

## About the Instructor

**Dr. Sorin Nastasia**

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**Director, International Studies Program (INTS)**

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**Office Hours:** 9:30-10:30 a.m. CST, Tuesdays in person and Thursdays via Zoom, OR by appointment

## Welcome

As your instructor, I hope that you learn, collaborate with peers, share ideas, and have fun in ACS 413. I will do my part to guide you effectively through public relations cases and practices. Our collective exchanges and efforts will make the course a useful academic experience with implications for your personal, community, and professional life. Once again, welcome on board!

## Bio

Hello everyone! To learn about my qualifications and approach, you can read my professional bio below:



I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Communication Studies and the Director of the International Studies Program at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. I earned a Ph.D. in Communication and Public Discourse from the University of North Dakota in 2010. I am originally from Romania in Eastern Europe, where I earned a Bachelor's degree in Languages and Literatures and Master's degrees in American Cultural Studies, International Relations, and Public Relations, and I worked as an international relations counselor for the Ministry of Culture and a public relations counselor for the Ministry of Education. At SIUE, I teach undergraduate and graduate courses related to public relations, persuasion, visual communication, and intercultural communication. My research interests include international public relations, crisis communication, nonprofit public relations, and public portrayals of underprivileged groups. I currently serve as the Internship Director for the Department of Applied Communication Studies.

## Teaching Philosophy

Throughout my administrative and academic career, I have been involved in situations requiring critical thinking as well as creative approaches, and taking initiative as well as working collaboratively. These are principles I am trying to pass on to my students. I encourage my students to use their energies for identifying effective and fair solutions to the problems of today's world, and for contributing to the production and promotion of civic dialogues between and among people from different walks of life and diverse parts of the globe.

## Communicating with the Instructor

The prevalent ways in which I will communicate with you are via Blackboard and the SIUE email. I will be happy to schedule Zoom meetings with you to provide any clarifications and advice related to the course materials and assignments.

## About ACS 413

### Catalog Description

Strategies and critical analyses of ethical issues and approaches in the social and political atmosphere of public relations.

### Course Description

This upper level course uses the case study method to help students understand public relations practices. By employing communication concepts, research techniques, critical thinking, and PR writing skills, students in this course will learn to evaluate several key types of public relations campaigns.

Students will acquire skills and practical knowledge related to different types of PR, including investor relations, media relations, consumer relations, community relations, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and activism campaigns. Students will explore the ways in which public relations professionals deal with the opportunities and problems related to the types of campaigns discussed. Students will be prompted to utilize writing skills and knowledge acquired in lower level PR classes and additional professional engagements as well as to practice professional writing related to the cases they read.

When analyzing a campaign, students will be referring to both administrative issues (How was the campaign planned and carried out? Was the campaign successful?) and critical issues (What was a stake in the campaign and who benefited from it? Are there ethical problems related to the campaign?). The course will focus on real-life cases that will allow you to experience actual public relations issues as well as on both U.S. and international cases that will allow you to reflect on public relations in local and global contexts.

### Prerequisite Knowledge

This course is open to undergraduate students.

ACS 213 Minimum Grade of C OR ACS 203 Minimum Grade of C. 3 Credit Hours.

We will be considering and applying in this course concepts that you encounter in additional coursework in applied communication studies and public relations.

### Course Objectives

By the end of this semester, students enrolled in ACS 413 will be able to:

- practice writing through discussion board posts and crafting key PR campaign elements (press releases, message maps, etc.) for several types of PR campaigns (investor relations, media relations, consumer relations, community relations, Corporate Social Responsibility, and activism campaigns)
- understand the exigencies of organizational settings and target audiences for public relations and strategic communication campaigns
- analyze and evaluate concrete cases involving the planning and implementation of public relations campaigns
- recognize best practices and/or key failures of contemporary public relations campaigns and be able to identify them in other campaigns outside of the context of this course

### Course Materials

#### **Textbooks:**

[Schechter, Sam \(2023\). Public Relations Case Studies: Strategies and Actions. Pressbooks.](#)

[VanSlette, Sarah \(2024\). PR Case Studies: Analysis and Application. Libretexts.](#)

#### **Additional required resources:**

Additional materials for this course are provided by your instructor on Blackboard. You will consult for this course academic as well as industry materials and written as well as video materials. Please consult the weekly folders in Blackboard.

### Technology Privacy Information

We will be using Blackboard in this course. View the [Anthology Blackboard Privacy Statement](#) to review how your data is being used and stored.

## Course Requirements and Policies

### Course Activities/Assessments

The assignments have been designed to help you achieve the course objectives.

#### *Student Information Sheet*

##### **1 Student Information Sheet X 20 points = 20 points**

The Student Information Sheet will help your instructor understand what your background, academic interests, public relations experience, and professional aspirations are. **Students will post their Student Information Sheet under a designated thread on Blackboard. The Student Information Sheet is due by 11:59 p.m. CST on Tuesday of week 1.**

#### *Responses to Readings*

##### **8 Responses to Readings X 35 points each = 280 points**

Several times each week, in the corresponding Discussion Board forum, each student will write one complex, meaningful response to the assigned readings (at least 200 words per response). Students must write about ALL readings assigned (i.e. if two chapters were assigned, both must be discussed). Guidelines for the Responses to Readings are provided in Blackboard. **Students will post their Responses to Readings under designated threads on Blackboard. Responses to Readings will be due by 11:59 p.m. CST on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays of weeks 1 and 2 of class as well as on Wednesday and Friday of week 3 of class.**

#### *Weekly Peer Commentaries on Responses to Readings*

##### **8 sets of Peer Commentaries X 25 points per peer response set = 200 points**

For each Response to Readings assignment, students will consult some of their classmates' discussion board posts and will write thoughtful commentaries for two (2) peers (at least 100 words per commentary to peer, with an outside source added). Guidelines for the Peer Commentaries on Responses to Readings are provided in Blackboard. **Students will post their Peer Commentaries on Responses to Readings as replies to Responses to Readings of their peers on Blackboard. Peer Commentaries on Responses to Readings will be due by 11:59 p.m. CST on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays of weeks 1 and 2 of class as well as on Thursday and Saturday of week 3 of class.**

#### *Case Study Workbook Assignments*

##### **8 Case Study Workbook Assignments X 50 points each = 400 points**

[The Case Study Workbook](#) includes 3 prompts (assignments or questions) for each Case Study and you will **PICK two (2)** prompts per Case Study to complete or respond to. Engaging with the Case Studies in the Workbook and reacting to the prompts will help you evaluate critically case studies in public relations and practice your PR writing skills on real cases. **Students will submit their weekly Case Study Workbook Assignments as Word documents via Turnitin on Blackboard. The Case Study Workbook Assignments will be due by 11:59 p.m. CST on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays of weeks 1 and 2 of class as well as on Wednesday and Friday of week 3 of class.**

#### *Final Exam*

##### **8 Final Exam X 100 points each = 100 points**

During the final week of the class, you will complete a final exam that is meant to test your comprehension of the PR case studies you read. You may refer back to the online text as you complete the final exam (this exam is open book and open notes). The exam format is 30 multiple choice/true false questions, worth 2 points each. **Your Final Exam must be completed on Blackboard, by 11:59 p.m. CST on Sunday of the last week of class.**

#### **Submitting Work**

In ACS 413, students are responsible for completing assignments individually and submitting them electronically on the Blackboard course shell, as detailed under Course Activities/Assessments and in the course schedule. All assignments must be submitted on Blackboard by the deadline for full credit. When you submit an assignment, **it is your duty to review what you have submitted by reading the post and opening any attachments to make sure they successfully attached to the post. Written assignments must be submitted in Microsoft Word format or PDF format.** I cannot read Pages or other file formats and they will not be accepted.

## Grading

<i>Student Information Sheet</i>	<b>2%</b>
<i>Responses to Readings</i>	<b>28%</b>
<i>Weekly Peer Commentaries on Responses to Readings</i>	<b>20%</b>
<i>Case Study Workbook Assignments</i>	<b>40%</b>
<i>Final Exam</i>	<b>10%</b>

Grades for assignments will be posted in the My Grades area on Blackboard.

## Grading Scale

**A (90-100%)** indicates superior work

**B (80-89%)** indicates good work

**C (70-79%)** indicates satisfactory work

**D (60-69%)** indicates passing but marginal work

**F (59% and under)** indicates unsatisfactory work and results in failing the course

## Grading Rubrics, Feedback, and Timeline

Assignment guidelines and grading procedures are available in the syllabus and on Blackboard. Assignment grades with feedback will be posted within three days of the due date. You can find your grade by clicking the My Grades link on the left menu of the Blackboard course. If there is a rubric attached to the assignment, you can click your score to see my personal feedback on the rubric.

## Grades Reconsideration

Success in this course requires thoughtful self-evaluation of your own performance. When you discuss grades with the faculty, please be prepared to make a well considered case regarding the evaluation. Your argument must be related to your assignment as presented, and based on how it compares with the criteria for the assignment (not how you think it compares with someone else's work or how it will affect your GPA). Discussions about an assignment should occur within one week of receiving the evaluation.

## Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

Cheating is any action that violates college norms or an instructor's guidelines for the preparation and submission of assignments. Plagiarism involves using ideas, words, or graphics of others without identifying the source of those materials.

Proper documentation requires citation in the as well as in a bibliography including any texts and visuals, both from traditional sources and online sources, which you have consulted. Having other people do your assignments also constitutes cheating.

Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic and professional offenses. In conformity with SIUE's Rules of Student Conduct, any form of plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated and may lead to failure on an assignment, in the class, or dismissal from the university, per the [SIUE academic dishonesty policy](#). Students are responsible for complying with university policies about academic honesty as stated in the [University's Student Academic Conduct Code](#).

Students are reminded that the expectations and academic standards outlined in the [Student Academic Code \(3C2\)](#) apply to all courses, field experiences and educational experiences at the university, regardless of modality or location.

## Turnitin

This course will utilize the Turnitin plagiarism detection software. A Turnitin link will be available anywhere written work is to be submitted in the course. [Find out more about using Turnitin](#). Visit the [Turnitin Services Privacy Policy](#) for additional information on their privacy policy.

## The Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Unless expressly allowed by the instructor, the use of artificial intelligence tools and applications (including ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others) to produce content for course assignments and assessments is a violation of SIUE's academic policy and is prohibited.

## Participation

Active participation is essential for this course. This includes completing all readings and assignments as well as posting your assignments and engaging in discussions through the Blackboard platform.

## Discussions

SIUE faculty initiate frequent and timely opportunities to engage with students and enable students to engage with one another for the consideration and application of course materials and content. In this class, students will engage in vigorous discussions of the readings and their applications through online discussion boards.

## Class Behavior

- You can expect from me enthusiasm for and competence in the subject matter as well as an open and conversational course format. I expect you to participate in all course activities, complete all course assignments, and actively seek out ways to understand and make use of the course materials and my expertise.
- **Sign your name.** Take responsibility for your comments in order to build a strong classroom community.
- **Keep the conversation on the topic.** If there is a particular dialogue going on, please add to it, but if you have something new to say, start a new thread.
- **Reflect** before you post a material and reread what you have written to be sure it is professional.
- **Communicate** effectively.
  - Communicate with particular peers, the class as a whole, and your instructor as if your comments are provided in professional settings.
  - Do not provide emotional responses if any crisis situation occurs.
  - When writing about an issue, do not use all caps or multiple punctuation marks (!!!, ???, etc.).
  - Be sure to define or explain acronyms, jargon, or uncommon terms so everyone can understand and participate in the discussion.
- **Foster community.** Share your ideas and contribute to ongoing discussions. Make comments that add to, not detract from, a positive learning environment for the course.
- **Be constructive.** Challenge ideas, but do so in positive ways. It's fine to disagree, but when done politely you stimulate helpful discussion and you maintain positive relationships with fellow students.

## Technology Requirements and Policies

### PC or Apple Computer

1.2 GHz or greater, 1 GB RAM or greater

Intel Pentium, Celeron, or Centrino

Windows 8 or 10

Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint (or their Google Workspace equivalents)

Media player such as QuickTime or Windows Media Player

[Java plugin](#) (free)

Internet browsers ([Apple Safari](#), [Google Chrome](#), [Mozilla Firefox](#))

Review [Blackboard's Browser Checker page](#) to see if your browser and operating system are compatible with the Blackboard platform

DSL or Cable Internet connection or a connection speed no less than 6 Mbps.

Additional details on technological requirements for students can be found in this [ITS Knowledge Base article](#).

## Technology Capabilities and Writing Proficiency

The ACS 413 course activities cannot be completed without regular access to an electronic device with reliable Internet access as well as to Blackboard and your SIUE email account. To perform well in this course, students need to have ***basic level skills in computer operation*** and ***proficiency in language usage***. Students enrolled in ACS 413 should be able to:

- Use a word processor, such as MS Word, to compose assignments and communicate with others in the class
- Attach files to emails or course areas
- Navigate websites and course materials
- Reach out to tech support staff when issues arise and troubleshoot to resolve problems

Additional guidance can be found on the [Online at SIUE site](#).

The Department of Applied Communication Studies also regards computer skills and writing proficiency as essential to the satisfactory completion of its courses at the undergraduate as well as graduate level. Thus, for each course assignment you will be assessed and graded not only on knowledge and content but also on text layout, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation as well as on graphic design capabilities and visual appeal of materials when such aspects are relevant. Please edit all materials carefully. Please keep copies of all documents you produce for this class.

## Technical Support

Contact ITS at [618-650-5500](tel:618-650-5500) or at [help@siue.edu](mailto:help@siue.edu) with any technical concerns.

You can also check the functionality of University systems, including Blackboard, at the [ITS System Status page](#), or search the [ITS KnowledgeBase](#) for various how-to and troubleshooting guides.

## Course Evaluation

Near the end of the course, you will be asked to complete a course evaluation questionnaire inviting your opinions about the course and how it is taught. Your honest and constructive feedback is valued by the Department of Applied Communication Studies and the faculty. The course evaluation questionnaire will be administered in such a way as to ensure your confidentiality. Your professor will not have access to the information on the evaluation until after grades have been turned in. Aggregate data from the course evaluations will be utilized for making any improvements needed to future iterations of the course.

## University Policies and Information

University policies and guidance that address teaching, learning, and student support services are available at: <https://kb.siue.edu/132378>.

Students are encouraged to visit this resource site for current information on:

- Regular and Substantive Interaction
- Recordings of Class Content
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Pregnancy and New Parenting Policy
- Services for Students Needing Accommodations (ACCESS)
- Academic and Other Student Services (Library, Academic Success, Tutoring, etc.)
- Cougar Care
- Student Success Coaches

## Subject to Change Notice

All material, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change with prior notice. It is your responsibility to stay in touch with your instructor, review the course site regularly, or communicate with other students, to adjust as needed if assignments or due dates change.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK / DATE (LEARNING MODULE)	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	ASSIGNMENTS DUE (ON BLACKBOARD, DEADLINES INDICATED BELOW)	
<b>Week 1</b> <b>(Monday 12/16 is reserved for your reading of the materials for the week's sessions)</b>			
<b>Session 1</b> December 17-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult: Syllabus, Textbook Introduction, Case Studies 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>• Discussion Board Introduction to Peers</li> <li>• Discussion Board Response to Readings</li> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings (set of 2)</li> <li>• Workbook Assignments for Case Studies 1 &amp; 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Information Sheet (20 points)</li> <li>• Response to Readings 1 (35 points)</li> </ul>	Tuesday, December 17
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings 1 (25 points)</li> <li>• Case Studies Workbook Assignments 1 (50 points)</li> </ul>	Wednesday, December 18
<b>Session 2</b> December 19-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult: Case Studies 3 &amp; 4</li> <li>• Discussion Board Response to Readings</li> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings (set of 2)</li> <li>• Workbook Assignments for Case Studies 3 &amp; 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to Readings 2 (35 points)</li> </ul>	Thursday, December 19
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings 2 (25 points)</li> <li>• Case Studies Workbook Assignments 2 (50 points)</li> </ul>	Friday, December 20
<b>Session 3</b> December 21-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult: Case Studies 5 &amp; 6</li> <li>• Discussion Board Response to Readings</li> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings (set of 2)</li> <li>• Workbook Assignments for Case Studies 5 &amp; 6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to Readings 3 (35 points)</li> </ul>	Saturday, December 21
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings 3 (25 points)</li> <li>• Case Studies Workbook Assignments 3 (50 points)</li> </ul>	Sunday, December 22
<b>Week 2</b> <b>(Monday 12/23 is reserved for your reading of the materials for the week's sessions)</b>			
<b>Session 4</b> December 24-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult: Case Studies 7 &amp; 8</li> <li>• Discussion Board Introduction to Peers</li> <li>• Discussion Board Response to Readings</li> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings (set of 2)</li> <li>• Workbook Assignments for Case Studies 7 &amp; 8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to Readings 4 (35 points)</li> </ul>	Tuesday, December 24
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings 4 (25 points)</li> <li>• Case Studies Workbook Assignments 4 (50 points)</li> </ul>	Wednesday, December 25
<b>Session 5</b> December 26-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult: Case Studies 9 &amp; 10</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to Readings 5 (35 points)</li> </ul>	Thursday, December 26

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion Board Response to Readings</li> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings (set of 2)</li> <li>• Workbook Assignments for Case Studies 9 &amp; 10</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings 5 (25 points)</li> <li>• Case Studies Workbook Assignments 5 (50 points)</li> </ul>	Friday, December 27
<b>Session 6</b> December 28-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult: Case Studies 11 &amp; 12</li> <li>• Discussion Board Response to Readings</li> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings (set of 2)</li> <li>• Workbook Assignments for Case Studies 11 &amp; 12</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to Readings 6 (35 points)</li> </ul>	Saturday, December 28
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings 6 (25 points)</li> <li>• Case Studies Workbook Assignments 6 (50 points)</li> </ul>	Sunday, December 29
<b>Week 3</b>			
<b>(Monday 12/30 is reserved for your reading of the materials for the week's sessions)</b>			
<b>Session 7</b> December 31 - January 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult: Case Studies 13 &amp; 14</li> <li>• Discussion Board Introduction to Peers</li> <li>• Discussion Board Response to Readings</li> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings (set of 2)</li> <li>• Workbook Assignments for Case Studies 7 &amp; 8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to Readings 7 (35 points)</li> </ul>	Wednesday, January 1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings 7 (25 points)</li> <li>• Case Studies Workbook Assignments 7 (50 points)</li> </ul>	Thursday, January 2
<b>Session 8</b> January 3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult: Case Studies 15 &amp; 16</li> <li>• Discussion Board Response to Readings</li> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings (set of 2)</li> <li>• Workbook Assignments for Case Studies 9 &amp; 10</li> <li>• Final Exam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to Readings 8 (35 points)</li> </ul>	Friday, January 3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Commentaries on Response to Readings 8 (25 points)</li> <li>• Case Studies Workbook Assignments 8 (50 points)</li> </ul>	Saturday, January 4
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Exam (100 points)</li> </ul>	Sunday, January 5