Journalism 5350.007, Topics in Journalism
(Seminar in Strategic Public Relations)
Fall 2013
The Twitter hashtag for this course is #UNTJ5350

Instructor:
Samra (Sam) Jones Bufkins, MJ, APR
Lecturer, Strategic Communications
Email: Samra.Bufkins@unt.edu
Office: GAB 113
Office phone: 940-565-2167
Cell: 214-708-5653 (phone does not work in my office, text is OK)
www.twitter.com/samjb

Note about communicating with me: If you need a rapid response, text me or email me.

Office Hours: After class; Mondays roughly noon—3 p.m. (I try to escape for lunch between classes); Tuesdays 5—6 p.m.; by appointment or when my door is open.

Course Goals
- Gain exposure to a wide range of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for success in the field of public relations.
- Increase understanding of the broad business aspects of public relations and the diverse types of communications used in the field.
- Establish a professional online profile.
- Develop a comprehensive communications plan for a client of the student’s choice.
- Expand the base of resources for continued professional development in the field of public relations.

Technical Requirements
- Blackboard: Unless otherwise instructed, all assignments will be submitted via Turnitin in Blackboard. There are no exceptions. Anything not submitted via Turnitin will be considered a missed assignment. Turnitin will lock you out at the deadline—don’t be late.
- All official class correspondence will be through UNT email and/or Blackboard Announcements. Forward UNT email to your personal email.
- Twitter. Tweets must be unprotected. See handout in Blackboard.
- Hootsuite or similar social media dashboard that facilitates chats and following multiple Twitter feeds.
• Blog—you are required to blog about what you’ve learned from each weekly session, the guest speakers and any topics assigned by the instructor. Your blog may be on the platform of your choice but it must clearly identify you as the author. Feel free to make it as graphically interesting as you wish. Video blogs are also accepted, but submit a written script via Turnitin.
• LinkedIn—see handout in Blackboard for specifics.
• You will need to find an actual client (preferably a nonprofit organization) with whom to work on your final project. Details will be discussed in class.
• Optional Pinterest Account: I have created a board for this class on Pinterest at http://pinterest.com/samrajb/jour-5350001-seminar-in-strategic-public-relations/ If you would like access to pin to this board, let me know the email address you use for your Pinterest account.

Required Text:
Study Guide for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations, Second Edition
Universal Accreditation Board: New York, 2010
Downloadable free at http://online2learn.net/docs/APRPREP/APR_StudyGuide.pdf
Print it out and get it spiral bound with a plastic cover.

Students will also be assigned one additional (unique) book related to public relations and social media which they will read and report on in class. Specific texts will be assigned once class enrollment is determined.

Additional REQUIRED reading:
Twitter: You must follow my Twitter feed (@samjb), and each of your classmates’ Twitter feeds, which everyone is required to post in Blackboard by the second class meeting. You’ll also want to search #untj5350 regularly for relevant Tweets being shared by me and the class. Any time you want to Tweet or ReTweet something you think is of interest to the class, use the hashtag #untj5350. Tweet the link to your blog, using the class hashtag, every time you publish a new post. Participation in Twitter discussions will be considered part of your class participation grade, but be mindful that we all appreciate quality over quantity (and I’m frequently guilty of more quantity than quality). Feel free to use Twitter for sharing links to articles of interest. Students must also participate in at least four Twitter Chats per semester, and provide screen shots of your Tweets. A schedule of relevant chats is posted in Blackboard.

Supplementary Articles I have the annoying habit of finding articles, websites, blogs, etc. and sharing links to them with my colleagues via Twitter and Facebook. I will do the same for this class, via #untj5350 (as well as the hashtags for my other classes, #untj4460 & #untj4270). Feel free to do the same. Here’s the deal: If I “Tweet” it with the class hashtag, that’s a hint that I’d like you to at least skim over it and be prepared to discuss it in class. (You can print it out and bring it with you if that’s easier.) Feel free to share info you find with your classmates and me via this same Twitter hashtag—information sharing goes both ways and we can all learn from each other. If I post an article in a discussion section of Blackboard, in a content folder or email it directly to you, that’s a pretty clear indication we WILL be discussing it. You are also
encouraged to suggest articles for class review and discussion—I see this class as a collaborative effort by all.

Optional, recommended text:
The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law

**Grading System**
920 points or higher A
820-919 points B
720-819 points C
620-719 points D
Fewer than 620 points F

**Assignments and Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upload a photo, resume, LinkedIn profile link, blog link and Twitter handle to Resume/photos folder in Blackboard discussion area. Include a short bio, and what you’d like to get out of this course. Your LinkedIn profile and Twitter activity will be graded over the course of the semester.</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifteen weekly blogs—write about the topic covered by the guest speaker and/or the instructor that week, and don’t be afraid to be provocative (but respectful). Discuss the topic in the context of real-time issues in news, media and PR. Use SEO tags, embed links and include relevant graphics.</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three Tweetchats about topics relevant to public relations, communications or media. (Provide screenshots or Storify summary.)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Select a PR professional to shadow and/or interview about the profession, their work, and where they see the profession growing/evolving in the future. The person you chose cannot be anyone you work with or have worked with, and cannot be one of the class guest speakers. I’d like you to get out of your comfort zone and seek out a high-level, potentially high-visibility person for this profile paper. You can choose someone local or national to interview. It must be an in-person or Skype interview, not an email interview. I need to approve your choice in advance.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-7 page summary and critique, (citing outside sources) with presentation in class, of the book assigned at the beginning of the semester.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detailed strategic communications plan for your client, presented in class. (A draft will be required for review about mid-semester.)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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All assignments are to be done in Microsoft Word format and uploaded via Turnitin (through Blackboard, not Turnitin.com). Assignments not submitted via Turnitin will not be accepted and will be considered missed. Turnitin is set to lock you out at the deadline—don’t be late, don’t
wait until the last minute. Bring a hard copy to class. To gain access to this class go online to LEARN.UNT.EDU.

I cannot help you with Blackboard or Turnitin problems. If you have any problems, call the Help Desk listed on the site during its working hours, and create a screen shot of your error messages. Your screen shot and emailed confirmation of your trouble ticket will be your “Get out of Jail” card if the technical issue impedes submission of an assignment.

All official class announcements, online discussions, grade postings, and additional readings will be posted in Blackboard, so familiarize yourself with it as soon as possible. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK UNT EMAIL DAILY OR FORWARD IT TO YOUR PREFERRED EMAIL ACCOUNT FOR SCHEDULE UPDATES, ADDITIONAL READINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS. I will not accept assignments via email.

All assignments are due by the appointed time on their due date. Please do not wait until the last minute to post your assignments—both Blackboard and individual computer technologies fail, and I have Turnitin set up to lock you out at the deadline. Don’t let procrastination keep you from earning credit for your hard work. Grades on assignments will be posted in Blackboard as quickly as humanly possible.

All written submissions, discussions and emails will be in standard English. The AP Stylebook is the grammar, punctuation, spelling and usage guide for this class. All sources must be cited within the text or in footnotes at the end of the assignment. Sources must be cited in their entirety, whether a website, blog, book, magazine or journal article, or any other scholarly source, including the date of publication. Citation of online sources must follow the format from the Purdue Online Writing Lab, http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/10/ and must be complete. Raw links will not be accepted as citations or bibliography entries. Citations in blogs must be embedded as hyperlinks in anchor text. Any omission of these citations will result in a lowered grade and possible investigation for plagiarism. When in doubt, cite. Don’t press your luck.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Mayborn School of Journalism Academic Integrity Policy
The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind – including plagiarism and fabrication – is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school’s policy aligns with UNT Policy 18.1.16 and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of
Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

When you submit work for this class, that is the same as making a statement that you have produced the work yourself, in its entirety, specifically for this class. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement and similar uses of other people's work are unacceptable. You are expected to conform to the university Student Code of Conduct: [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

**Work that has been written for other classes (past or present), including blog posts, articles or publications, may not be submitted for credit in this class even if they are your original work. You may refer to them if appropriate, but re-submission will result in a grade of zero and possible investigation for violation of the academic integrity policy.**

**Blackboard Gradebook:** Grades posted in the Blackboard gradebook are nothing more than points accrued for each project graded, or each exam. Weighting of assignments, attendance, and class participation are not included. Total points accrued in Blackboard may not be a reflection of your potential or actual grade in this course. Because of the large number of students I have in all my classes, I will not do individual grade calculations on demand. You are responsible for keeping track of your graded assignments and track your progress in this course.

A note about Wikipedia. I use Wikipedia—I love it, it’s a great tool, but it is not to be relied upon as the sole source for anything, especially in this class. If you use it to get started, great, but check the sources within Wikipedia as well as other sources online and in the library. Assignments written with sole reliance on Wikipedia or any other user-sourced site will not be considered complete and will be graded accordingly.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY:** This class is generally a no phone, texting, emailing, WiFi or otherwise wireless communications zone, but I will allow live tweeting of guest speakers with their permission, if you use the class hashtag. If you are using your laptop to take notes, fine, but please limit it to that. We will have guest speakers, and they deserve your undivided attention. Your instructor and the classmates with whom you are learning and sharing information also deserve your undivided attention. If you are on call for your employer and notify me in writing (email works) well in advance of each class for which you are on call I will forgive you if your phone rings in class.
Class Schedule: Topics are subject to change pending availability of guest speakers. Changes in class topics will not affect the due date of assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/28</td>
<td>Administrivia, Introduction to PR as a Management Function. Brief intro to Twitter/Hootsuite if there’s time.</td>
<td>First blog post due Friday 8/30 at 11:59 p.m. Upload a Word document to Turnitin and tweet the link to your post with the class hashtag. Be thinking about a non-profit client to work with.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>KSAs needed for success in the practice of public relations. A little brainstorming about your client project.</td>
<td>Confirm your client and your book with me (and post in discussion area of Blackboard—early birds get first choice). Initial Twitter Assignment due at beginning of class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>PR Ethics—Do they even exist?</td>
<td>Readings TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>Informal communications plan presentations, critiques and brainstorming</td>
<td>Draft Communications Plan due via Turnitin at 11:59 p.m. 10/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>Guest Speaker: Steve Lee, Chairman and Chief Pathfinder, Quicksilver Interactive</td>
<td>Topic: Social media</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>Guest Speakers: Megan Wright, Media Relations Specialist for Oncor; Eric Celeste, Editorial Director at Big Science Media.</td>
<td>Topic: Brand journalism, social media policies, transforming the corporate culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>Guest Speaker: Richie Escovedo, Director of Communications, Mansfield ISD.</td>
<td>Topic: School district communications and crisis communications. Second Tweetchat screenshots due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Discuss your book reviews and brainstorm some more on your communications plans.</td>
<td>Written Book Reviews due via Turnitin 11:59 p.m. 10/29. Bring handout (see template in Blackboard) for everyone in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/6</td>
<td>Malinda Mason Miller, <a href="http://www.EmCubed.me">www.EmCubed.me</a> On Twitter, @Emcubedcreative</td>
<td>Topic: Reinventing yourself and your PR career—from nonprofit to entrepreneur.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/13</td>
<td>Presentations/discussion of interviews with PR pros.</td>
<td>Write-up of your interview with a PR professional due 11:59 p.m. 11/12. Bring copies of a bullet summary (with contact info) for everyone in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/20</td>
<td></td>
<td>Third Tweetchat screenshots due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/27</td>
<td>No class—Happy Thanksgiving</td>
<td>Blog still due on Friday—sorry, I’m evil like that.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/4</td>
<td>Present communications plan in class.</td>
<td>Final Communications Plan due online midnight Tuesday 12/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/11</td>
<td>Final Class Meeting—No final exam</td>
<td>Work will be returned, semester recap</td>
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The Fine Print (Mayborn School of Journalism and UNT Required Statements)

**Journalism Course Registration**

- Registration will begin on the dates noted in the schedule of classes each semester. The system is a live, first come/first serve program.

- By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required prerequisites according to your catalog year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you haven’t taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your prerequisites, please see an advisor.

- A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed the GSP test, all pre-major courses, and Math 1680/1681 and also have applied for major status. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses.

**Email communication**

Communicating with students using the UNT student email account is part of the university’s contract with students. Electronic communication with students in this class will be through the students’ myunt accounts rather than personal email accounts.

**Re-taking Failed Courses**

Students will not be allowed to automatically take a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for 12 months. Once you have waited 12 months after failing a course twice, you may make an appeal to the professor teaching the course to be allowed to enroll a third time.

**Disability Accommodation**

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. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

**Textbook policy**

The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn’t require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

**SETE**

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a university-wide online evaluation and a requirement for all UNT classes. The Mayborn School of Journalism needs your input to improve our teaching and curriculum. This short survey will be available at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class...
is taught. Prompt completion of the SETE will mean earlier access to final semester grades. You’re a critical part of our growth and success. We look forward to your input through SETE.

**Academic Honesty**
When you submit work for this class, that is the same as making a statement that you have produced the work yourself, in its entirety. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people’s work are unacceptable.

Plagiarism, in a nutshell, is using other people’s written words as your own. Some people consider the use of 7-10 words in a row, copied from another source, as plagiarism. Be sure to include citations when using other people’s writing, because plagiarism is a serious offense in any discipline, especially in journalism. It is a firing offense in the professional world.

**Mayborn School of Journalism Academic Integrity Policy**
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**First Class Day Attendance**
Journalism instructors reserve the right to drop any student who does not attend the first class day of the semester.

**Statement of Student Learning Outcomes**
Since 1969, the UNT Department of Journalism (Mayborn School of Journalism effective September 1, 2009) has been accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, the only accredited professional master’s program in Texas. About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here, because it certifies that the department and graduate institute adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences.

In this course, students will
1. demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
2. demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications;
3. work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
4. think critically, creatively and independently;
5. conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
6. write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
7. critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
8. apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

**Attendance**
One absence in the course is the limit without penalty toward your final grade, unless you have communicated with me from the beginning about an extraordinary problem. Coming to class late or leaving early may constitute an absence for that day. This is a seminar course, and it requires your attendance and participation each class meeting.