

Fashion Media and Public Relations / COMM 5304

Thursday, May 15 through Friday, May 30 , 2014
(No class May 17-18, or 24-26 over Memorial Day weekend)

M-F 10:00-2:00, Room: TBD Umphrey Lee

Professor: Nina Flournoy ... 214-768-4358 / flournoy@smu.edu

Office hours: by appointment/ 217 Umphrey Lee

Course Overview

This course provides students with an understanding of professional public relations practices for the fashion industry. Consumer perception is integral to the fashion industry. That's the business of PR practitioners. In their work with fashion designers, retailers and manufacturers, PR practitioners are involved in almost every aspect of fashion, from forecasting trends and working on designer collections, to launching new lines and helping clients grow their brand. Fundamental skills involve public relations writing and marketing strategy. Students in this class will research and write various PR documents, including pitches, press releases, fact sheets, backgrounders, bios and blogs focusing on fashion-related topics. Students will focus on web-based PR strategies, including social media campaigns and online pressrooms. In addition to lab writing, the course will include lecture, reading assignments, guest speakers in the fashion industry and field trips to fashion-related events.

Students in this course will:

- Gain insight into the nuances of the complex fashion world and the role of public relations and marketing in the fashion industry.
- Identify current trends in fashion promotion, visual merchandising, and production of fashion events.
- Learn the basics of public relations methods, campaigns and strategies
- Gain insight into activities related to planning, publicity, and promoting special events and fashion shows.
- Study fashion campaigns, including aspects related to advertising, public relations, and special events.
- Evaluate campaign outcomes.
- Learn to craft messages and pitch stories to fashion editors and reporters.
- Learn to target social media strategies for the fashion world.
- Demonstrate adequate oral communication skills in presentations
- Gain understanding of why PR is an essential part of brand strategy.

Required Text:

• **Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law** (any edition)

You can access the AP Stylebook Online at:

http://proxy.libraries.smu.edu/login?url=http://www.apstylebook.com/smu_edu

It can also be accessed from SMU's Online Resources web page at <http://smu.edu/cul/or>, either alphabetically in the A's or by subject, under "Communications."

Recommended Text:

• **Fashion Public Relations**, by Sherman and Perlman; Fairchild Books

Sites we'll use:

• **Blackboard:** See readings and other course documents on class Blackboard site

• **SMU Fashion Guides:** Browse sites listed here: <http://guides.smu.edu/fashionmedia>

• **Berg Fashion Library:** <http://www.bergfashionlibrary.com.proxy.libraries.smu.edu>

- Fashion Wire Daily** (register for free access) http://www.fashionwiredaily.com/first_word
- The Business of Fashion:** <http://www.businessoffashion.com>
- Fashion Headlines from PR Newswire:**
<http://www.mediawebsite.net/appsear/menu/?catSetID=7007&catID=292307>
- Conde Nast Digital:** <http://www.condenastdigital.com/index.html>
- Sportswear International:** <http://www.sportswearnet.com>
- Who What Wear Magazine:** <http://www.whowhatwear.com/website/home.php>
- Council of Fashion Designers of America:** <http://www.cfda.com>
- **New York Magazine's fashion blog:** <http://nymag.com/daily/fashion>
- **Currently Obsessed Me:** <http://currentlyobsessed.me>
- **Net-a-Porter:** <http://www.net-a-porter.com/am/home.nap>

Basic Grammar Requirements

Students entering this course should already have basic language proficiency. Students are expected to know grammar, syntax, punctuation, spelling and word usage. Writing proficiency includes knowledge of sentence and paragraph structure. Students who are not proficient in these basic skills should consider dropping this course and either take or retake lower-level English courses.

Basic Media Writing Requirements

Students should be familiar with foundational media writing skills, including basic news writing/reporting, AP Style, an understanding of news values, media relations and copyediting.

Assignments

These are outlined in the course schedule and on the Class Project and Portfolio sheet. If you have a deadline issue with an assignment, please tell me before the assignment is due.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following:

- Class participation, tests, homework - 30%
- Final project (binder and press kit) - 50%
- Final presentation- 20%

All written assignments will be judged based on professional standards — neat, well-written, typed copy with no factual, spelling, grammatical or style errors. All assignments will be graded for content and mechanics as follows:

- A Excellent – Ready for publication or for submission in a professional setting. Made only a few minor mistakes.
- B Good – Needs a few minor corrections.
- C Acceptable – Needs minor rewrites to edit info. or minor mechanics issues.
- D Poor – Missing major info., bad organization, multiple mechanics errors.
- F Unacceptable – Writer needs to start over. Missed the point. Form incorrect. Problems with mechanics, such as grammar, spelling, tense, punctuation.

Attendance

Class attendance is required by the university and necessary to keep up with assigned readings, lectures and projects. All class absences/tardiness, and/or failure to keep up with assigned readings will inevitably result in lower grades. Anyone with on (1) unexcused absence will drop one letter grade for the class. Students with two (2) or more unexcused absences will be administratively removed from this course. Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular

activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

Arrive on time. Tardiness is disruptive to the entire class. If you are consistently late, you will be counted as absent.

Academic Honesty and Misconduct: You are bound by the Honor Code and the SMU Student Code of Conduct: http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL_01_ToC.asp

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass>. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

Class Schedule

(Note: Guest speakers/events and some quizzes TBD)

Prior to the first day of class:

Access class on Blackboard. Review syllabus, assignments overview and browse through all reading and files.

Per the Class Project Assignment: bring a few client choices to discuss day one.

Read Fashion in Popular Culture:

http://www.academia.edu/5063445/Fashion_in_Popular_Culture

Thursday, May 15

- **Class overview, expectations and assignments**

- **Bring laptop to class**

- **Fashion, Communication and Culture**

- **Fashion's Power 10 assignment outlined**

<http://www.adweek.com/news/advertising-branding/fashions-power-25-134765>

Use PPT or Prezi format to present. Due by Monday

- **Review of Chanel's Métiers d'Art show 2013/14 in Dallas**

- **Client project discussion: select a client and research**

- **Discuss Blackboard reading assignments**

- **Public Relations fundamentals**
- **Understanding the fashion PR field**
- **Effects of public opinion regarding a fashion company's success**

Assignment for next class: Round up two articles about fashion (lines, designers, companies). What were the angles? Did it promote or destroy their image?

For next class: Review “Define Your Client” and “What does your designer’s line communicate?” assignment and be prepared to discuss.

Blackboard reading: Bloggers Mean Business

They’re not the future of fashion magazines—they’re the future of fashion branding
<http://www.adweek.com/news/advertising-branding/bloggers-mean-business-134757>

Friday, May 16

- **PR’s role and responsibility in the world of fashion and lifestyle designs**
- **“Define Your Client” and “What does your designer’s line communicate?” assignment due next Monday.**
- **How Public Opinion and the Media Work, and Who’s Involved in PR**
- **Types of media and roles of each**
- **Discuss the two articles assignment. What were the angles? Did it promote or destroy their image?**
- **Fashion Bloggers taking the industry by storm**

Browse Currently Obsessed Me: <http://currentlyobsessed.me>. Click on “All Bloggers” and select a few who focus on brands that reflect your client’s brand. How would you persuade those bloggers to feature your client’s products?

Monday, May 19

- **Fashion’s Power 10 presentations begin.** Bring on your laptop or flash drive.
- **“Define your client” and “What does your designer’s line communicate?” assignments due.**
- **Defining the PR Audiences**
- **B2B and B2C ... audience segmentation by company types**

- **Discuss Audience profiles based on demographic and psychographic data**

- **Adjusting initiatives according to a company's audience profiles**

Browse Council of Fashion Designers of America: <http://cfda.com>

British Fashion Council: <http://www.britishfashioncouncil.com>

Designer Fact File: <http://www.designerfactfile.com>

- **Assignment (bring to next class.):** Locate a current fashion story in the media.

Summarize the story and the coverage it received. In your opinion, what was the media angle used to get the story picked up? Analyze this angle for effectiveness. Was it appropriate for the publication, audience, and current events?

- **Telling your client's story**

- **Writing a company backgrounder or designer bio.**

- **“Create Audience Profile” assignment due next class.**

Tuesday, May 20

- **Setting Up Public Relations Campaigns and Goals**

- **The 15 steps to a properly planned public relations campaign**

- **Campaign Case Study**

- **Fashion's Power 10 presentations continue.**

- **Discuss fashion story coverage assignment.**

- **Bios/Backgrounders draft due. Print out and bring your bio or backgrounder.**

- **Categories of public relations methods:** media methods, community methods, grassroots methods.

- **Cause-related sponsorships**

- **Review the Campaign examples on Blackboard**

- **The fashion world's online image**

•Website Analysis due Thurs: Evaluate your “client’s” online press information:

- a. Is it easy to navigate and find information?
- b. Does it list current press releases?
- c. Are current press releases displayed on-line as text or as an attached PDF?
- d. Does it offer archived releases?
- e. Does it provide story ideas?
- f. Is there a photo gallery? Is it easy to navigate and download images?
Are there photo credit instructions?
- g. Is company information included in the center?
- h. Is there information on the company’s community involvement?
- i. Does it provide specific press contacts information?

Wed. May 21

Guest speaker: TBD

Bios /Backgrounder due

•Formulating, Modifying, and Selecting Public Relations Methods

Identify and understand public relations methods in order to implement the goals in a more efficient, timely and cost effective manner.

•Fashion’s Power 10 presentations continue

•Impact of New Media and Technology on Fashion PR and Journalism

Thurs. May 22

• Client Website Analysis due

•“Establishing Campaign Goals” assignment due

•Fashion’s Power 10 presentations continue

•Implementing the Public Relations Method and Creating a Media Angle

Targeting the media and developing a media angle

•Incorporate a cause-related sponsorship into your campaign

- **Campaign Methods and Implementation**

Friday, May 23

- **Strategic Public Relations Tools**

- **“Campaign Methods” assignment due.**

- **Editorial Calendars**

- **Assignment: Press Release**

Develop a news angle and write a press release for your “client.”

Include a quote from a leader in your client’s company. Who is the target media? (Due next class.)

- **Press Release writing lab**

(Monday: No class on Memorial Day)

Tuesday, May 27

Guest Speaker: TBD

- **“Implementing your campaign and devising a media angle” assignment due**

- **“Incorporate a cause-related sponsorship into your campaign” assignment due.**

- **Review of press release draft in class**

- **Obtaining and Handling Media Coverage**

- **Media lists**

- **Pitching a fashion story**

- **Writing pitch letters: In class lab**

Wednesday, May 28

Field Trip: Attend opening day of the **Dallas Apparel & Accessories Market** at the **Dallas Market Center** <http://www.dallasmarketcenter.com>

- **Online newsroom (web or social media news rooms)**

- **Fashion’s role in Community Relations and Nonprofit Organizations**

- Review of Strategic Campaign plan: Bring draft to next class.**

Thursday, May 29

- Pitch letter due**
- Media Relations and business relationships**
- Crisis Management :** Consequences of the crisis on the fashion company's consumers, business partners, staff, and the media
- Ethical issues in dealing with the crisis**
- Administration in Fashion PR**
- Record keeping, reports, media clips and establishing a media portfolio**

Strategic Campaign plan due

Friday, May 30

Last day of class

- Press Release and Media list due**
- Review of final presentations and Press Kits**
- Final presentations begin**
- Press kits due**

Have a great summer!