

The PRactice Experience

COMM 3188

Spring 2026

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I'll be in my office every Wednesday from 4:00-5:00 p.m. I encourage you to stop by and ask questions. We will meet several times throughout the semester in-person from 4-5 p.m. on Wednesday, so let me know if the time doesn't work for you.

Course Description

This course equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a PR agency environment. It works especially well when paired with hands-on experience through The PRactice (osuthepractice.com), although participation in The PRactice is not required. Students will gain a strong understanding of agency operations, including team dynamics, client relationship management and project workflows, giving them a clear sense of the inner workings of a PR agency.

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

Joining this class does NOT automatically guarantee a spot in The PRactice. Registration for The Practice is different and run by the student organization. If you are unable to join the PRactice because the spots have been filled, it is still okay to take this class and attending the weekly PRactice meetings is not required.

Please watch Carmen 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. Several times during the semester we will meet in person to learn from PR practitioners.

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:

- 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

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.

University policies on **Academic Misconduct, AI and Academic Integrity, Disabilities, Religious Accommodations, Intellectual Diversity, Grievances and Problem Solving, Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct** are available [here](#).

TENTATIVE AGENDA (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week	Discussion topic	Activity
1	Update your resume PR agency basics	Use AI to optimize your resume for a job in PR Read <i>Part I: Why Indispensable, How to Succeed in a PR Agency</i> , pages 1-5
2	Discussion topic: Working for an agency Agency staffing models	Review discussion post and participate by sharing your response; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts. Read <i>Part II: Agency Basics, How to Succeed in a PR Agency</i> , pages 7-28
3	Submit ideas for what will be included in your portfolio Discussion topic: Working for an agency (continued)	Specific details will be posted on Carmen. Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least

	How agencies make money	two other students with thoughts on their posts. Read Part II: Agency Basics, How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 29-52
4-5	2-3 credit students: Submit your idea for a professional interview. Discussion topic: Getting to know your client Ethical conduct	Specific details will be posted on Carmen. Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts. Read Part II: Agency Basics, How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 53-57
6-7	Writing essentials Strategic planning	Read Part II: Agency Basics, How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 59-63
8	Discuss topic: media relations A leader at every level	Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts. Read Part III: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 67-71
9	Discussion topic: internal comms, event planning, crisis communications Achieving authenticity	Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts. Read Part III: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 72-79
10	Discussion topic: differences between working for an agency and working in-house; relationship between the two.	Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts.

	Diplomacy and Persuasion, Managing Expectations, PR: Personal Relationships	Read Part III: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 80-97
11	2-3 credit students: professional interviews due Discussion topic: Managing up, across and down Building a Team	Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts. Read Part IV: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 99-112
12	Review professional interviews Personal Branding	Review the interviews posted by other students and share at least two comments in a group discussion on Carmen. Read Part IV: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 113-119
13	3 credit students: creative briefs due Managing Your Career	Review creative briefs posted by other students and discuss as a group in Carmen; reply with feedback to at least two submissions. Read Part IV: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 120-126
14	Discussion topic: The many hats you must wear to be successful in an agency Managing the Career of Others	Review slides or video and participate in group discussion; reply to at least two other students with thoughts on their posts. Read Part IV: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 127-132
15	Discussion topic: Share what you learned this semester	Submit a discussion post about what you learned and how it was applied in your PRactice projects or other ways.

	Managing Client Relationships	Read Part IV: How to Succeed in a PR Agency, pages 133-138
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