

## COMM 354: Public Relations Writing

Fall 2015

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### TEXTBOOKS:

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

Christian, D., Froke, P., Minthorn, D., & Jacobsen, S. (2014). *The Associated Press stylebook* (15<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: The Associated Press.

### COURSE PURPOSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Instruction and writing practice designed to develop the professional-level writing skills expected of beginning public relations practitioners, emphasizing the different approaches required for particular audiences and media. Upon completion of this course students will:

- Develop a knowledge base for the:
  - role and responsibility that comes with public relations
  - increasing demand for flexibility in format and style and instant response
  - ethical and legal responsibilities complicated by instant global access and persuasion
  - thought processes and theories behind reliable and strategic writing
  - importance of clarifying and simplifying complex information, while avoiding miscommunication
  - importance of grammar, punctuation and style in public relations writing
  - purpose and place for media kits, media pitches, backgrounders, and columns
  - importance of achieving freshness and vitality in your writing
  - best practices for crisis communication involved in public relations
    - This **knowledge** learning objective is met through all outlined assignments 1-5 (listed below in the table)
- Be able to apply reasoning about public relations
  - through active in-class discussion & demonstration
  - by applying knowledge concepts to examples and hypothetical situations
    - This **reasoning** learning objective is met through assignments 1 & 5 (listed below in the table)
- Identify, design, develop, and execute a unique public relations campaign
  - This **demonstration** learning objective is met through assignment 5

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Your grade will be based on small assignments/homework/activities, online chapter quizzes, a group presentation, midterm, final (cumulative), and final project.

### 1. Assignments/homework/activities:

- Throughout the semester I will periodically have activities, writing assignments, or some type of homework worth points. It may be take-home or completed during class (25% of your final grade).

### 2. Chapter Quizzes:

- Fifteen quizzes (Chapters 1-15; due dates outlined in the course schedule) will be posted online via Canvas on the specified day. These quizzes will each be worth 10 points and will focus on the specific chapter we are covering at the time (15% of your final grade).

### 3. Group Chapter Presentation:

- You will be assigned to a group (by interest of chapter topic) and asked to **give one** presentation about that particular chapter on the day it is covered. So that we have a chance to get a good start on the semester, we will begin with Chapter 6 and end with Chapter 15 (due to semester time restrictions). Presentations should be between 18-20 minutes and involve a creative take on the chapter, bringing in supplemental information and involving some type of interactive activity for the class (10% of your final grade).

### 4. Midterm & Final Exams:

- The midterm exam will cover material from chapters 1-9 as well as any other additional/supplemental reading I assign during this time. The final exam will be cumulative and may also include questions about other readings assigned. A review session will be held to more specifically explain what to expect for both the midterm and final (combined these are a total of 20% of your final grade; 10% each).

### 5. Final Group Project:

- The final project involves a series of stages that will stretch throughout the entire semester. This will be a **group assignment to develop a public relations campaign, marketing a student organization of the group's choice**. Each stage is worth a set amount of points that go toward your final score for the entire project (30% of your final grade). Components are listed below:
  - Selecting an “organization” (i.e., student organization)
  - Incorporation of social media (i.e., Facebook or twitter) (Chapter 8)
  - Backgrounder (Chapter 9)
  - A fact sheet (Chapter 9)
  - A cover letter (Chapter 9)
  - A news release (both broadcast **and** print) (From Chapter 10)
  - An advertisement (From Chapter 12)
  - Newsletter (From Chapter 13)
  - Brochure (From Chapter 14)
  - Speech (for recruitment/awareness) (From Chapter 15)
  - Final Presentation & Campaign (i.e., all of your materials)

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Week 1	Introduction to the course (Syllabus & Schedule) Public Relations & the Writer The Global Public Relations Environment	Chapter 1 & 2
Week 2	Persuasion & Research for the Public Relations Writer	Chapter 3 & 4
Week 3	The Public Relations Planning Process	Chapter 5
Week 4	Writing to Clarify and Simplify the Complex	Chapter 6
Week 5	Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation	Chapter 7
Week 6	PR's Role in Social Media: Monitoring and Participating & Media Kits, Media Pitches, Backgrounders and Columns	Chapter 8 Chapter 9
Week 7	Review for Midterm & Final Project Group Planning Meeting	
Week 8	Midterm Exam	<b>Midterm Exam (Chapters 1-9)</b>
Week 9	Writing for Traditional Media	Chapter 10
Week 10	Emails, Memos, Letters, Proposals and Reports & Designing Messages for Controlled Content Media	Chapter 11 Chapter 12
Week 11	Newsletters	Chapter 13
Week 12	Brochures and Magazines	Chapter 14
Week 13	Speeches and Presentations and Other Orally Delivered Messages	Chapter 15
Week 14	<b>Portfolio/Final Presentations</b>	
Week 15	<b>Portfolio/Final Presentations</b>	
Week 16	Final Exam	<b>Final Exam (Cumulative/ Chapters 1-16)</b>