

Public Relations Writing

JOUR 3421-501

Fall 2014

Tuesday/Thursday 1-3 p.m.

Varnell-Jones 205

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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:

•The Associated Press Stylebook (2011). New York, NY: The Associated Press. ISBN978-0-917360-54-1

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

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

The classroom will be presented in lecture and laboratory format. Students write and submit assignments that are returned with feedback that is meant to encourage improvement.

COURSE WEBSITE ADDRESS:

1. Go to the University of Memphis home page: <http://www.memphis.edu>
2. Click on the "MyMemphis" link at the bottom of the left column menu
3. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
4. Click on the "eCampus resources" tab.
5. In the center column of the page, click on the blue U of M eCourseware link.

NOTE: We will NOT use the internal eCourseware email system on the course web page. Use your regular UoM email and correspond with the professor at her regular UM address noted at the top of this syllabus.

DEADLINES:

Meeting deadlines is essential for media professionals. Regular attendance is vital in class. **When you miss a class you cannot make up the work unless the absence is due to a mandatory school sanctioned activity that you provide documentation for or you provide a medical excuse.** Please do not email the instructor to ask what work was covered during your absence. Instead, check with a classmate.

GRADING:

Testing and Assignment Procedures:

Course work will be accomplished every week. There will be writing assignments, exams and a final project. Each must be completed by its due date and time, which varies by assignment and test. Your success in this course will depend on your willingness to read the textual and supplemental learning materials, successfully complete exams and written assignments, and participate in discussion activities, as assigned.

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

While students that have two or fewer absences in the class may ask to redo work that was turned in on or before deadline to attempt a higher grade, students that have missed three or more absences or who have been tardy or left early four or more times will not be afforded this opportunity. Students that qualify for the option to redo an assignment must ask the professor for this opportunity upon receiving their grade on said assignment. If the professor grants the opportunity to redo the assignment, the student has one week from the date the arrangement was made to resubmit the work to be graded again. The score from the highest attempt will be used.

Students who miss more than four classes are subject to drop one letter grade per absence at the discretion of the professor. Attendance is mandatory.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

August 26	Review Syllabus/ Lecture Ch. 1/ Homework: Read Ch. 2
August 28	Lecture Ch. 2/ Homework: Read Ch. 3
September 2	Lab Activity 1: Create Media List
September 4	Lab Activity 1: Create Media List Due
September 9	Lecture Ch. 3/ Homework: Read Ch. 4
September 11	Lab Activity 2: Write Media Advisory
September 16	Lecture Ch. 4/ Homework: Read Ch. 5
September 18	Lab Activity 3: Event Release (Pre-event)
September 23	Lab Activity 4: Editor's Workshop
September 25	Cover Event for Post-event Release in LA3
September 30	Complete Lab Activity 3: Event Release (Post-event)
October 2	Lab Activity 5: Spot News Release
October 7	Lecture Ch. 5/ Homework: Read Ch. 6
October 9	Lab Activity 6: Begin Feature Story Interview
October 14	FALL BREAK

October 16	Lab Activity 7: Policy Announcement /Homework: Begin Project 1: Write & Build Newsletter
October 21	Lecture Ch. 6 / Turn in Feature Story at Beginning of Class / Homework: Read Ch. 7
October 23	Lab Activity 8: Response Release
October 28	Lecture Ch. 7/ Lab Activity 9: Compile Twitter & Facebook Posts / Homework: Read Ch. 8
October 30	Lab Activity 10: Appointment of... (Bio)
November 4	Lecture Ch. 8 / Homework: Read Ch. 9 & Begin Project 2: Write & Build Brochure
November 6	Lab Activity 11: Donor Letter (Direct Mail- Ask)
November 11	Lab Activity 12: Television Broadcast Release for Special Event (p.167)
November 13	Lab Activity 13: Write :15 & :30 Radio Spots
November 18	Lecture Ch. 9/ Project 1 Due at End of Class
November 20	Lab Activity 14: Write :60 TV Script
November 25	Lab General Work Day
November 27	THANKSGIVING
December 2	LAST DAY OF CLASS/ Project 2 Due at End of Class
December 4	STUDY DAY
TBA	FINAL EXAM

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.