PUR 4243 – Industry Perspectives: AI in Public Relations and Communications

Academic Term: Spring 2025
Class Day/Time: Wednesday, 10:40 – 11:30 a.m., Weimer 2050
Credit Hour(s): 1

Instructor
Name: Leticia Solaun, Ph.D., ENV SP
Email Address: lsolaun@ufl.edu
Office Phone Number and Times: **+1 (352) 246-5246.** You can text or call me at this number. If I am not available when you call, leave your name and phone number and I will return your call as soon as possible.
Virtual Office Hours: I am flexible in accommodating to student availability. Contact me to schedule an appointment.

NOTE: There may be classes where in-person presence is required and online attendance will not be possible. Students will receive advanced notice for sessions requiring in-person class attendance.

Course Description and Prerequisites

Course Description: In this course, you will learn about current practices, opportunities, and challenges in applying Artificial Intelligence (AI) – including generative AI – technology to the public relations practice and to facilitate communication and engagement. Through effective working knowledge and real-world applications, students will learn about ethics in AI, various AI platforms, precision prompt engineering for large language models (LLMs) and the power of natural language processing (NLP). Students will learn and be able to help guide clients in decision making in the application of AI capabilities in key public relations planning and implementation scenarios.

Course Prerequisites – N/A

Course Expectations

Some of the classes during the semester will be in person, but many weekly meeting will be conducted via Zoom. Using an online collaboration platform will allow students to work in AI tools and discuss/participate the impact and output of prompts, which is key to mastering AI techniques.

Attendance Policy
Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. Students are expected to attend and actively participate in class. Click here to read the university attendance policies for information on absences, religious holidays, illness, and the twelve-day rule.

Late Assignment Policy
Late assignments will not be accepted unless it is a University excused absence, as stated in the attendance policies. *No late work will be accepted for final projects or work due in the final week of class due to the university grading deadlines.*

Accessibility/Students with Disabilities Information

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](.). It is important for students to share their accommodation letters with their instructors and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback professionally and respectfully is available at [https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/](.). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](.). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](.).

College of Journalism & Communication and Course-Level Objectives

College of Journalism and Communications Objectives:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.
- Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.
- **Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.**
- **Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.**
- **Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.**
- Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
- **Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.**
- **Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand ethical AI concerns and use cases and the PRSA statement on professional ethics on AI use. (CO: 1)
2. AI, including key concepts of natural language processing (NLP, large language models (LLMs) and machine learning, and their application to public relations and communications practices. (CO: 2)
3. Recognize and determine how to create prompts, which prompts to select given needed information or outcomes, how to engage and converse with LLMs, and how to retain and hone critical thinking in an AI world. (CO: 3)

4. Analyze a real life public relations event, situation, or clients need to identify which what information source will be most reliable and/how to critically assess AI output. (CO: 4)
5. Counsel clients/senior leadership on AI, creation, maintenance, and adaptation of LLMs, and explain practical challenges to practitioner implemented use. (CO: 5)

(CO = Course-level Objective)

Textbooks and Materials

Required Course Textbook(s): There are no required textbooks.
Required Software: Students must have a ChatGPT license and be able to access and use it throughout the semester.

University and Course Grading Policies

University Honor Code
UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies the number of behaviors that violate this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is unacceptable, especially in academic communities. All academic work must be an original work of your own thought, research, or self-expression. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, prohibited collaboration, consultation, and submission of academic work that has been purchased or obtained (see the UF Policy: Student Conduct Violation). In addition, self-plagiarism is also unacceptable. Self-plagiarism is defined as recycling or reusing one's own specific words from previously submitted assignments or published texts. Remember that plagiarism is unacceptable in any of your work, including all discussion board posts, journal entries, wikis, and other written and oral presentation assignments. It's important to always cite your sources in your assignments.

Grading Criterion
Your grade will be calculated based on the following:

Assignments/Assessments	Weight or Percent of Grade
Course Orientation: These assignments are required; however, they do not count toward the final grade. • Student Introduction • Course Evaluation	0%
Seven written assignments or output from class sessions/work; maximum points possible per assignment is 10	70%
Class attendance and participation; maximum points possible is 30.	30%
TOTAL	**100%**

Written Assignments or Output from Class Work: 70%

<mark>We will actively use AI platforms throughout the semester in and out of class. Students will need to complete seven assignments. Throughout the semester there will be opportunities to submit more than seven assignments. Students may select which assignments they complete. Many of them will involve you interacting with large language models. These assignments should include your initial prompt, the platform response, and your analysis of the input and output.</mark>

Attendance and Active Participation: 30%
Students are expected to attend and participate in class discussion and interactive exercises. You are expected to be fully engaged at all times unless cleared in advance. Note that we will have numerous in-class assignments, and if you are not in class to complete them you will receive a zero. Requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, assignments and other work in this course follow UF policies:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Grade	Percentage
A	92.5-100%
A-	89.5-92.4%
B+	86.5-89.4%
B	82.5-86.4%
B-	79.5-82.4%
C+	76.5-79.4%
C	72.5-76.4%
C-	69.5-72.4%
D+	66.5-69.4%
D	62.5-66.4%
D-	59.5-62.4%
E	0 – 59.4%

The only passing grades for graduate students are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, and C. Letter grades of C-, D+, D, D- or E are not considered passing at the graduate level. However, the grade points associated with these letter grades are included in grade point average calculations. See the Graduate Catalog and UF graduate school grading policy for more information.

Student Privacy
Federal laws protect your privacy regarding grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the Notification to Students of FERPA Rights.

Technology Requirements

Software Use
All faculty, staff, and students at the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Software

- [Microsoft Office 365.](#)
- [UF Apps](#) – access UF software applications from any device from any location at any time.
- [Adobe Reader](#)
- [Zoom](#)
- Chat GPT

Communication Policies

Announcements

You are responsible for reading all announcements posted in the course each time you log in.

Email

You are responsible for reading all your course emails and responding promptly (within 24 hours).

Video Conferencing

You are responsible for attending course video conferencing meetings. If you cannot attend the video conferencing meeting, please advise the instructor and/or your team at least 24 hours in advance (exceptions can be made for legitimate emergencies). You are expected to demonstrate netiquette and etiquette communication expectations during these meetings.

Video Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal, educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under [UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code](#).

Privacy

If your course includes live synchronous meetings, the class sessions will all be recorded for students in the class to refer to and for enrolled students who cannot attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilized a profile image agree to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your

profile or video image recorded, keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who unmute during class and participate agree to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. Please see UF's Information Technology policies for additional information.

Commitment to Diversity
The College of Journalism and Communications embraces diversity as a shared responsibility among faculty, staff, and students and strives for tangible expressions of this responsibility. We are committed to fostering a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for individuals of all races, genders, nationalities, religions, sexual orientations, identities, and abilities to express their culture and perspectives through the art and science of journalism and communication.

AI Policy for Student Work
In this course you will be asked to use generative AI for some assignments. AI is commonly used in the profession, so familiarity with generative AI tools is important. However, it is essential for you – as a student of the profession – to develop the skills and have the ability to think critically through your future work. Building these skills occur during your academic career. While you will continue to build on those as you develop through the years, establishing a solid foundation is essential. Bypassing spending the time developing those skills will impact the quality of your future work.

Use your creative thinking and editing skills. Do not let them lapse! When AI is allowed or encouraged in assignments, you will need to document how AI was used. This will be done by providing your original prompts, showing the editing that you did to the created content, or using appropriate citation of information obtained via generative AI.

If you are using AI when not explicitly allowed, that is considered a violation of the honor code as you are presenting content as your own that was not fully created by you. There are various AI detection tools available (built within Canvas and externally such as ZeroGPT), and many AI platforms follow very formulaic response patterns. If I am concerned that your work is not your own, I will try to verify the originality of your work. If unable to do so, I may ask you to resubmit the assignment detailing how you arrived at your submission.

Academic and Student Resources

Academic Resources
- E-learning Technical Support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 (HELP) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- Career Connection Center: Career assistance and counseling. Reitz Union, Phone: 352-392-1601.
- Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance concerning using the libraries or finding resources.
  UF Library Services for Distance Students
  Ask a Librarian – chat with librarians online.
  CJC Librarian - April Hines, Phone: 352-273-2728, Email: aprhine@uflib.ufl.edu.
- Writing Studio: Provides one-on-one consultations and workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate). 302 Tigert Hall, Phone: 352-846-1138.

Health and Wellness

- *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, call 352-294-2273, or visit the website to refer or report a concern, and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center:* Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis and non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department: Visit the [UF Police Department](#) website or call 352-392-1111 (or 911 for emergencies).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal well-being, including wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

Course Schedule			
Week	**Date**	**Topic and Assignments**	**Assignments**
1	1/15/2025	Introduction to the Course and AI	
2	1/22/2025	Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing; Ethics and Bias in AI; Perspective API	Assn 1 available (Multiple Assn Possible; 20 Assn Points Maximum)
3	1/29/2025	Discuss Perspective API Results	Assn 1 Due
4	2/5/2025	AI Use Cases in PR; Prompts, Queries, and Output: Instructing Large Language Models	Assn 2 Available
5	2/12/2025	Prompts, Queries, and Output: Conversing with Large Language Models	Assn 2 Due Assn 3 Available (Multiple Assn Possible; 20 Assn Points Maximum)
6	2/19/2025	Stakeholder/Audience Analysis & Segmentation; Influencer Identification and Chat Analysis	Assn 3 Due
7	2/26/2025	AI Regulations and Transparency (OpenAI Regulatory Sandbox)	Assn 4 Available
8	3/5/2025	Sentiment Analysis, CRM, and Media Monitoring	Assn 4 Due
9	3/12/2025	AI Driven Personalization in PR Campaigns; Chatbots	Assn 5 available (Multiple Assn Possible, 20 Assn Points Maximum)
10	3/19/2025	**Spring Break – No Classes**	
11	3/26/2026	Crisis Management and Response: AI vs Traditional Methods	Assn 5 Due
12	4/9/2025	AI Metrics and ROI (Advanced Analytics and Attribution Models, Benchmarking, and Continuous Improvement)	Assn 6 Available
13	4/16/2025	Class Discussion on Assn 6 Results	Assn 6 Due Assn 7 Available
14	4/23/2025	Collaborating with IT; Advising and Counseling Clients	Assn 7 Due

		Related to AI Application and LLM Development	

The instructor reserves the right to adjust this syllabus as necessary.