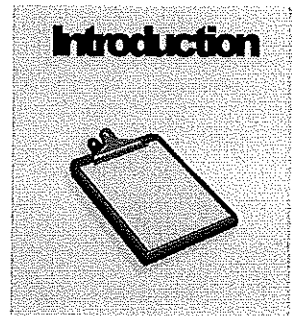


MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY

Creativity in Public Relations

© 2004 Patricia J. Parsons
E-mail: biomed@hfx.eastlink.ca



Course Syllabus

Creativity can solve almost any problem. The creative act, the defeat of habit by originality, overcomes everything. George Lois

Use the icons to guide you through the work you have to do.

AS public relations author Andy Green points out, public relations professionals today are offered millions of dollars world-wide to develop and implement creative public relations strategies – innovative and fresh solutions to communications challenges. However, there is almost no literature on the topic of creativity in public relations (except for Green’s book).

In addition, it appears that there is a small but growing body of research that indicates that “creativity” is one of the key behavioral competencies expected of PR practitioners by the industry. Toronto-based PR consultant Pat Kahnert conducted a small survey of corporate, non-profits and government communicators in which he tried to ferret out the top technical and behavioral competencies expected of PR practitioners today. Planning, writing and evaluation were not surprisingly the top three technical competencies. The top three behavioral competencies coveted by PR employers were:




- Listening, understanding and responding
- Strategic business sense
- Creativity.

Creativity, then, seems key to success in the professional practice of PR. The question is: how do you cultivate it? We’ll try to do just that in this course.

How to Use this Workbook

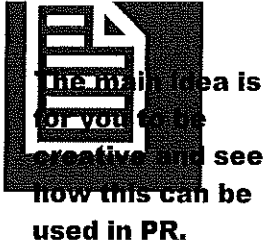
Bring this workbook to class every day. It contains all the course hand-outs including the exercises and challenges that you will complete. It is a workbook – the primary

ICON KEY

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
|  | Topic |
|  | Individual Challenge |
|  | Group Challenge |
-




COURSE SYLLABUS

concept here being work. You'll have to do some in every class to get the most out of the course. Of course, you'll also have to do a certain amount outside of class as well.



About the "Picture" Icons

The icons that you'll see within each section are designed to point out to you what you are supposed to know and what you are supposed to do.

-  Creativity topic description
-  Individual creativity challenges, some of which we will do in class; others you will complete as homework
-  Group creativity challenges; some of these we will do in class and some will constitute part your group assignments.

It would probably be best if you didn't read ahead to sections we have yet to complete. That way the exercises and challenges will be fresh.

Course Description

"Creativity" is the state or quality of being "creative" and the "process by which one utilizes creative ability" [infoplease.com]. Another definition is the quality of being able to produce original work or ideas *in any field...* This course explores the concept of creativity in general, the use of the creative process, characteristics of the creative individual and then applies this new material to challenging you to think creatively and produce work that is innovative and imaginative. It has two overall purposes:

- To convince you that you are creative;
- To provide you with tools to unleash that creativity.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course you will be able to:

1. appreciate the extent to which creativity plays a role in truly successful public relations planning and implementation;
2. demonstrate the use of both individual and group approaches to generating creative and innovative ideas.

COURSE SYLLABUS

3. identify aspects of the creative organization and discuss how this contributes to understanding yourself as a creative individual with your particular strengths.
4. demonstrate a new way of thinking about public relations as a creative endeavor and identify aspects of public relations that require a high level of creativity for successful outcomes.
5. produce a piece of creative work that you can be proud of.

How You'll be Evaluated

There are three components to your final evaluation. Some of the evaluation is based on individual work and some on group work; some of your evaluation is based on in-class work and some of it is based on work you have to do outside the classroom.

- 1. Workshop Participation:** 30% of your grade is based on your participation in in-class workshops. This class is taught in workshop format, the operative part of this being "work." You will be evaluated on the following: individual work ethic, teamwork and openness to new ideas. You will be evaluated by your team members all of whom will complete an evaluation record for each of their team-mates. You will receive a mark based on the average of the mark that they have given you. You will receive all their comments.
- 2. Adopt-a-Genius:** 30% of your grade is based on your individual out-of-class assignment that requires you to select a (deceased) genius from any discipline, research what made that person a creative genius, determine what you can learn from this person's legacy and present this person to your peers in any creative way you want (poster presentation, dance performance, song performance, video, DVD, game development, painting, short story, poetry, , table-top art presentation etc.: just a few ideas to get you started). The point is that you must be able to get across all your points to your audience. You will be evaluated on your ability to make us understand your points, innovativeness of approach and execution. All members of the class will provide written responses to your presentation which will be taken into consideration in your final grade.
- 3. The Big Challenge:** 40% of your grade is based on a major team competition. It culminates in a final pitch session that will be attended by other members of the PR faculty. Extra details are provided on a separate sheet describing the challenge and how you will be graded.

Start to think now about which genius you will adopt. The only one you can't select is Leonardo da Vinci.

Your Responsibilities

Each of you as an individual is responsible for the following:

1. Attending every single workshop and completing, uncomplainingly, all requirements both in the classroom and outside.
2. Signing your creativity contract.
3. Meeting all deadlines imposed. The requirements of this class are such that you have responsibilities to others as well. When your dates are selected for presentation, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are there to make that presentation. Summer school is short and rescheduling will be impossible. If you are in a coma, we can make other arrangements.
4. Note that "university regulations on plagiarism and cheating will be strictly enforced. These regulations are posted on boards and are found in the university calendar."
5. Note that "correct use of language is one of the criteria included in the evaluation of written assignments." MSVU Calendar.

Required Textbook

We will be using the following textbook for readings:



Green, Andy. 2001. *Creativity in Public Relations*. 2nd ed.
London: Kogan Page. (in association with IPR)