

Writing For Public Relations.



OVERVIEW

FEB. 4 - CLASS 1 INTRODUCTION

An introduction to the course, instructor, textbooks, tools, and expectations.

FEB. 11 - CLASS 2 EDITING REFRESHER

An abbreviated review of editing, proofreading, and writing principles.

FEB. 18 - CLASS 3 MEDIA RELATIONS

Defining public relations, media relations, publicity, news, news releases, media alerts, and the impact of social media on public relations.

FEB. 25 - CLASS 4 BEYOND RELEASES

Research methods, feature stories, online communication, and the impact of public relations on multiple publics, including internal audiences.

MARCH 4 - CLASS 5 STRATEGIC COMM.

Communication strategy, the elements of a communication plan, working with various publics, and managing bad news.

Writing for Public Relations, 2010

Course Description And Overview

Writing for Public Relations is a skills-oriented class with an emphasis on practical, real-life examples. Students will:

- ♦ Have an opportunity to prepare professional public relations materials such as news releases, fact sheets, online content, crisis plans, and other collateral.
- ♦ Understand the difference between writing as journalists, and for specific publics, advertising, and social media.
- ♦ Become familiar with the expectations held by public relations firms and corporate employers.
- ♦ Develop an understanding of news releases and feature stories from the perspective of a journalist.
- ♦ Become familiar with the Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual (AP Stylebook).
- ♦ Develop the ability to apply strategic solutions to writing assignments under the pressure of a deadline.

Course Objectives

This class will examine, practice, and redefine the skills needed to be an effective professional public relations practitioner with an emphasis on strategies, tactics, and writing skills. Because employers rate writing as the most important skill set in public relations, students must be

prepared to commit the time it takes to develop those skills.

Writing Objectives

- ♦ Write clear, concise, human, and conspicuous copy that is logically organized.
- ♦ Write with correct grammar, spelling, syntax, and punctuation.
- ♦ Write without bias and with an emphasis on accuracy.
- ♦ Write for specific audiences and formats.
- ♦ Write under pressure of a deadline.
- ♦ Write and edit in accordance with the AP Stylebook.

Course Materials

Required For Proficiency

- ♦ The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual, latest edition
- ♦ Collegiate dictionary
- ♦ Webster's New World Thesaurus
- ♦ Strunk & White, The Elements of Style

Optional For Insights

- ♦ Public Relations Writing: Form and Style (Newsom/Haynes)
- ♦ News Reporting and Writing (Missouri Group)
- ♦ 2010 Writer's Market Deluxe
- ♦ The New York Public Library Desk Reference



Instruction Method

- ◆ Class lectures
- ◆ Class discussions
- ◆ Guest speakers
- ◆ Text assignments
- ◆ Reading assignments
- ◆ Visual presentations

Assignment Scores

Grades earned in this class are not reported to the university. They are between the instructor and the student, in order to help individuals set personal goals.

Assignments will be valued at 100 points each. Grade guidelines:

- A (90-100) = publishable
- B (80-89) = minor work needed
- C (70-79) = acceptable draft
- D (60-69) = significant work needed

Two points will be deducted for every mechanical and grammatical error: spelling, grammar, passive voice, awkward diction, improper punctuation, and AP Style.

Plagiarism (not original work) or unauthorized collaboration with another person (collusion) will not be tolerated.

Assignment Format

All written assignments are to be printed on 8-1/2 x 11 white bond paper stock, **double spaced**, 12 point minimum, with 1-inch margins. Use traditional fonts, such as Arial, Times, Palatino, or Helvetica. All assignments must conform to AP Style.

Assignments

- ◆ **Class 1:** Obituary writing, due Feb. 11.
- ◆ **Class 2:** Editing exercise, due Feb. 18.
- ◆ **Class 3:** Rewrite a release, due Feb. 25.
- ◆ **Class 4:** Write a release, due March 4.
- ◆ **Class 5:** Communicate bad news, due March 11.
- ◆ **Class 6:** Develop a crisis work plan, due March 18.
- ◆ **Class 7:** Write a PSA, due March 25
- ◆ **Class 8:** In-class assignment.

Extra Credit

- ◆ 10 points for the rewrite of any assignment (required).
- ◆ 10 points for attending any PRSA or IABC luncheon. Select AIGA, AMA, LVAF, WIC luncheons with approval.
- ◆ 20 points for writing a one-page summary of the workshop attended.
- ◆ 25 points for attending any advanced professional workshop with approval.
- ◆ 100 points for volunteering for an aggressive in-class mock media interview. Commitment must be made by March 4. Replaces lowest grade.
- ◆ 100 points for producing a media kit for any nonprofit organization. Commitment must be made by March 11. Replaces lowest grade.
- ◆ 100 points for writing a story for an online citizen newspaper. Commitment must be made by March 18. Replaces lowest grade.

MARCH 11 - CLASS 6 REAL TIME COMM.

An overview of real-time communication during a crisis, online communication, interviews and interviewing.

MARCH 18 - CLASS 7 ADVERTISING COPY

Expanding public relations to include direct-to-public brochures, newsletters, events, advertisements, and online communication.

MARCH 25 - CLASS 8 ETHICS IN PR

An overview of ethics in communication and the role of a communicator/public relations practitioner in an organization.

APRIL 1 - CLASS 9 INDUSTRY TRENDS

Trends in public relations, the impact of social media on public relations, integrated communication models.

GUEST SPEAKERS TO BE DETERMINED

Speakers are invited during the first three weeks of class and will be scheduled based on their availability. Typically, they include one corporate communication professional, one public relations firm professional, and one editor or print publisher.