

# *Advertising & Public Relations Law & Ethics*

**ADV/PR353**



Instructor: Dr. Erica Ciszek  
Email: [eciszek@utexas.edu](mailto:eciszek@utexas.edu)  
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 11:00 – 1:00 pm  
and by appointment  
Where: BMC 4.374

TA: Rachel Lim  
Email: [esther7.lim@utexas.edu](mailto:esther7.lim@utexas.edu)  
Office Hours: Tues/Thur 12:30-1:30 pm  
Location: cubicle 4.316A

---

## Course Summary:

The course is designed to foster a critical understanding of advertising and PR as promotional institutions, and their role in communication, society, culture, and our economy. Students develop a framework in which to understand the continuing dialogue between supporters and critics, and confront issues related to the institutions' ethical conduct, regulatory issues, and social responsibility. The course is set up for interaction and dialogue. You are provided with an opportunity to try out and develop your ideas. Your job is to read, think, read some more, and write critically about the role of advertising in society. My job is to help you in the process of thinking through the material and developing your ideas.

## Course Objectives:

Understanding the larger role of advertising and public relations will make you a much more thoughtful and productive professional and consumer. The main objective of the course is to place advertising and PR within: a social context, a consumer culture, different economies, a changing commercial media system and a global environment.

You will encounter a number of contemporary issues in advertising and PR, examine controversial aspects of content and practice in advertising and PR, and develop a critical perspective that you can use to approach the subject. Many views of advertising we will encounter in class will be uncomplimentary; others will vigorously affirm contemporary advertising & PR philosophy and practice.

The course is designed to accomplish the following learning objectives:

- to read, think and write critically about the role of advertising and PR in society.
- to enhance knowledge and understanding of the conflicting arguments surrounding the roles and influences of advertising and PR in society.
- to provide a macro-perspective of advertising and PR as economic and social institutions.
- to introduce contemporary social, economic, regulatory, and ethical issues surrounding the practices of advertising and PR.

## Prerequisites:

Students must be Advertising or Public Relations majors, and they must have upper division standing.

## Course Website:

The course website is on Canvas. ***Tutorials for students who are unfamiliar with Canvas are available at <https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/welcome-to-canvas>***

---

## Course Format:

The professor will use an interactive lecture/discussion approach. Legal and ethical analysis lends itself to a dialog between the professor and student and among students, so class participation is important. Cases and team exercises will be used as a basis for class discussion. Team exercises will give students opportunities to develop and exercise the skills needed to work successfully with others. Students must come to class prepared and participate. It is also in students' long-term interest to prepare thoroughly for each class because the material is cumulative. It is each student's responsibility to attend class. Exams will include material raised during in-class discussion and/or examples from the professor, students, guest speakers, and films during class.

## Topics:

The course has four major themes, which will be intertwined throughout the course:

### *The Legal Environment of Advertising and Public Relations*

Topics include an examination of commercial speech and the First Amendment, deception, libel, copyright, trademark, publicity rights, and industry self-regulation.

### *Advertising/Public Relations & Society*

Topics focus on the aggregate effects of advertising and public relations and their social consequences such as potentially contributing to the obesity crisis, creating or reinforcing problematic stereotypes, or encouraging excessive materialism.

### *Organizational Integrity and Corporate Social Responsibility*

Topics include organizational culture, corporate social responsibility, organizational diversity, and emerging topics in ethics and law.

### *Personal Professionalism and Ethical Decision Making by Individuals*

Topics include an examination of professionalism, personal values, moral myopia and moral muteness, theories of moral conduct, ways of putting one's personal values into action, lying, and whistleblowing.

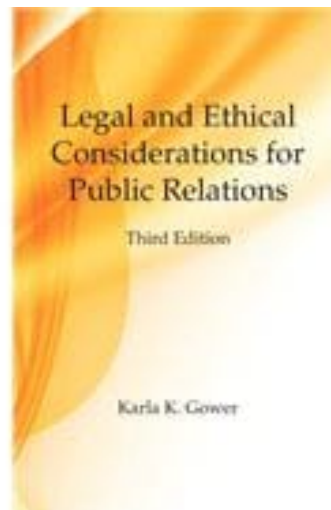
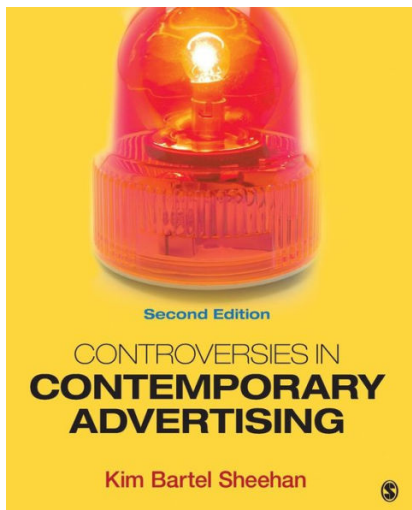
## Reading Assignments:

It is difficult to anticipate the pace of the class' progress and the exact dates upon which guest speakers will be available. ***As such, reading assignments for individual class sessions will be posted on Canvas, and students must check Canvas prior to each class to find out the reading assignment.*** Readings that are available in electronic form will be posted on Canvas as will PowerPoint presentations used in class. If students miss a class session, it is their responsibility to find out what they missed by contacting another student and checking Canvas. ***Do not contact the professor or the teaching assistant for the assignment. Use Canvas and get to know fellow students.***

## Reading Materials:

*Controversies in Contemporary Advertising*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2013, by Kim Sheehan, ISBN-13: 978-1452261072

*Legal and Ethical Considerations for Public Relations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2018, by Karla K. Gower, ISBN-978-1-4786-3581-9



# Class Policies

## Attendance

Reliable and punctual attendance is critical in the workplace. As such, this course is designed as an opportunity to begin to practice good workplace habits. In addition, attendance and participation are important to learning. The expectation is that students will attend class for the entire session and participate in discussions and team activities. Leaving class before the session ends is disruptive to other students. As such, students should leave class only for bathroom emergencies or sickness. If students know in advance that they will need to leave class before the end, they should place a note with an explanation on the professor's lectern before class starts.

Attendance will be taken at each session with the Poll Everywhere App.

*Since students may have one absence with no penalty, absences due to illness, internships, interviews, weddings, etc., will not be excused.* Students may review their attendance records on Canvas.. Students who contest the recording of an absence must do so within one week of the class session in question by e-mailing the TA.

## Participation

Outstanding participation in discussions (frequent and thoughtful participation) and on the Canvas Discussion Board can help a student's final course grade, especially in close situations (i.e., borderline grades).

## Email

Keep your emails formal; write professionally, as if you are writing to your boss at work, not to your friend. **The TA is your first point of contact for your queries about grades.** I am your first contact about the course material. The TA and I will try to return your e-mail within 24 hours of receiving it on Monday through Friday, or by Monday evening if we receive it on the weekend. E-mail is an excellent way to communicate if done appropriately.

When we grade your work, you start with zero points. You earn points based on the quality of the work and the accuracy, appropriateness and detail of your answers. You do not start with 100 points and then lose them based on mistakes you might make. Your final points represent the total points earned for that assignment, not the number of points "taken away" for errors or omissions.

# Evaluation

What	How Much	When
Class attendance	20%	Daily
Exam 1	25%	March 6
Exam 2	25%	April 22
Applied Project	30%	May 6 & 8

## Grading

Any disagreements about grades MUST be submitted in writing within seven days of when the grade is posted on Canvas.

## Exams

*No make-up exams will be given unless the absence is excused by the university (e.g., observance of religious holidays, participation in varsity sports). Please check the dates of the exams for all of your courses. If you are unwilling to take all of the exams for your courses as scheduled, then you should rearrange your courses.*

Exams will be multiple-choice questions. Exams will encompass classroom lectures and discussions, presentations by guest speakers, reading materials, and films or videos.

## Applied

There will be one creative group-assignment for this course. As is the case in the professional world, you will work in teams to come up with a creative execution that addresses a social issue and relays your knowledge of law and ethics in action. More details to come.

# Grades

Letter Grade	100 Scale (%)
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0-59

Grades this semester will NOT be rounded up or down. I do not round, which means a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999%. Note: I do not respond the way you hope when you email me at the end of the semester about rounding up your grade. So please don't.

---

## Office Hours

We, the professor and the teaching assistant, encourage students to come by our offices during office hours. Please feel free to come by simply to chat. Students should not use e-mail as a way of having a conversation with us about substantive issues; that is what class discussions and office hours are for. We do not mind being contacted by e-mail for administrative purposes.

## Religious Holy Days Observance Policy

The Texas Education Code specifies that an institution of higher education shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this provision may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

<https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/academic-affairs/files/pdf/Religious-Holiday-Observances.pdf>

## Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty

We, the professor and the teaching assistant, encourage students to come by our offices during office hours. Please feel free to come by simply to chat. Students should not use e-mail as a way of having a conversation with us about substantive issues; that is what class discussions and office hours are for. We do not mind being contacted by e-mail for administrative purposes.

## University Health Services

The University has considerable health related resources for students. These include a 24-7 Nurse Advice Line (512 475-6877) <http://healthyhorns.utexas.edu/>, a 24-7 Telephone Counseling Line (512 471-2255) <http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/>, and a Behavioral Concerns Advice Line (512 232-5050) <https://operations.utexas.edu/units/csas/bcal.php>. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these resources as needed.

---



---

## Drop Policy

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231: “Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”

## Emergency Evacuation

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Additional information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: [www.utexas.edu/emergency](http://www.utexas.edu/emergency)

## Title IX

a segment of the Education Amendments of 1972, makes it clear that violence, harassment, or discrimination based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources at <https://www.utexas.edu/student-affairs/policies/title-ix>



## UT Class Related and Other Policies

More information can be found at: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/index.html>

**Counseling and Mental Health Services:** Taking care of your general well-being is an important step in being a successful student. If stress, test anxiety, racing thoughts, feeling unmotivated or anything else is getting in your way, there are options available for support.

For **immediate** support:

- Visit/Call the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC): M-F 8-5p | SSB, 5th floor | 512-471-3515 | [cmhc.utexas.edu](http://cmhc.utexas.edu)
- CMHC Crisis Line: 24/7 | 512.471.2255 | [cmhc.utexas.edu/24hourcounseling.html](http://cmhc.utexas.edu/24hourcounseling.html)

**CARE Counselor** in the Moody College of Communication is: Abby Simpson, LCSW

- M-F 8-5p | CMA 4.134 | 512-471-7642 (Please \*leave a message\* if she is unavailable)

**FREE Services** at CMHC:

- Brief assessments and referral services
- Mental health & wellness articles - [cmhc.utexas.edu/commonconcerns.html](http://cmhc.utexas.edu/commonconcerns.html)
- MindBody Lab - [cmhc.utexas.edu/mindbodylab.html](http://cmhc.utexas.edu/mindbodylab.html)
- Classes, workshops, & groups - [cmhc.utexas.edu/groups.html](http://cmhc.utexas.edu/groups.html)

## Documented Disability Statement:

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329- 3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.

Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g. instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).

Please notify me as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations for field trips are required. Advanced notice will permit the arrangement of accommodations on the given day (e.g., transportation, site accessibility, etc.).

Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) of reference SSD's website for more disability-related information: [http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for\\_cstudents.php](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php)