EDLE 5610 Course Syllabus

University of North Texas
Department of Teacher Education and Administration

EDLE 5610
School Communications and Public Relations
Summer, 2017 — June 5–July 28

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

R. Jefferson George, PhD, Instructor

Questions: Use the Ask Questions Here discussion forum.
Preferred contact method and private conversations: Use Messages on the course menu.
Emergencies: Contact me at Royce.George@unt.edu.

Teaching Assistant — Inna Dolzhenko, M.S. Inna.Dolzhenko@unt.edu
Student Services Coordinator — Marilyn Deuble Marilyn.Deuble@unt.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

• This course is a Part of the UNT Ed. Leadership’s AOP and is completely online, with no face-to-face classroom meetings.
• From the UNT Catalog: Every administrator in an educational organization has a responsibility to engage in public relations on a daily basis. The primary objective of this course is to examine school-based public relations with the context of life in an information age, practice in schools shared decision making, and sustained demands for school improvement. Students study three critical dimensions of school public relations: informing the public; modifying attitudes and opinions; and integrating the actions and attitudes of an organization with those of its public.
COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of the course, you will be able to do the following:

1. Describe the public's current perception of American schools.
2. Describe the importance of an effective school-community relations plan and distinguish between a centralized plan, a decentralized plan, and a coordinated plan for school-community relations.
3. Identify specific ways that school administrators can reach out to parents and the community for engagement with and support for the schools.
4. Describe the roles of educators at the district and campus level related to an effective school-community relations program.
5. Identify the steps in the communication process and to apply those steps given a scenario.
6. Identify barriers to communication and how they might be overcome.
7. Identify in writing each of the member groups of a school's Internal Publics (those inside the organization) and describe at least one specific action that can be taken to effectively communicate with each member group.
8. Identify and describe in writing the member groups of the school's External Publics (those stakeholders spending most of their time outside of the school's walls) and identify at least three ways or opportunities where information is best communicated to them.
9. Describe in detail at least three strategies for enhancing the school's relationship with the news media and their representatives.
10. Compare your school's experiences with the best practices identified in the text related to at least one of the following — Open House events, Parent Teacher Conferences, and Convocations and Celebrations.
11. Describe the skills and behaviors necessary for the campus administrator who can communicate most effectively with a variety of audiences, in writing and when speaking.
12. Demonstrate competencies in written and oral communications along with judgment in determining priorities when presented with multiple tasks needing responses in a simulated in-basket activity (ATk20 assignment for the course).
13. List both benefits and cautions when communicating electronically and using social media as a means for keeping stakeholders informed.
14. Describe best practices related to leading during a crisis, including:
   - Designing a Crisis Management Plan
   - Implementing the Plan
   - Communicating during a crisis
   - Dealing with the aftermath of a crisis
15. Complete a simulation that creates a Parent and Community Involvement Plan for the school where the student is employed or a fictional or “real” school that meets the criteria for effectiveness that is described in the rubric for the assignment. (You may collaborate with others in the class while working on this assignment.)
16. List and describe at least three ways to collect data to evaluate the results of the school-community relations efforts.
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

I will provide reading materials for each week from the textbook and other sources along with an introductory narrative for the topics for each week. You also will be provided activities related to the topics and have the opportunity to apply the learning gained each week. I will review and respond to responses to the assignments and discussions. I expect each student to participate fully in order to integrate the subject matter and gain new or improved skills or knowledge for the learner.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading assignments
Please refer to each week’s folder in the course for the assigned readings for each week.

Textbook
The textbook for the course is *School-Community Relations, Fourth Ed.*, by Douglas Fiore, published by Routledge. **IMPORTANT** — When you see page numbers related to material in the textbook that appear in assignments, discussions, or other materials, realize that the 4th edition, paperback version of the Fiore book is the source of those page numbers. Those page numbers will not be accurate when using other editions and versions of the book, though you may likely find the referenced material.

Assignments
Assignments for each week are described in detail in each week’s folder. See the *Course Schedule* in this syllabus and, within the course, each week’s *Weekly Overview*, the individual assignments for each week, and the *Calendar*. You will submit two major assignments, the “Principal’s In-Basket” and the “Parent and Community Involvement Plan” to the Tk20 System. See more information about the Tk20 System below.

Class Discussions
You are expected to provide substantive responses to the forums in the *Discussions* area **AND** respond to the postings of your classmates as assigned.

Application of Learning
Each week may include the opportunity for you to respond to a case study related to the week’s topics **OR** an opportunity to apply learning by investigating or reviewing the topics with your campus or district administrator.

Final exam
There will be a final exam in this course that will provide the opportunity to demonstrate your skills and knowledge gained in the course. The Final Exam will be available to you on **Saturday of Week 7, and due the following Thursday of Week 8, by 11:30pm.** The Exam is due on Thursday to allow adequate time for scoring the exam before the grades for the course are due on the following Monday. Contact me with any questions you have.
Each student must complete the Final Exam independently. There should be no collaboration with other students in the course. You may use any resources you need to develop substantive responses to each task on the exam.

**Tk20 System — VERY IMPORTANT**
This course includes two assignments you will upload in the College of Education’s Tk20 electronic portfolio system. This requires a one-time purchase of Tk20 that will be in effect for seven years. You will use it throughout the Educational Leadership program. If you have not already purchased it and for those new to the Program, find information and purchase an account at the Tk20 site. Contact the Tk20 administrator at alyssa.floyd@unt.edu or at 940-369-5157 for questions.

**COURSE LOGIN INFORMATION**

This course was developed and will be facilitated utilizing the University of North Texas’ Learning Management System, Blackboard Learn. To get started with the course, please go to: https://learn.unt.edu
You will need your EUID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your EUID or have forgotten your password, please go to: http://ams.unt.edu.

**Minimum Technical Skills Needed**
- Navigating and using basic tools of Blackboard Learn
- Using email and attaching documents
- Creating, saving, and submitting files in DOC and PDF formats
- Copying and pasting

**STUDENT TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES**

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparation for the technological aspect of the course.

- Info on using Blackboard Learn
  http://it.unt.edu/blackboard-learn-information
- Blackboard Learn technical requirements and plugins
  https://bbsupport.unt.edu/TechnicalRequirements
- If you are new to blackboard, see short how-to videos at Blackboard’s
  On Demand Learning Center for Students
- Computer configuration for Blackboard Learn
  http://bit.ly/1n257Qn

**Student Technical Support**
After logging into Blackboard Learn course, locate the “UNT Helpdesk” tab at the top of the course browser window, which provides links to student resources of technical information and instruction, and how to contact the Help Desk for assistance.
Please make a note of this information NOW. If you can't log in, contact the UNT Student Helpdesk.

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu
Phone: 940-565-2324
Site: UIT Helpdesk
Report an Issue

Support Hours
Monday-Thursday 8am-midnight
Friday 8am-8pm
Saturday 9am-5pm
Sunday noon-midnight

Technical Emergencies and Advice for Taking Online Exams
- Be mindful of the regular weekly maintenance schedule (11 pm Saturdays to 2 am Sundays) when planning to begin your exams.
- Avoid using a wireless connection for exams unless you're certain of its reliability.
- Take exams using a supported web browser on a desktop or laptop rather than using an iPad. If using an iPad, we recommend the Chrome browser.
- Save your exam after each answer.
- Should you encounter technical problems affecting your ability to access or complete a test, immediately contact the UIT Helpdesk for assistance so they can document the issue with a helpdesk ticket number.
- If the UIT Helpdesk cannot resolve the problem, it will document the problem and provide you with a ticket number that you can provide to your instructor as verification.
- When staff is unavailable, Report an Issue online.

Additional Support Resources
Links to all of these services can be found on the Academic Support tab at the top of your course site.

- Learn how to forward your EagleConnect mail to a personal email address.
- UNT UIT Helpdesk http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/students/
- Change or update your AMS password (used to log into online courses) https://ams.unt.edu/
- UNT Portal http://my.unt.edu

UNT Library Information

Off-Campus Users
http://www.library.unt.edu/services/for-special-audiences/offcampus/information-for-off-campus-users

On-Campus Users
http://www.library.unt.edu/services/facilities-and-systems/campus-access
COMMUNICATIONS

Information about the communication tools in the course and how we will use them:

- For all course-related questions, please read this syllabus carefully before seeking assistance.
- For assignment clarification questions, see the Ask Questions Here forum in Discussions from the course menu.
- **Use the Messages feature from the course menu for all private electronic communications with me.** If for some reason you are unable to use course Learn Messages, you may contact me using the contact methods available on the first page of the Syllabus. You can expect a response from me within 24-hours of sending a message. If your concern is urgent, please call by phone or leave a message.

Announcements
Please check the course Announcements each day for updated information and changes.

Collaborative Discussions
See Discussions from the course menu to check the appropriate weekly forum for assigned postings, to review the postings of classmates, and to make postings of your own.

Please extend the readers of your postings the same courtesy you would expect when communicating. Please read and consider the content of the message before responding. Profanity and insults are not tolerated.

ASSESSMENT and GRADING

Assessments
This course will use the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course.

- Responses to prompts and classmates in the Discussion forums
- Responses to Assignments
- Responses to Application exercises
- Two major assignments (to be posted in Tk20)
- Online final exam
Grading Procedure
Grades will be determined by the following points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Points Each</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Points Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Assignments</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Applications</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Assignment: Week 5 Principal’s In-basket Activity</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Assignment: Week 7 Parent and Community Involvement Plan</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final grades are determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Earned</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>144-160</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128-143</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112-127</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 112</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accessing Grades
You will see all of your grades by selecting My Grades from the course menu. You can also see my comments and feedback by clicking on the little bubble beside your grade. In addition, you can see the rubrics for the assignments and discussions. For the two assignments that are in a test format (weeks 5 and 6), if you click on your score, the test should open giving you feedback on the answers. Grades will be accessible shortly after the tasks are reviewed and graded.

Assignment Submission Instructions
Assignments required to be submitted online must be in Word format and submitted by the deadline noted in each assignment found in Assignments from the course menu. Please create your response as a Word document and attach in the appropriate assignment before submitting.

COURSE SCHEDULE
- The course officially begins on Monday of Week 1, and concludes on Friday of Week 8, for a total of eight weeks in the course.
- You will find the activities for each week (readings, assignments, discussions, etc.) within each week's folder.
- Due dates for assignments are normally 11:30pm Sunday of each week. For example, assignments for Week 1 are due no later than 11:30 pm on the Sunday of Week 1.
- Your initial weekly discussion postings are due no later than Wednesday night, with conversations concluding Sunday night of each week.
Listed below are the areas of focus for each week.

Each week contains these elements:

- Weekly Overview
- Readings
- Outside reading
- Assignment
- Discussion
- Application of Learning

### Week One

“Orientation to Course and Engaging the School Community”

- Welcome, Building Community, Course Overview, Syllabus
- Framework for Texas Principal Competencies
- Texas Educator Code of Ethics
- Most Recent KDP article on the public perception of schools

### Week Two

“Everyone can be an Effective School Communicator”

### Week Three

“Working Effectively with Internal and External Publics”

### Week Four

“Working with Media Organizations and Special Events”

### Week Five

“Effective Written and Oral Communications”

- Activities for this week include the first major assignment for the course – “Principal’s In-Basket Activity” – to be uploaded in the Tk20 System

### Week Six

“Communicating Electronically in the Era of Social Media”

### Week Seven

“The School-Community Relations Plan and Effective Communications in Crisis Situations”

- Activities for this week include the second major course assignment — “Parent and Community Involvement Plan” — to be uploaded in the Tk20 System

### Week Eight

“Putting It All Together”

- Assignments – The assignments for this week will include the completion of the Final Exam for the course.

### COURSE EVALUATION

*Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT)* is the new student evaluation system for UNT implemented to comply with the State of Texas House Bill 2504. Developed and offered by the University of Washington
(IASystem®), this proven system offers both online and paper administration options, as well as evaluation forms that support different pedagogical formats (e.g., large lecture, online, studio). This system also offers many benefits to obtain an overall assessment of the course and instructor. You will be notified by email toward the end of the course with directions regarding this evaluation.

**SCHOLARLY EXPECTATIONS**

All works submitted for credit must be original works created by the scholar uniquely for the class. It is considered inappropriate and unethical, particularly at the graduate level, to make duplicate submissions of a single work for credit in multiple classes, unless specifically requested or approved by the instructor.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Assignment Policy**
Due dates for each assignment are posted in the instructions of each assignment. Assignments should be submitted in Word format and submitted by using the “Submit” button at the end of each assignment.

**Examination Policy**
The Final Exams is open-book and open-note, however, you may not discuss the exam with another student unless after both have completed and submitted your answers. Missed quizzes or exams may not be taken at a later date without written documentation that justifies the error.

**Late Work**
Late work will be accepted up to one week after the due date, but a penalty of points deducted will be assessed up to ½ of the value of the assignment. Please contact the instructor whenever late submissions are anticipated.

**Class Participation**
All students are required to login to the online class site multiple times each week. Instructors use the Blackboard Learn tracking features to monitor student activity. Students are also required to participate in all class activities such as discussions, conference sessions, and group projects as assigned.

**Virtual Classroom Citizenship**
The same guidelines that apply to traditional classes should be observed in the virtual classroom environment. Please use proper netiquette when interacting with class members and the professor.

**Incompletes**
The only time an instructor in our College can give an incomplete is if a student is *passing the course* but has a severe illness during the last third of the course. The student must submit a form requesting an incomplete and provide documentation supporting the need for an Incomplete. Students can get these forms by contacting Marilyn Deuble at marilyn.deuble@unt.edu or local students can go by our program office in office 218 in Matthews Hall.
Administrative Withdrawal
Students may add this course or withdraw in accordance with the University’s policy currently in effect.

Copyright Notice
Some or all of the materials in this course may be protected by copyright. You may use the materials during the duration of the course and for assignment purposes only. When the course ends, you are required to remove all copyrighted materials from your possession. See the UNT Copyright Resources for details.

Policy on Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties
The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact the UIT Helpdesk, who will work together to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time: helpdesk@unt.edu, 940-565-2324, or Report an Issue.

Student Conduct and Discipline
See this section of the Student Handbook.

Academic Honesty Policy
Academic dishonesty is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with University policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of “F” in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. You will find the policy and procedures at http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm.

Cheating and Plagiarism Policy
The UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline provides penalties for misconduct by students, including academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism. The term “cheating” includes, but is not limited to, (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; and (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university. The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use of the published or unpublished work of another person, by paraphrase or direct quotation, without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. If a student engages in academic dishonesty related to this class, the student will receive a failing grade on the test or assignment and a failing grade in the course. In addition, the case will be referred to the Dean of Students for appropriate disciplinary action.
Ethical Behavior and Code of Ethics
The Teacher Education and Administration Department expects that its students will abide by the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators (Chapter 247 of the Texas Administrative Code) and as outlined in Domain IV: Fulfilling Professional Roles and Responsibilities of the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES); and as also addressed in codes of ethics adopted by professionals in the education field such as the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

Student Behavior in the Classroom
Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr.

ADA Policy
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. Please note that disability accommodations are not retroactive. Accommodations will be made only after a disability is officially verified.

Information on the services provided by the ODA, as well as application procedures, is available at http://www.unt.edu/oda/index.html. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323. Information on UNT’s policies related to disability accommodations is available at http://policy.unt.edu/policy/18-1-14.

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Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for
student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr.

**Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses**

**Federal Regulation**

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website at http://www.ecfr.gov/. The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f) (6) (i) (G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F–1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F–1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

**University of North Texas Compliance**

To comply with immigration regulations, an F–1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course. If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student’s responsibility to do the following:

1. Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.

2. Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

**Syllabus Change Policy**

Changes to the syllabus may be necessary at times. Communication of any changes will be made via the Announcement tab and Email in Blackboard.