

**URBS-4/512 Public Information/Involvement**  
Minnesota State University, Mankato - Fall 08  
MH112—Mon/Weds. 12:00-1:15-p.m

**Instructor:**

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Office Hours: As posted on my office door & web page.  
[http://www.intech.mnsu.edu/cherrington/Office\\_Hours.htm](http://www.intech.mnsu.edu/cherrington/Office_Hours.htm)

**Required Text(s) for All:**

(R-1) TBA (to be announced)  
(R-2) Media Relations for Local Gov. (RM) ISBN 0873261178      ICMA electronic copy or (RM)  
(R3) Marketing Places (grads only)                                      ISBN 07432-3636-X      Free Press

**Morris Hall Copy Shop (CP)--Req'd for all:**

Class packet for URBS 4/512.

**Course Purpose:** The purpose of this course is two-fold. The first is to increase public and non-profit managers' overall understanding of media relations. The second is to help public sector manager/planners understand how to develop a strong and compelling image for a city and stimulate public awareness that instills a sense of pride of place in community.

- Legal Contexts of Government-Media Relations: 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment, etc., the local government "beat reporter," and Civic Journalism.
- MN's Data Practice Act
- News: What constitutes it? Who are the media and what drives it? Preparing for an interview.  
Tips about radio/TV/newspaper, Public Service Announcements..
- Getting the Word Out: Roles and Responsibilities, Cultivating Local Government/Non-Profit Media Relationships. The news conference and press releases.
- Organizing: Preparing for an Interview: What to say when the reporter calls. Conducting telephone and other types of interviews.
- Public-sector marketing, Branding and Place Making.
- Crisis Communication: Steps to Effective Crisis Communication.
- Public Information and Involvement: Telling your city's story.
- Communication plans: Gathering data, photographs, design principles.

This course is designed to help public managers and non-profit directors to understand the media within an appropriate context. You will learn about legal considerations and examine the concept of civic journalism. Emphasis will be placed the role of public information: How to gather and disseminate it in order to stimulate public involvement as well as market a community. The primary focus of the course will be developing a professional approach to building successful media relationships for your city or organization. Also you will engage in applied learning projects on designing a public information campaign. The course is geared toward public and non-profit managers, department heads, elected officials, and planners or anyone else who regularly interacts (or should interact) with the media. The course will include lectures, readings, and out-of-class field projects. Guest speakers will also come in to class and discuss their real-world experiences and provide personal tips for dealing with the media.

**Course Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to do the following:

- Articulate historical contexts of government-media relations, legal considerations, and the Data Practice Act.
- Articulate civic journalism and ethical behavior in media relations.
- Understand and use various forms of media in local government and non-profit settings.
- Understand how public and non-profit managers can build successful media relationships.
- Understand policies and internal procedures needed for effective media communication.
- Understand principles of strategic marketing, branding and place marketing.

**Personal Skill Development Goals:** In addition to the specific course outcomes, there are 4 additional goals that are most common to all other URSI undergraduate and graduate courses at MSU. They are:

- to link theory to applied learning (learn-by-doing) projects
- to develop your creative and critical thinking powers in addressing public sector problems and opportunities.
- to develop your personal communication skills, both written and oral.
- to improve your understanding and use of technology.

In addition, graduate students are expected to interact with and mentor undergraduate student teams in organizing and completing applied learning projects. Graduate students will direct:

- field projects, research, and data collection.
- bringing laptop (and other equipment needed) and setting it up for class presentations.
- completion of written reports on the project.

#### **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES:**

A variety of instructional methodologies and teaching strategies will be employed throughout this course. Above all, my teaching style in this course is based on an “adult-centered” model wherein students are active participants responsible for their own learning. Student motivation is a key factor in learning. The instructor is a facilitator and resource person who (along with guest speakers) will attempt to lead you into discussion. However, *meaningful involvement is your responsibility and you will be graded on your attempt to participate (or not participate).* Attendance is critical as well as *fulfilling your team responsibilities.* Major portions of the class are a “studio” project that involve graduate students mentoring undergrads in field project assignments. Handouts on field projects will be distributed at a later time. **Several assignments will be out-of-class field projects.**

**Public Awareness Campaign Media Project:** The class will work collectively to research, assemble and proofread a community marketing tool as part of a public information campaign (PAC). Graduate students will act as Point People (PP) who will facilitate student communication on who is doing what. At the start of each class we will go over the *Action item & PERT lists* to check the status of assigned responsibilities. Specific details will be made available the first class meeting. **Graduate students will be expected to take the lead in fulfilling the studio project, guiding undergraduates with their role and assignments.** Each grad leader should keep an updated *Action Item List* (blank attached) on assignments and progress. This is part of the Report grade.

**Public Meeting Presentation:** The class will design a Powerpoint presentation recapping the project and officially presenting the brochure at that public meeting. All students should participate in (but not necessarily orally present). All students are expected to be present.

<b>Course Grading:</b>	<b><u>UGrads</u></b>	<b><u>Grads.</u></b>
Field Projects/Homework	20	20
Public Mtg. Presentation	25	35
Report/PAC	25	40
Attendance/Participation/Team Evaluation*	<u>30</u>	30
Graduate mentoring of Ugrads*		<u>25</u>
Total	100	150

\* N.B. A percentage of the points you earn will be determined by your co-team member's evaluation of your willingness and contribution to the PAC project.

**GUEST SPEAKERS:**

Throughout the semester guest lecturers will speak to the class. These appearances will be listed on the weekly class schedule (or announced). Guest speakers may include public relations directors, public information officers, radio and TV station managers, etc.. Be sure to ask the instructor the week before their appearance for some background information on the speakers *if it is not included in your class packet*. This will allow you to develop two (2) intelligent and meaningful questions to pose to them about the course subject matter. Your questions must be typed and have your name and date showing in the upper right hand corner. They are to be turned in at the start of class in order to receive the "guest speaker" question points listed under "grading." Note: You should do two copies and retain one to refresh your memory when the speaker calls for questions. *Please no open laptops, text messaging, or cell phones during these presentations. Failure to disregard this will result in a 2 point reduction for each occurrence.*

**American Disabilities Act (ADA)**

ADA requires that the university provide services for persons with disabilities. For more information regarding the services that are available to you, please contact the MSU Disability Services Office at (507) 389-2825 (V) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY). If you are a person with a disability, please discuss your special needs with this instructor within the first week of class. This will allow you and the instructor ample opportunities to make arrangement for taking notes, completion of assignments, and examinations.

**Other Policies:** No late assignments accepted (without prior notice and a verified and **justifiable** reason, (e.g. heart attack, stroke, pregnancy). Dues dates will be announced in class. When cell phones and beepers go off in class they are very distracting to others. Please turn off or put on vibrate) your cell phones and beepers during class time/field trips. **Laptop use only for project related work.s during class.** . Thank you.