

Public Relations Writing

JOUR 3421-001

Fall 2014

MW 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Meeman 206

Dr. Melissa Janoske

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CATALOGUE/COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

PREREQUISITES

JOUR 2121, JOUR 3400

TEXTBOOKS

Newsom, D., & Haynes, J. (2014). *Public relations writing: Form and style* (10th ed.). Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

The Associated Press stylebook 2013 (or 2014). New York: Basic Books.

CLASSROOM FORMAT

This class will be presented in lecture and laboratory formats. There is also opportunity for group work on several assignments. Students will write and submit assignments that will be returned with feedback meant to encourage student improvement over the course of the semester.

GRADING

There are 1,000 possible points in this class. At the end of the semester, your class average will be calculated and fractions will be rounded to the nearest whole number. Letter grades will be determined according to the scale below.

Writing Assignments

Fact sheet	50 points
News release	75 points
Feature release	75 points
Position paper	75 points
Brochure	50 points
Social media release	50 points

<i>Media Kit</i>	75 points
<i>Personal Portfolio</i>	75 points
<i>Personal Resume</i>	75 points
<i>Final Exam</i>	200 points
<i>Class Participation</i>	200 points

<i>Total</i>	1,000 points
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A+	967-1000	B+	867-899	C+	767-799	D+	667-699
A	934-966	B	834-866	C	734-766	D	634-665
A-	900-933	B-	800-833	C-	700-733	D-	600-633
						F	Below 600

Quality of Work

All work in this course should follow AP Style, including proper spelling, grammar, and language. A large part of public relations is having a polished written concept of what you are communicating. This includes all class work and presentations. Problems in these or other areas will result in the deduction of points.

I expect your work to be good and to be yours. What is not yours should be fully cited. In documenting sources you may use either APA or MLA formatting. If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources. In addition, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource, and can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

Questions about Grades

If you would like to ask about a grade, please make an appointment to meet with me outside of class time, as I will not discuss grades via email or during class. If you have a question or problem with a grade, exam question, or in-class assignment, you have 48 hours after the assignment is returned to you to contact me, or the grade stands. Your question or appeal must be stated in writing, citing your position and why you feel the mark is incorrect. The appeal should be turned in to the professor or sent via email within the stated time frame.

Additionally, you are responsible for tracking your grade online and meeting with the professor early in the semester if you are concerned about your overall grade. Meeting with the professor early and often can help both parties involved find ways to improve student-instructor understanding and quality of work.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a basic schedule for topics and major assignments over the course of the semester. Although every effort will be made to stick with this schedule, please understand that some material may require more or less discussion and class time. Thus, changes to the schedule may occur. All changes will be announced in class.

<i>Week Of</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignment(s)</i>
August 25, 27	Syllabus/Course Overview Newswriting basics	Discuss assignments Define public relations
September 1, 3	No class 9/1, Labor Day Chapter One	Publics
September 8, 10	Chapter Three Chapter Four	Persuasion Research
September 15, 17	Chapter Five Environmental scanning	Public relations process Relationship management
September 22, 24	Chapter Two Chapter Six	Ethics GSPS, editing
September 29, October 1	Chapter Seven Chapter Eight	Writing for new/social media
October 6, 8	Chapter Eight Organizational voice	Writing for new/social media
October 13, 15	Chapter Nine	News releases
October 20, 22	No class 10/20 Chapter Eleven	Fall Break! Pitching
October 27, 29	Chapter Twelve Evaluating media	Advertising basics
November 3, 5	Newsletters Infographics	
November 10, 12	White papers and op-eds	Establishing expertise
November 17, 19	Chapter Sixteen	Crisis communication
November 24, 26	Portfolio and resume building	
December 1, 3	Final Presentations	Extra credit due
Final Exam	Monday, December 8 @ 10:30 a.m.	

ASSESSMENT

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.

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;
- produce online media kits for clients. The kits may contain the following:
 - fact sheets, backgrounders, biographies;
 - brochures, memos, direct mail, PSAs, memos, letters to the editor;
 - website content, social media tools such as blogs, Twitter and YouTube content.
- apply AP guidelines to written materials;
- proofread and edit the work of others;
- pitch story ideas to news media; and
- respond to crisis communication situations.

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 work with clients to design messages and tools that solve the clients' communication problem.

Students will

- use resources to target appropriate media outlets;
- produce strategic components of online media kits;
- use AP guidelines on written materials;
- proofread and edit the work of others;
- manage timelines/deadlines; and
- respond appropriately to a crisis communication situation using techniques and media

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 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 communication;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communication.
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples 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 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 communication 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 communication 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.

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.

No points will be deducted from your final grade if you have three or fewer absences. Each additional absence beyond those three will result in a deduction of five percentage points from your final numerical average. For example, if your final average is 83 (B) and you have four absences, your course grade would be a 78 (C+).

This absence policy includes **ALL** absences. It will be assumed that each absence is valid. If you are on a school-sponsored trip or are ill and miss class, it will count. No verification, explanation, or note is necessary.

In addition, frequently we will engage in class exercises that will count as participation points; if you are not in class, you cannot make up the participation points.

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)

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.

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.