

Public Relations Writing
JOUR 3421-M50
Fall 2011
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COURSE-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

CATALOGUE/COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Emphasis on communication tactics; plan, write and produce public relations tools; audience and media selection; print and electronic media.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of people and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communication in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images in information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communication professions, audiences and the purposes they serve;
- Clearly evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy, fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

PREREQUISITES:

JOUR 2121, JOUR 3400

TEXTBOOKS:

The Associated Press Stylebook (2011). New York, NY: The Associated Press. ISBN 978-0-917360-54-1

Newsom, Doug and Haynes, J. (2011). *Public Relations Writing: Form and Style*, 9th ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth. ISBN 978-1-4390-8272-0

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

Cognitive Objectives To Be Mastered (Ability To Explain, Analyze, Understand, Think Critically):

Students will:

- explain how the writer's purpose, intended public and requirements of the medium affect style and content;
- recognize potential problems and solutions in media relations;
- recognize legal and ethical problems associated with public relations writing;

- understand the differences between writing for print and writing for mass/social media.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS TO BE MET:

(Demonstrable Skills, Abilities, Techniques, Applied Competencies):

Students will:

- earn a passing score on written exams and quizzes;
- earn a passing score on written media products such as news releases, media pitches, position papers, fundraising letters, speeches, social media tools and others;
- apply AP guidelines to written materials;
- proofread and edit your own work;
- meaningfully participate in class discussion board at least once a week.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR PR WRITING:

This class is designed to equip students with the skills needed to write correctly in controlled, mass and social media outlets for various audiences.

Students will:

Application:

- use resources to target appropriate media outlets;
- use AP guidelines on written materials;
- proofread and edit your own work;
- manage timelines/deadlines;
- respond appropriately to a crisis communication situation using PR writing tools and media outreach.

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

This course is delivered online in an asynchronous format. You must have Internet access and Microsoft Word or other word processing software that generates a “.doc” or “.docx” extension.

Browser: To view lesson slideshows, you must be running Internet Explorer 5 or higher. To determine what browser version you have, select from the browser menu Help > About. To download the file, click on your computer’s platform system: PC or Mac. The download may take an hour or more, so plan to do it at a convenient time.

You will view the lesson slideshows from the Desire2Learn course. These PowerPoint slides represent supplemental information that you can use and reference in your work. As a way of referencing in your work, note the chapter, subject and slide number.

You must have Microsoft Word software. I must be able to open your work to grade it. Work submitted in a software package not noted as acceptable in this syllabus (Microsoft Word) may result in point deductions being assessed to your work.

COURSE WEB SITE ADDRESS:

(The course page will be open from August 27, 2011 to December, 2011.)

Go to the University of Memphis home page: <http://www.memphis.edu>

1. Click on the “MyMemphis” link at the bottom of the left column menu.

2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. Click on the “eCampus Resources” tab.
4. In the center column of the page, click on the blue UoM eCourseware link.
5. Down on that page, in the Fall 2011 course list available to you, click on the link for JOUR 3421 - M50 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page.

GRADING:

Testing and Assignment Procedures: Course work will be accomplished every week. There will be 10 writing assignments, one quiz, two tests, discussion board participation and a final project. Each must be completed by its due date and time (Central Standard Time), which varies by assignment and test. Check each due time to ensure that you post by the deadline.

The tests will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions, which will contain one or more units of study. Tests will be limited as to time. The computer will cut you off at the end of the prescribed time period, regardless of whether you have completed all questions. You may use your text to confirm an answer, but be aware that time limits will not allow you to spend much time flipping through the text. You should read and be familiar with each section before taking its test.

Other parts of your grade will come from participating in online discussions. These assignments and discussions must be submitted per instructions; no credit will be given outside of the proper submission guidelines.

Your success in this online course will depend on your willingness to read the textual and supplemental learning materials, successfully complete tests and written assignments, and participate in discussion activities, as scheduled.

You are required to ask via e-mail or call me with your questions as to the proper completion of the assignment. It is your responsibility to ensure clarification of instructions.

Written assignments will be graded on the basis of AP style, grammar, spelling and punctuation, as well as content.

Grading Scale on Written Assignments

<p>A 91 – 100</p>	<p>Professional work. Clear thinking reflected in clear writing. Uses appropriate style for type media. Knows and uses preferred form. No errors in form, grammar or spelling. Adapted to intended audience (public).</p>
<p>B 81– 90.99</p>	<p>Near professional work. Lacks polish (style) of A work. Form is correct. No errors in form, grammar or spelling. Adapted to intended audience.</p>

C 71 – 80.99	Acceptable as a classroom assignment only. Not usable professionally without further editing/corrections. Up to 7 errors detected. [or] Not well adapted to intended audience or medium.
D 65 – 70.99	Needs significant work in form and/or style. Up to 12 errors detected. [or] Little consideration of needs/interests of intended audience or of medium.
F 64.99 and below	Unacceptable in form and style [or] fails to adapt to audience or medium.

GRADING FOR SEMESTER

The student's final grade will be calculated using the following categories:

10 writing assignments	100 points each
Two tests	100 points each
1 quiz	50 points
Discussion board participation with each lesson	10 points per lesson
Final project	200 points
TOTAL	1,560

A= 1,419.6 – 1,560

B= 1,263.6 – 1419.5

C= 1263.5 – 1,107.6

D= 1014.0 – 1,107.5

F= 1013.9 and below

SUBMITTING FORMAT OF WRITTEN WORK

All assignments must be uploaded to the course dropbox. In this class, most assignments will be produced for a client. The professor serves not just as the instructor, but also as the supervisor/director of the project.

With that frame of reference, students should include a memo with each assignment they submit. The memo will be the first page of your assignment and should feature:

- the student's name
- the supervisor's (instructor's) name
- the date
- specific instructions (SEE BELOW) about the goal that you hoped to achieve with the communication piece that will help your supervisor provide solid feedback about how successful you were with the assignment

The memo should address the following specific instructions/questions for the instructor/supervisor:

1. The student should tell the instructor what she is to do with the assignment. Is the instructor supposed to read it? Review it?
2. The student should provide a review of the assignment. What was the student's approach? The student should include the following:
 - a. **PURPOSE:** What did the student hope to achieve with the piece? Why did the student do what he or she did?
 - b. **AUDIENCE:** Who is/are the audience(s) for the assignment? Describe demographics and/or psychographics. Are there any special circumstances in this population?
 - c. **MEDIA:** How is the student planning on delivering the message to the audience? Mail? Fax? Email? Social media? To whom (by name and title)? At which media? **Be specific.** Why were those media channels selected?
 - d. **RESPONSE:** What response is expected from the audience? Why?
 - e. **DEADLINE:** Is there a time constraint regarding when the message needs to reach the audience? Why? Is it a restraint that the student or the organization has imposed?
 - f. **ASSUMPTIONS:** Did you have all of the information you needed in order to execute the assignment? If you had to assume some facts about the audience or the client, what were they?

LATE WORK:

The instructor will accept only one late written assignment from the student, and **the instructor must be notified that the assignment will be late before the deadline. Notifications that are received after the deadline will not be honored, and the project will be graded as a 0.** Late assignments automatically lose 10 points, and **must be submitted within 7 days of the original deadline.** The tests, quizzes and final project must be completed on time and will not be accepted after the deadline.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE:

Aug. 27-28	Post your bio to the discussion board
Sept. 4	Written assignment 1 due
Sept. 11	Written assignment 2 due
Sept. 18	Written assignment 3 due
Sept. 24	Written assignment 4 due
Sept. 25	AP style quiz
Oct. 2	Written assignment 5 due
Oct. 9	Written assignment 6 due
Oct. 14	Exam 1 due
Oct. 23	Written assignment 7 due
Oct. 30	Written assignment 8 due
Nov. 13	Written assignment 9 due
Nov. 29	Written assignment 10 due
Dec. 7	Exam 2 due

Dec. 9	Final project due
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ASSIGNED READINGS:

Here are the assigned readings from your textbook, *Public Relations Writing: Form & Style*. We will be using many other supplemental materials as well. You are also responsible for reading the weekly Power Point presentations and any posted PDFs or links.

Dates	Required Readings
Aug. 27- Sept. 4	Ch.1: Public Relations and the Writer Ch.3: Persuasion Power Point 1
Sept. 5-11	Ch. 2: Ethical and Legal Responsibilities Power Point 2 PRSA Code of Ethics AP Briefing on Media Law (pgs. 382-424)
Sept.12-18	Ch. 4: Research Ch. 5: PR Planning Process Power Point 3
Sept. 19-25	Ch. 6: Writing to Clarify Ch. 7: Grammar, Spelling Ch. 8: Writing for Social Media Ch. 9: Pitching section only (pgs. 195-197) <i>AP Stylebook</i> : Punctuation (pgs. 370-381) and editing marks (pg.425) Power Point 4
Sept. 26 – Oct. 2	Blogging and implications of social media Power Point 5
Oct. 3- 9	Ch. 9: Media Kits, Backgrounders and Position Papers Power Point 6
Oct. 10-14	Power Point 7 (PSAs and other AV tools)
Oct. 15-18	Fall Break
Oct. 19-30	Ch. 11: Email, Memos and Letters Ch. 12: Reports and Proposals Ch. 13: Writing Ad Copy Power Point 8
Oct. 31 – Nov. 6	Ch. 14: Newsletters Ch. 15: Brochures Ch. 16: Magazines Power Point 9
Nov. 7-13	Power Point 10 (Writing for the Web)
Nov. 14-20	Ch. 17: Speeches and Presentations
Nov. 21-27	Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 28 – Dec. 4	Ch. 18: Crisis Communication Power Point 11

Deadlines are content are subject to change.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

EMAIL:

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

CELLPHONES:

You must turn them off during class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

CHEATING:

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

"Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all." (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Services at (901) 678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

ONLINE SETEs:

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

EXIT EXAM FOR ALL JOURNALISM MAJORS:

All Journalism majors are required to take the Journalism Exit Exam their last semester before graduation. Please contact the Journalism office staff anytime during the semester to sign up. You may take the test anytime there are open lab hours during the semester. You will not be certified to graduate until you have completed the test.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and

innovation.

Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

- Awareness: familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
- Understanding: assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.
- Application: competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.