options.

To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If you are isolating while waiting for a COVID-19 test result, please let me know immediately. Those testing positive for COVID-19 should refer to the Safe and Healthy Buckeyes site for resources. Beyond five days of the required COVID-19 isolation period, I may rely on Student Life Disability Services to establish further reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

Religious accommodations

It is Ohio State's policy to reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of all students. The policy permits a student to be absent for up to three days each academic semester for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief.

Students planning to use religious beliefs or practices accommodations for course requirements must inform the instructor in writing no later than 14 days after the course begins. The instructor is then responsible for scheduling an alternative time and date for the course requirement, which may be before or after the original time and date of the course requirement. These alternative accommodations will remain confidential. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all course assignments are completed.

Mental health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

TENTATIVE AGENDA (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week	Discussion topic	Activity
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1	<p>Getting to know each other</p> <p>PR agency basics</p>	<p>Submit resume and answer a discussion question about what you hope to gain from this course; schedule time with the professor to review your resume or visit his office in Journalism Building 326 on Wednesday afternoon between 4-5:00 p.m. Please stop by anytime during the semester with questions or to say hello.</p> <p>Read <i>Part I: Why Indispensable, How to Succeed in a PR Agency</i>, pages 1-5</p>
2	<p>Discussion topic: Working for an agency</p> <p>Agency staffing models</p>	<p>Review discussion post and participate by sharing your response; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts.</p> <p>Read <i>Part II: Agency Basics, How to Succeed in a PR Agency</i>, pages 7-28</p>
3	<p>Submit ideas for what will be included in your portfolio</p> <p>Discussion topic: Working for an agency (continued)</p> <p>How agencies make money</p>	<p>Specific details will be posted on Carmen.</p> <p>Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts.</p> <p>Read <i>Part II: Agency Basics, How to Succeed in a PR Agency</i>, pages 29-52</p>
4-5	<p>2-3 credit students: Submit your idea for a professional interview.</p> <p>Discussion topic: Getting to know your client</p> <p>Ethical conduct</p>	<p>Specific details will be posted on Carmen.</p> <p>Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts.</p> <p>Read <i>Part II: Agency Basics, How to Succeed in a PR Agency</i>, pages 53-57</p>

6-7	<p>Writing essentials</p> <p>Strategic planning</p>	<p>Read Part II: Agency Basics, How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 59-63</p>
8	<p>Discuss topic: media relations</p> <p>A leader at every level</p>	<p>Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts.</p> <p>Read Part III: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 67-71</p>
9	<p>Discussion topic: internal comms, event planning, crisis communications</p> <p>Achieving authenticity</p>	<p>Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts.</p> <p>Read Part III: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 72-79</p>
10	<p>Discussion topic: differences between working for an agency and working in-house; relationship between the two.</p> <p>Diplomacy and Persuasion, Managing Expectations, PR: Personal Relationships</p>	<p>Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts.</p> <p>Read Part III: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 80-97</p>
11	<p>2-3 credit students: professional interviews due</p> <p>Discussion topic: Managing up, across and down</p> <p>Building a Team</p>	<p>Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts.</p> <p>Read Part IV: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 99-112</p>
12	<p>Review professional interviews</p>	<p>Review the interviews posted by other students and share at least two</p>

	Personal Branding	<p>comments in a group discussion on Carmen.</p> <p>Read Part IV: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 113-119</p>
13	<p>3 credit students: creative briefs due</p> <p>Managing Your Career</p>	<p>Review creative briefs posted by other students and discuss as a group in Carmen; reply with feedback to at least two submissions.</p> <p>Read Part IV: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 120-126</p>
14	<p>Discussion topic: The many hats you must wear to be successful in an agency</p> <p>Managing the Career of Others</p>	<p>Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts.</p> <p>Read Part IV: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 127-132</p>
15	<p>Discussion topic: Share what you learned this semester</p> <p>Managing Client Relationships</p>	<p>Submit a discussion post about what you learned and how it was applied in your PRactice projects or other ways.</p> <p>Read Part IV: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 133-138</p>