I. Basic Course Information

A. Course number and Title: COMM 210, Introduction to Public Relations

B. Date of Proposal: March, 2005

C. Sponsoring Department: Communication & Languages

D. Semester Credit Hours: 3

E. Weekly Contact Hours:
   Lecture  3
   Lab     0

F. Prerequisites: ENGL 111-- English I

G. Laboratory Fees: None

II. Catalog Description

(Prerequisite: ENG 111-- English I) Introduction to Public Relations examines issues, tasks, and responsibilities of public relations practitioners in a variety of professional settings (e.g., corporate, academic, government, non-profit, trade association and union). The course covers theories and foundations of public relations as well as contemporary practices of public relations in North America. It also explores legal and ethical issues facing professionals in the field of public relations today.

III. Statement of Course Need

As a part of a program review of Communication Studies in Spring, 1998 the review committee identified a need for an introductory Public Relations course. Communication students, responding to a survey conducted as part of the program review, listed Public Relations as a Communication field they were particularly interested in as a career. This interest was corroborated in the same survey conducted with new Communication students in Fall, 1998. The program review committee also considered the growing public relations needs of corporations and businesses, government agencies, and non-profit organizations in Somerset and Hunterdon Counties. One indication of these needs is the increasing number students who choose Service Learning, internship, or Co-Op projects involving public relations.
IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- Free Elective
- Program Elective--Communication Studies

V. Outline of Course Content

This course explores the following topics:

- Foundations of Public Relations
  - Models of public relations
  - Public relations research
  - Public relations process

- Public Relations and Communication
  - Internal communication
  - External communication
  - Cross-cultural and international communication

- Public Relations and Media
  - Understanding media needs
  - Preparing news releases and publicity messages
  - Using radio, television, and electronic technologies
  - Planning press conferences and other special media events

- Developing Public Relations Programs and Campaigns
  - Determining PR needs and objectives
  - Planning PR programs and campaigns
  - Developing a budget
  - Evaluating PR programs and campaigns
  - Developing PR in various settings (e.g., corporate, academic, government, non-profit, trade association, union)

- Public Relations and Crisis Management
  - Developing PR crisis plans
  - Crisis PR communications
  - Anticipating PR crisis situations

- Public Relations and Legal/Ethical Issues
VI. Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes

A. General Education Goals

Students will:

- Define objectives for a public relations issue. (G.E. 1)
- Create a public relations campaign to meet specific needs of a client. (G.E. 1, 3)
- Communicate effectively with individuals, groups, and "publics" with a vested interest in a public relations campaign. (G.E. 2)
- Recognize ethical issues facing professionals in the field of public relations today. (G.E. 5)

B. Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Explain the role of public relations in the field of communication and media.
- Explain important models of public relations.
- Employ key public relations reference sources effectively.
- Determine research needs and appropriate research techniques for public relations issues.
- Determine public relations needs of a client
- Develop appropriate strategies and tactics to address a client’s public relations needs.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a public relations campaign.
- Develop public relations strategies for a crisis situation.
- Explain legal and ethical issues relevant to public relations.

VII. Modes of Teaching and Learning

- Lecture/discussion
- Small-group work
- Guest speakers
- Student oral presentations
- Student collaboration
- Team presentations
- Site visits (recommended)
VIII. Papers, Examinations, and other Assessment Instruments

- Research projects
- Quizzes
- Student oral presentations
- Team presentations
- Written reports
- Written examinations

IX. Grade Determinants

- Oral presentations
- Written reports
- Research projects
- Team presentation
- Quizzes
- Written examinations

X. Text and Materials

- Web Sources: Internet resources relevant to current public relations issues and cases.

XI. Resources

- Internet resources
- Current PR cases in the news
- Guest speakers
- Off campus site visits (recommended)