Eastern Washington University  
Department of Education  
Course Syllabus: EDUC. 566  
School-Community Relations  
Spring, 2011  
Dr. Harvey B. Alvy  
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Office Hours: Tuesday 12-2; Wednesday 11-12; Thursday 4-5 (Williamson, 313D)


In addition, there will be other sources (e.g. handouts from the National School Public Relations Association—consider bookmarking this website) relating to school-community relations that will also be part of your required assignments. Excellent references for the course can also be found on Warner pp. 35-36 and links from my web site: http://www.ewu.edu/x21525.xml

**General Description of Course Content:** This course will comprehensively examine communication principles and the spectrum of forces that are involved in school community relations. These forces include: internal and external stakeholders, the broad community involved in school issues, individuals and organizations that can form partnerships with schools and the various newspaper, radio, television and electronic media that are available to schools. Communicating effectively, giving spontaneous speeches, critiquing school publications, developing a PR marketing plan, dealing with crisis management, assessing school and community needs, working with the media, and remembering to focus on student learning will all be examined during the course. Application of essential PR tools, to enhance a school's mission and vision related to student learning, is a major course objective. Case study analysis and group interaction will be essential learning strategies instituted during the quarter. Broad course aims include, also, the implementation of descriptive, analytic, assessment, communication, and application skills.

**Course Objectives/Outcomes Include:**

- Assessing and developing personal communication skills, including intentional “spontaneous speeches” to honestly interact with important stakeholders about student learning
- Critiquing school publications and other PR documents in a School Public Relations Portfolio to develop effective publication skills
- Constructing a School Public Relations Marketing Plan for one's school based on contextual school needs developed through appropriate assessment strategies including Lewin’s Force-Field Model
- Reviewing various school public relations programs and planning strategies
• Identifying important internal and external school stakeholders and analyzing the school PR strategies to successfully interact with these stakeholders
• Developing effective media skills to work with newspapers, television and radio
• Identifying the major opinion "leaders" and pressure groups in the community
• Developing techniques to assess a target group's level of understanding of a school issue
• Communicating without educational jargon
• Effectively managing a school, community, national or world crisis, (e.g. earthquake, fire, Sept. 11, 2001, Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, Hurricane Katrina, the recent tragedy in Japan), including the internal school needs and external community needs during the crisis (e.g., misunderstanding of changes related to federal and state testing and accountability)
• Evaluating communication technologies appropriate for school use
• Using case study analysis with Lewin’s Force-Field Model to comprehensively understand the various forces that impact schools
• Addressing current school-related issues that develop during the quarter focusing on school, media and community reactions

**Tentative Course Outline**

**March 30, 2011**
**Orientation to class:** ice-breaker, discuss syllabus, and student expectations.

**General Public Relations Tips for School Leaders and Self-Assessing One’s Communications Skills:** Reviewing broad public relations suggestions and considering one’s communication strengths and areas needing to be strengthened.

**Case study analysis of Hughes and Hooper Marketing Plan** on pages 207-214 in *Public Relations for School Leaders*. This group activity will include an important comprehensive overview of a “typical” school marketing plan. **Lewin’s Force-Field Model** will be introduced to assist with the case study analysis and help students prepare for their School Public Relations Marketing Plan Presentations. Examining the case study will provide, also, an opportunity to review various public relations issues that impact schools and how to systematically address the issues.

**Assignments for April 6:** Warner, Preface, pp. xii-xiv and chapters 1, 4 and 13; Hughes and Hooper, chapter 8 (pp.141-148). (NOTE: see Warner's comment on page xiv concerning granting of permission to use or modify all resources cited in the text.)

**April 6, 2011**
**Essential Principles of School-Community Relations, Oral Communication and Publication Strategies:** Creating an effective communication loop by developing essential steps based on sound strategies to foster positive public relations. Also, “building” and presenting effective speeches (will include activity for sequencing key points of a speech and assessing one’s performance). Working with partners, we will review techniques and experiment with presenting “spontaneous speeches” on school-related topics using the “specific” to “general” to “specific” approach. How to produce first-rate publications and other resources to highlight a school will also be addressed.
Assignments for April 13: Warner, chapters 3 & 7; Hughes & Hooper, chapter 5. Begin gathering sample data for the School Public Relations Resource Portfolio of publications and other communication resources relating to your school. This assignment will be due on May 4, 2011. See assessment section of the syllabus for a detailed explanation of this assignment.

April 13, 2011
Working Successfully with Internal School Forces or Publics: Meeting the communication needs of teachers, counselors, other professionals, students (internal and external), classified staff, volunteers, in-house parents (parents can be classified as internal or external forces), the administration and school board members. The faculty meeting as a “public relations” opportunity.

Case study analysis: Hughes and Hooper, pages 214-219

Assignment for April 20: Warner, chapters 6, 8, and 9; Hughes and Hooper, chapter 1 (pp. 13-21), chapter 2 (pp. 34-35), chapter 3 (pp. 54-61), chapter 8 (pp. 148-163)

April 20, 2011
Working Successfully with External School Forces: Communicating and partnering with a multitude of people, including pressure groups, in the school community. Groups may include: individual parents, PTA/O, small businesses, corporations, senior citizens, political organizations, religious groups, athletic organizations, community organizations, clubs, volunteer organizations, social service agencies, media, ethnic organizations, and foundations--just to name a few! Working with difficult parents and addressing diversity issues with parents will be addressed. View PBS video on external groups and “School Choice” options.

Assignment for April 27: Warner, chapters 2, 10 & 12; Hughes and Hooper, chapter 10 (pp. 199-207). Telling Your Story: A Toolkit for Marketing Urban Education (will be used primarily during the next three weeks).

April 27, 2011
Part I. Marketing the School: Gathering data about the school and community to formulate a systematic PR marketing plan that addresses the unique needs of the school. Strategic Planning as a helpful marketing plan model and the booklet, Telling Your Story: A Toolkit for Marketing Urban Education will be reviewed and analyzed.

Case study analysis: Hughes and Hooper, pp. 219-224

Assignment for May 4, 2011: Complete the School Public Relations Resource Portfolio. (Review the previously examined Chapters 4 and 13 in the Warner text as you complete the portfolio.) Review: Telling Your Story: A Toolkit for Marketing Urban Education for the May 4th class.

May 4, 2011
Group interaction on School Public Relations Resource Portfolios
Part II. Marketing the School: Implementing a systematic PR marketing plan that includes the spectrum of possibilities from one-on-one contact to high tech publications.
Assignment for May 11: Warner, chapter 5; Hughes and Hooper, chapter 7; review Toolkit, pp. 10-18.

May 11, 2011
Working With the Media: Reviewing the skills needed to proactively and successfully develop trusting relationships, and effective techniques, to productively network with newspapers, television, radio personnel, and using web 2.0 strategies, to interact with regard to school activities and crises.


May 18, 2011
Crisis Management: Preparing for tragedy through proactive planning and group support. The OSPI School Safety Planning Manual and school and district crisis documents will be reviewed.

Second Speech Partnering Activity: (See procedure from April 6th, activity)


May 25, 2011
Begin School Public Relations Marketing Plan Presentations

Assignment for June 1, 2011: Continue presentations on School Public Relations Marketing Plans

June 1, 2011
Complete School Public Relations Marketing Plan Presentations.

Assignment for June 8: Study for Final Exam.

June 8, 2011--Final Examination

Evaluation/ Assessment Procedures

(Note: regarding the rationale behind the forms of assessment: The quality/success of the course will depend a great deal on the individual and group contributions that you make. Educators should be successful communicators, decision makers, listeners, problem solvers and reflective practitioners. We will work on these skills together.)
Final grades will be based on the following four areas:

1. **Constructive class participation, keeping up with the texts, and other resources.** This includes presenting your insights each evening, and positively interacting with colleagues individually and in groups. **THUS, WEEKLY ATTENDANCE IS CRITICAL TO CLASS SUCCESS. 20% (Note: If excessive absences occur I will use my discretion to penalize a student’s grade more than 20% because “real time” class interactions/activities/insights cannot be “duplicated.”)**

2. **School Public Relations Resource Portfolio:** This portfolio will include a collection of sample public relations publications and other resources/documents/artifacts relating primarily to your school (district, state and national level documents also can be used). These resources/documents/artifacts will be collected for approximately one-month. **A loose-leaf notebook should be used (3-ring binder) to make it easy to examine the resources.** The resources can be school newsletters, flyers, posters, daily announcements, newspaper articles, press releases, parent surveys, report card samples, certificates, school profiles, reports to parents, monthly calendars, student newspapers, hard copies of school web sites, etc. You will select five of these resources to critique. In a table of contents, sequentially list the items in your portfolio, noting which items are critiqued (page numbers are unnecessary). The five critiqued articles should follow the table of contents in your portfolio. A minimum of 20 items should be in your collection. Organize your table of contents based on artifact topics (and logic) following the five critiqued articles (e.g., parent letters, announcements to teachers, district memos, newsletters, etc.). Make sure you complete reading Chapters 4 and 13 in the Warner text before writing the critiques. The five critiqued items will include **subheadings** with explanations concerning: a) title and purpose of the document, b) intended audience, c) strengths of the document, d) document weaknesses, and e) your recommendations to improve the document. Each of the five critiques should be on a separate page, **and attached to the appropriate item.** Each written critique should be no more than one-page, word processed, with a reasonable font size (Times 12). **Select items to critique that spark a “conversation” related to document strengths, weaknesses and/or recommendations.** At least three of the critiques should include one reference (they should be different references), other than the course texts (although you may add the course texts), that provide **insights** related to effective public relations. Use APA style 6th Edition, in your narrative. Include a Works Cited section with the three references on a separate page at the end of your portfolio. Due May 4, 2011. 20%

3. **School Public Relations Marketing Plan:**

Each student will develop a **School Public Relation Marketing Plan** to target public relations needs in one's school, or of an imagined school. Remember, the ultimate goal of the marketing plan should be to enhance student learning. **The marketing plan presentation to the class should, in the following order, include:** a) important geographic/demographic highlighted narrative information concerning the school, district, state, etc. (If you would like to include other “less important” demographic, statistical information do so in an appendix that follows your paper), b) the current PR situation with **your force-field analysis**, c) a succinct description of the marketing plan goals including targeted areas/problems to be improved, d) proposed
action plan/solutions noting specific steps/recommendations/guidelines (that is, what will be
done to improve the public relations situation), e) a timeline, and f) evaluation/assessment
measures, g) reflections (“ah-has”). Remember, the force-field analysis should be used in part
“b” of the marketing plan and addressed during the presentation (see Hughes and Hooper, page
212). The needs assessment questions (use as suggestions) on page 201 of Hughes and Hooper
will also be very helpful as an analysis tool for group members. Issues relating to internal and
external forces, assessment, the relevant stakeholders, surveys, budgeting, and the uniqueness of
the school should be considered. The plan should include relevant references integrated into
your marketing plan on appropriate public relations topics/issues, helpful in the plan's
development. References should be from a variety of sources including: journals, books,
personal interviews, the Internet, etc. Hughes and Hooper's case studies (pp. 207-224) and
Warner's marketing plan steps (pp. 10-12 and p. 101) will provide helpful ideas for your plan.
Also consider using Telling Your Story: A Toolkit For Marketing Urban Education (especially
pages 4, 7, 25-26). School Public Relations Marketing Plans will be presented on the evenings
of May 25 and June 1.

The final product will include:

a) a 30 minute presentation on the plan to the class. Assume that you are presenting to your
district school board or other appropriate body. (Rehearse your presentation so that it does
not exceed 30 minutes.) The presentation should provide important highlights and insightful
ideas that emerge from your reflections and research, using the “a to f” sequence noted above.
Have a good grasp of the material so you do not have to read “word for word” from your
marketing plan notes. Appropriate visual aids for the presentation, and handouts of your
PowerPoint or overheads (for classmates) must be used to emphasize essential points. Again, the
presentation should stress the “highlights” of your plan for the class geared toward your
specific audience. Details will be covered in your six-page report. 20% 

b) Marketing Report on different aspects of the plan. The reports should include an
introduction (briefly reviewing the topic and organizational plan for the report), main body
(following the “a to f” sequence of your presentation), and final reflections noting insights/new
perspectives/ “ahas”, possible difficulties, and conclusions you gained from the process. Note the
different sections of the report with appropriate headings and subheadings (which
function as a logical organizing outline, and hierarchy of heading importance). Each report
should be six pages, double-spaced, with a reasonable font size. Include at least five new
references in your written text (in addition to the course textbooks). If you use quotes, use them
sparingly and, of course, reference each quote. Use APA style 6th Edition, in your narrative and
on your Works Cited page. A separate title page (with specific title for your plan) and Works
Cited page will also be included with the report. All individual reports are due on June 1. 20% 

4. Final Examination on Wednesday, June 8, 2011 20%

Suggested Resources for the School-Community Relations Course

The National School Public Relations Association is a leading resource in the field. I would
suggest bookmarking their website and the Education World website for the course. Educational
Leadership, Phi Delta Kappan (each year “The Kappan” presents their poll of the public’s views
on schools), *Education Week*, *Educational Administration Quarterly* and journals from AERA, NASSP, and NAESP, are excellent sources for articles on school-community relations. The NEA, AFT, PTA (National Congress of Parents and Teachers) and, as noted above, the National School Boards Association, are also fine resources. The Parent Institute also publishes a helpful monthly newsletter.

Check with your principal and district “public relations” specialist to gain access to their resources and bookmark the OSPI website.

Almost all of the above organizations, and many state administrative organizations, have excellent web sites. Again, see pages 35-36 of *Promoting Your School*, by Warner, and especially *Telling Your Story: A Toolkit For Marketing Urban Education*, pps. 30-34 for detailed addresses and excellent web sites. Additionally, the reference sections and suggested reading sections of both the Warner text, and the Hughes and Hooper text, offer excellent sources for additional information.

**Other Selected References for School Community Relations**


Zhao, Y. (2009). *Catching up or leading the way*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.