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# **GIFT 2008**

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# The Flexible Syllabus

## *How to use an innovative approach to teaching writing intensive courses*

By Dr. Michael Kent, Oklahoma

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### **Introduction**

The Flexible Syllabus is suitable for many courses including Fundamentals of Public Relations; Public Relations Writing, Cases or Campaigns; Introduction to Journalism; International Communication; or Advertising.

In this model, a percentage of the course points (typically 20–30 percent) is left open so that students select assignments based on their own individual needs/desires. The instructor provides students with a list

of “possible additional assignments” from which they can choose. Each assignment reflects a certain percentage of points. For instance, a student may decide to complete two 10 percent assignments for the flexible part of the grade. Another student may select one 20 percent assignment that allows him/her to complete a larger, more involved project.

### **Rationale**

The Flexible Syllabus reflects a core

set of exams and assignments that all students in the class complete. However, the instructor can provide variety in the types of assignments given to the students for the flexible portion of their course grade. The syllabus works much like the liberal arts curriculum where students are required to take a core of school-wide and departmental classes, but then take electives in areas of interest. The Flexible Syllabus exposes students to a greater variety of writing assignments than would normally be possible. More importantly, it allows students to tailor their writing projects to their professional interests. This is especially valuable when you have students with varying levels of writing ability in the same class.

### Implementation

Assuming a public relations writing class:

- Assign the core assignments for the class. For example, an instructor might require two or three exams and three foundational writing assignments of everyone. These assignments and due dates are placed on the class schedule.
- The instructor then provides a list of potential assignments on the syllabus with a brief description of each to inform the students about their choices. For instance, the option of writing a speech might be listed with 1) a required word count (700 words); 2) suggested amount of points (15 percent); and 3) due date for all who select this option.
- It is important that the specific dates that assignments are due are also placed

on the schedule either as “five percent assignment due...10 percent assignment due...” or “first individual assignment due... second individual assignment due...” etc. These dates become a part of the individual student’s contract with the professor.

- During the second week of class, students complete a course contract from a cafeteria list of writing assignments. All dates, percentages and details are listed on this contract.

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### Impact

Students love to have the freedom to select assignments that they feel fit their individual needs. Students learn the fundamental writing skills on the required assignments and then pursue their interests on the flexible assignments.

In public relations writing, some students may select a high percentage, multi-part writing assignment so that they can have one significant outcome (a Web site with four or five writing samples). Other students may select more assignments worth fewer points to reach their individual total.

In the new communication technology class, students can pick assignments ranging from writing/critiquing blogs, Web site design/critique, a research paper or content analysis.

In the international communication class, students can study news events from different international views, compare and contrast news coverage of different media outlets, compare product advertisements in different nations or analyze Web sites for international audiences.

Two of the authors allow the students to sign up for extra credit assignments as part of their contracts. Once contracted, these

assignments become “required.” Students who sign up for extra credit actually wind up doing more assignments than their peers. The experiential learning research suggests enormous value in this type educational outcome.

The impact on instructor morale is also dramatic. Often in the introductory journalism and mass communication classes,

the students complete the same assignments each semester. These required assignments are foundational to their development as media professionals. The Flexible Syllabus allows for a different course to be taught without additional preparation. It also allows the instructor to test out new assignments that may eventually become a part of the foundation of the course.

**Sample Student Selection**

**Demonstration Speech (10%):** Write a ten-minute demonstration speech for the person who will be conducting the training on how to eat properly at the “dress for success” dinner. You will explain how to sit at a formal table, napkin etiquette, which utensil to use and when, which plate is *your* bread plate, etc. You should write the speech out word-for-word, prepare a manuscript in 18 point, double-spaced type, prepare three extemporaneous note cards. Be sure to script in dramatic pauses, pauses for laughter, pronunciations (if relevant), jokes, and emphasis. If you cannot find someone in the PRSSA to interview for this, do some research on your own. Be prepared to deliver this speech to your classmates on (or near) the due date. Bring in a proper table setting or use the data projector for visual aids.

**Brochure (15%):** Using some of the current Gaylord literature as a model, see Celia Perkins, Director of Communications, Gaylord, for what the specifications are on fonts, colors, etc. Develop three (one should be final draft after I approve the designs) versions of a brochure featuring Gaylord Public Relations faculty (Meta Carstarphen, Michael Kent, Maureen Taylor, Natalie Tindall, Katerina Tsetsura, Sheri Veil) and their areas of interest/expertise. Include headshots for everyone (coordinate with Traci Coffman for Photographs). Include the following: a paragraph about each person, a list of the classes they teach/taught, their research. The size should be determined by you, 8.5” x 11” is probably too small for all this. Final drafts will go to Celia Perkins.

**Sample Student Selection**

**Poster, Billboard, Transit Sign (5%):** You will design a poster and a billboard or transit sign (based on the posters). Create three designs and messages for each document (I must approve the final designs and messages before they are due)—thumbnails or storyboards are fine for this. Visit three Web sites like “PrintForLess.com” and get price estimates for the posters. Contact local billboard or transit providers and get prices for the transit signs or billboards. Include the cost information in a short memo along with your final draft designs. Examine some texts like Tucker, Derelian, and Rowner’s Public Relations text for ideas on how to design an effective poster and billboard. You will create (not to scale) final draft versions of each of the documents. Find out from Celia Perkins, Director of Communications, Gaylord, who the “biggest” people are who are coming to visit Gaylord over the next semester/year and use *them* as the basis for your sign. Design accordingly depending upon who will come.

**Fact Sheet (10%):** Visit Beloit College’s ([www.beloit.edu/~pubaff/mindset/2010.php](http://www.beloit.edu/~pubaff/mindset/2010.php)) mindset list and create a fact sheet that illustrates the differences between students who graduate in 2002 and those who graduate in 2011. The fact sheet should be at least two-pages long (back to back), color, and use at least two graphics. Note: this should not just be “here it was then and here it is now,” two columns across from each other. Rather you should be creative and develop several heuristics for comparing the lists.

**Special Event (10%):** Visit the IABC Web site and learn about what they do. Contact Bianca.E.Ferrer-1@ou.edu or EmilyBlake@ou.edu and talk to them about the IABC’s potential role at Gaylord. They are working to set up a student chapter at Gaylord for Professor Tindall’s class. Work with them, or independently, to brainstorm three possible Gaylord IABC events. The events should be more than speakers coming to talk to students. Be creative. Pitch the three ideas to me in a 1.5-page memo and I will select the one that I like the best. Write a proposal for the event that includes the following information: When will the event happen? Where will it occur? What will it cost (include a detailed budget in tabular form). What are the goals of the event? How will you publicize the event and why is that the best approach (be specific, tactics to be used, where to place them, why that method of publicity is expected to work, etc.)? What is the timeline for the event (be specific, include planning activities like producing materials, getting approval, printing, etc.)?

**Sample Student Selection**

**News release (5%):** Write a seven-paragraph news release about one of the recent publications of Professor Shari Veil. Follow APA style and other news release writing rules. Request Veil’s vita and select one of her most recent publications. Once you have picked an article, ask for a copy and read it. Then, write a release suitable for the Gaylord Web site talking about her

work. Veil has agreed to meet with you once for a short meeting and to answer questions.

**Memo (5%):** I am your supervisor and I come to you after a meeting and want you to “optimize” our Web site. Conduct some research and learn about “optimizing” Web sites so that they come up higher on the list when people search for things. Jason Bodin (in our class) can probably give you an overview of what this is. Write a two-page, single-spaced memo explaining the process to me and what you will do to our Web site to improve its rankings. Be specific. Use your own words, memos are not a bunch of quotations, and write your memo so that a layperson would understand it.

**Stationery and Business Cards (15%):** Using the logo from the OU PRSSA’s “Dress For Success” event, design three different business card and stationery designs. Print off color proofs. Create a template and business card package to go along with the stationery that includes all of the fonts used and a template from Word for the business cards. Design the “business cards” with “four dress for success tips” on the back. Technically, these will not be “business cards” except for their size. They will be more like “wallet cards.”

**Plan a news conference or special event (15%):** In keeping with the previous assignment, plan an off-campus, dress for success night that includes the following: (1) letters of invitation for participants and guests (two letters); (2) thank you letters for attendees and guests (one letter); (3) sample tent cards with people’s names; (4) a memo outlining the following:

Three possible off campus venues (wedding, conference hotels, etc.) and the costs associated with each location for room rental (or minimum number of guests).

Costs per person to have the event catered.

Lead time needed to reserve each location.

A suggested timeline/agenda for the event. Plan for two after dinner speakers and create their topics.

A sample event program.

A set of driving directions to and from one of the locations.

Total estimated cost per cost person to attend.

A list of people to assist with the event and facilitate its success (be specific about what each person will do).

**Sample Student Selection**

**Flier (5%):** Create a flier template that has ALL of the dates for the PRSA meetings as well as the Web site URL, contact information for officers, etc. Include a relevant photograph (downloaded from a stock photo site or taken yourself), and three other possible photographs. The flier should be designed both as something that you might leave on a table for people to see, as well as something that you would give to all students at the beginning of the semester.

**Backgrounder (5%):** Create a two-page (single-spaced) backgrounder about the OU’s PRSSA chapter that will be posted on the Web site. Include the following information: Who founded it and who were the first officers; how long has it been around and what have some of the accomplishments been? Who does PRSSA serve and how does it serve them (i.e., what does it offer?); who are the current officers and how might I get in touch with each of them; when are the meetings held and where. Include at least *two* (1/6 page) photographs (see below). Format as proper fact sheet using a creative layout, grid design, etc.

**Fact Sheet (10%):** Select five current Gaylord faculty members who you believe would be of interest to current/future PRSSA members and prepare a two-page, back and front fact sheet containing a paragraph overview and outlining at least a dozen characteristics/features that make the people important/relevant. Include headshots for everyone in the document. Do not include sarcastic or unprofessional content. Get copies of everyone’s vita to use for background information.

**Photographs (10%):** You will take photographs suitable for use on the Gaylord Web site or Gaylord publications. All photographs will be presented to Celia Perkins, Director of Publications, Gaylord, on a CD. All photographs should be color corrected, cropped, and labeled with the name of the person in the photograph. You should obtain at least 100 “good” (screened and cleaned) photographs. Arrange the photographs into color proof sheets (about 9-12 per page). Obtain signed photo releases from everyone you photograph giving

permission to use their image as mentioned above. Be sure that the photographs are taken with a digital SLR (only) on the best setting so that they can be used in other publications. Get some better pictures of faculty members for the departments’ home page using a consistent backdrop.

**Persuasive Speech (15%, 7-9 minutes):** You will give this speech in class during the last few weeks of class. Assume that you have been invited to give an address to a meeting of new faculty members. Virtually every university in the country has new faculty orientation programs that last from one semester to a full academic year (we do it every week for a semester here). Commonly, at such meetings, students are invited to come in and discuss topics like plagiarism, etc.

**Your topics is as follows:**

Students and professors (especially those over about 35) are increasingly at loggerheads about technology and its role in higher education. Studies over the last 40 years have shown the negative side effects of technology: television, video games, the internet, etc., as well as how tools like PowerPoint (lead to poor presentations), the Internet, (facilitates cheating), social networking (leads to negative self disclosure and narcissism), do not actually improve education. And yet, many educators, politicians, younger professors, etc.) continue to argue that technology is a panacea. Take the pro-technology side and write a persuasive speech that argues for better integration of technology in the classroom. Your task is to convince neoluddites like me why we should embrace new technology. Create arguments that prove that the technology IMPROVES education, etc. Alternatively, assume you are talking to students, arguing AGAINST technology. The setting for this might be a PRSSA meeting, etc.

Be sure to have AT LEAST 5-7 credible sources (not the internet, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, etc.). Be sure to have scholarly support: articles, books, governmental reports, statistical data (from credible sources), etc. “Use all of the available means of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos.” Give an extemporaneous speech. Write an outline. Have a bibliography.

**Sample Student Selection**

**Memo (5%):** Write a 1.5 page (single spaced) memo outlining your goals as a public relations professional. Make specific reference to *how* you will accomplish your goals, what types of positions (names, titles, organizations, etc.) will help you, and what skills you will develop and how you will hone them. Write the memo as a “planning document,” i.e., the tone will not be conversational but informative and prescriptive. Be specific and realistic. Do some research if necessary. Use my memo-writing handout on my Web site for a model. *Do not* use the Microsoft memo template.

**Pamphlet (5%):** Using some of the current Gaylord literature as a model, see Celia Perkins, Director of Communications, Gaylord, for what the specifications are on fonts, colors, etc., create a one-page (double-sided, folded down the middle) pamphlet with a proper front and back cover. Inside, include brief biographies of four of the Advertising professors. Include headshots (coordinate with Traci Coffman for Photographs). Create three possible drafts (using thumbnails) and I will select the one that I like. Create a full-bleed design with crop marks.

**Fact Sheet (10%):** Create a fact sheet featuring the following professional organizations: **AEJMC** (Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication) **NCA** (National Communication Association), **ICA** (International Communication Association), **IABC** (International Association of Business Communicators), **WIC** (Women in Communication). Visit each organization’s Web sites and cull the key materials about benefits in each organization. The fact sheet should be at least two-page long (back to back), color, use at least two graphics obtained from a stock photography Web site (do not buy the images, use a watermarked or free sample), and use the organizational logos found on the Web sites. Create a full-bleed design suitable for turning into a PDF online.

**Victory Speech (10%):** Visit the American Rhetoric Web site [www.americanrhetoric.com/top100speechesall.html](http://www.americanrhetoric.com/top100speechesall.html) and listen to about a dozen (or as many as you can find) acceptance addresses, nomination speeches, etc. Read some “celebration”/“victory” speeches in some books of great speeches. Then, visit Barack Obama’s Web site and create a one-page memo analyzing his key messages, themes, and positions. Listen to him. Go to YouTube, listen to any speeches that you can find,

listen to him on television, etc. so that you can capture his style. Finally, write a 7–10 minute acceptance address that touches on his key messages/themes, etc., prepare a manuscript for the speech in 18-point, double-spaced type, and be prepared to deliver the speech on, or about, the day it is due.

#### Sample Student Selection

**Letter of Invitation (5%):** Write a 1.5 page, single-spaced, letter of invitation inviting one of major broadcast network newscasters to visit Gaylord for two days to give talks and meet with students. Conduct some research so that you can target your appeals directly to the person whom you select. Include a brief half-page memo explaining how you are trying to appeal to the person you select and why you expect to be successful. Be sure the arguments you make are not facile, pandering, or pleading. Also, be sure to mention in your letter what the broadcaster will get out of coming besides money (none is available except for transportation, lodging, and food), or “satisfaction.”

**News Release (5%):** Write a seven-paragraph news release (as per the news release handouts already distributed). Topic: You work for a statewide baking company that will release a line of sourdough bread products next month. In the release you should mention the types of products to be sold, give some background on sourdough and explain why you hope it will be well received, etc. Visit some Web sites or consult some cookbooks to learn about sourdough bread products. Frame the release around one signature product that will be released. Your company: The Fluffy Tom Thumb Baking Company.

**Special Event (20%):** You will plan the “First Gaylord Speech Competition.” Create the following: (1) letters of invitation for participants and judges (two letters); (2) thank you letters for judges/guests (one letter); (3) a poster for the event; (4) a five paragraph news release about the event; (5) speech evaluation forms and instructions for the judges; (6) a theme for the competition (which will go on the sign and other materials); (7) instructions for the participants and judges; (8) create award certificates for the winners. (8) In a memo:

Identify three on campus venues.

Identify appropriate prizes and where they will come from.

Include a timeline for everything.

#### Sample Student Selection

**Newsletter Content (5%):** Write a 700-word feature story about the research of one of the Gaylord Faculty members. Base your essay on a new research submission from a recent or upcoming conference. Be sure to read the article/essay/project and integrate specific reference to the work in the document. Assume the audience will be potential graduate students reading a Gaylord newsletter used as a recruiting tool.

**News Release (5%):** Write a seven-paragraph news release (as per the news release handouts already distributed). Topic: Beginning next month, Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream will go to *all organic* ice-cream products *only*. Assume at least a 30% increase in costs. In the release you should talk about the benefits of organics, give a reason for the decision, mention the price increases and the organization’s position on it, and include some good quotes.

**Backgrounder (5%):** Write a one-page, single-spaced, 500-word, backgrounder (full block) explaining why you have decided to go “all organic.” Like the news release, this document makes an argument (i.e., it will have some facts, be based on premises, make arguments, etc.), however, unlike the news release, this document should be interesting and compelling to read, as if it were targeted to “Joe Ice Cream,” or high school and college kids, who came to the site. Be sure to format this document to match other organizational documents, and give it a proper title.

**Fact Sheet (10%):** Create a two-page (single-spaced) fact sheet useful as a document on a Web site or for special events (PDF). Design three versions of the document (with thumbnails) and, after approval of one of the versions (by me), create a final draft document. The fact sheet should be related to the topic from the news release. The purpose of the document is *not* to compare and contrast organic versus non-organic ice cream but to make an argument. Include some facts about organics in general and explain how why they are relevant here. Take the facts and turn them into a more interesting point (as the samples do in the fact sheet handout). Include at least *two* (1/6 page) photographs. Format as

proper fact sheet using a creative layout, grid design, full bleed, etc. Mimic the style of Ben and Jerry’s (use the Web site for inspiration). Fill the space; do not create five “facts,” 25 words each.

#### Sample Student Selection

**News Release (5%):** Write a seven-paragraph news release about one of the recent publications (or *submission* to a journal) by Keith Greenwood, Robert Kerr, Namkee Park, or Doyle Yoon. Follow APA style and other news release writing rules. Request the professor’s vita and select one of her most recent publications. Once you have picked an article, ask for a copy and read it. Then, write a release suitable for the Gaylord Web site talking about his work. None of these people have agreed to meet with you so you will need to politely contact them and ask for their assistance. You do not have to interview them for this, use their article and their vita to write the news release.

**Stationery/Business Cards (5%):** Obtain a few dozen samples of stationery and business cards. Select half-a-dozen professional looking designs that that you can duplicate yourself. Create a proof package of both documents and present them to your classmates. Create an “order form” where people can insert their name, telephone/cell, e-mail address(es), physical addresses, a title (and provide several options: “Communication Professional,” etc. or allow them to write their own). Obtain a box of micro perforation business cards and some resume paper and create two-pages of cards and a few dozen pages of stationery for everyone. Save the files as templates and forward copies to all of your classmates. Submit copies of all samples obtained and all documents created (final draft documents can be printed on plain white paper for me but be sure everyone else gets their own copies of the documents—have them with you to distribute the day this is due).

**Photographs (10%):** You will take photographs of the Gaylord campus suitable for use on the Gaylord Web site or a Gaylord publication. Select images that are relevant to Gaylord in particular rather than just pictures of campus. For example, there are plenty of pictures of the front of the building and of the stairwells but few good photographs of hallways with students in them, the computer lab being used during peak times, the back of the building (with Edward Gaylord), the library, etc. All photographs will be presented to Celia Perkins, Director of Publications, Gaylord, on a CD. All photographs should be color corrected, cropped, and labeled with the name of the building, location, person, etc. in the photograph. You should obtain at least 100 “good” (screened and cleaned) photographs. Arrange the photographs into color proof sheets (about 9–12 per page). Obtain signed photo releases from everyone you photograph (as individuals) giving permission to use their image as mentioned above. If you take a crowd photograph, such as in a classroom, get permission from the instructor to attach a release letter to the attendance sheet. If necessary, remove people with PhotoShop who do not sign the release. Be sure that the photographs are taken with a digital SLR (only) on the best setting so that they can be used in other publications.

**Billboard, Transit Sign, (5%):** Develop three billboard ideas (pictures and prose), and three bus sign ideas (pictures and prose). Put all of the possible sign messages into a memo with the following information (the dimensions of a standard billboard and the dimensions of various bus signs—there are many sizes, identify them). Get me the memo for approval of your sign language and so I can select the size of bus sign that I want you to create. You will create three designs for each sign after I have given you the sizes and text. These should be thumbnails first. Show me the thumbnails and I will pick the two signs that you will design. Create the sign using an appropriate program (InDesign or Photoshop). Additionally, at least two of each sign should have a graphic (go to a stock photography site for these and show me samples with your thumbnails). **You will create signs to advertise Gaylord College’s Graduate program.** Look at some billboard and transit signs for ideas of designs, etc.

#### Sample Student Selection

**Speech (10%):** Write a 10-minute after dinner speech suitable for a giving after a journalism or public relations event. You should write the speech out word-for-word, prepare a manuscript in 18 point, double-spaced type, prepare three extemporaneous note cards. Be sure to script in dramatic pauses, pauses for laughter, pronunciations, jokes, and emphasis. Be prepared to deliver this speech to your classmates on (or near) the due date. Listen to a number of speeches. I recommend “My Word,” BBC for some perfect examples of after dinner

speeches (see me for examples). Visit the American Rhetoric Web site [www.americanrhetoric.com/top100speechesall.html](http://www.americanrhetoric.com/top100speechesall.html) and listen to about a dozen (or as many as you can find) entertainment speeches.

**News Conference or Event (10%):** Write a 1.5-page letter pitching three events that tie Gaylord and the athletic department together. Be specific, provide details. Once I have seen the letter I will select the idea I like the best and you will develop a proposal for the event that includes the following: When will the event happen? Where will it occur? What will it cost (include a detailed budget in tabular form). What are the goals of the event? How will you publicize the event and why is that the best approach (be specific, tactics to be used, where to place them, why that method of publicity is expected to work, etc.)? What is the timeline for the event (be specific, include planning activities like producing materials, getting approval, printing, etc.)? What are the details of the event, etc.

**Feature Story (10%):** Write a 1500-word feature story about a “line of research” (not one project) by one of the Gaylord Faculty members. Be sure to discuss any new research submissions to recent or upcoming conferences and any influential work by the person whom you select. Be sure to read some of their articles/essays/projects and integrate specific reference to the work in the document. Assume the audience will be potential graduate students reading a Gaylord newsletter used as a recruiting tool.

#### Sample Student Selection

**Letter (5%):** Write a 1.5-page, single-spaced, letter of recommendation on behalf of a fellow student who will be receiving an award. Assume that you are writing to support an award for “Gaylord, Public Relations Student of the Year.” Be sure to use specific references indicating your relationship with the potential award recipient. Be sure to address at least three paragraphs to the kinds of things that the award committee would find compelling. Hint: GPA is *not* something that impresses faculty members much. Follow my handout on Business Letters and Memos on my Web page.

**Flier (5%):** Create three versions of a flier/poster (8.5” x 11”) suitable for posting around Gaylord announcing our “Student of the Year.” Make all three versions asymmetrical. Include a photograph of the award recipient and briefly talk about what they will receive for winning (typically students get something like a membership in a professional association, a plaque/certificate, dinner with some university official, etc.). Make the document resemble other Gaylord materials (see Celia Perkins, Director of Communications, Gaylord, for sample materials).

**Stationery/Business Cards (10%):** Redesign the Gaylord stationery/business cards to give them a less reserved, more modern, look. Print off color proofs. Create a template for both documents that includes information about the dimensions to be used, placement on the page, all of the fonts/graphics to be used, and a one-page template for the business cards. See me for a sample of how to format your proof page of printing instructions. Create three versions of each document (however, you only need to have one printer instructions document).

**Brochure (10%):** Design three copies of a brochure about the classes in the public relations sequence at Gaylord. You will thumbnail (create mockups) of the three versions and bring them to me for approval (I will select one to become a final draft document). Go beyond what is in the catalog. Use syllabi from the classes and draw upon your own experiences. Include at least two appropriate photographs and two pull quotes. Make the brochure resemble other Gaylord materials (see Celia Perkins, Director of Communications, Gaylord, for sample materials). Keep the dimensions to letter/legal paper (8.5” x 11” or 8.5” x 14”). How many panels (6 or 8), and how the document will be folded, are up to you.

## Public Relations Writing: Partial List of Individual Assignments

**Beard, Kate**

**Memo (5%):** Interview two to three people, not students, (at least one of whom is a professor) about “LinkedIn” (Both Heather Spencer in advising and Celia Perkins in the Dean’s office use it. Talk to them or ask them for names of people.) Write a 1.5–2 page memo (follow my handout on memos: [faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf)) for your fellow students explaining what the technology offers. Do not just focus on the good, even if that is all your interviewees tell you. Be critical and give a balanced overview.

**Pamphlet (10%):** Create a four-page (two 8.5" x 11" pages folded and stapled in the middle) pamphlet describing the features of at least ten social networking Web sites. Design a proper front and back cover, number pages, include graphics, etc. Sites to consider might include: Bebo, Cyworld, Flickr, Friendster, Couchsurfing, LinkedIn, LiveJournal, Xanga, and many specialized social networking sites: Christian social networking (holypal.com; MyChurch.com), Jewish Social Networking (myjworld.com, shmooze.com), Irish social networking (www.irishabroad.com), Muslim Social Networking (muslimworld.ning.com; muxlim.com), LDS Social Networking (www.ldslinkup.com), etc. Do not cover: Facebook, MySpace, Second Life, or Twitter. Begin by making thumbnail sketches on blank paper and include those with your first draft.

**Stationery/Business Cards (15%):** You will design stationery, letterhead, and business cards for a student organization called the Students for Freedom.” SFF produces an “underground newspaper” each semester and is run by three undergraduates. The newspaper is often critical of OU and local politics. First, begin by obtaining at least ten samples of professional stationery, business cards, and envelopes (these will be submitted with your first draft). Second, write a one-page memo (in memo form) explaining what colors, typefaces, and images might be proper for an organization like SFF. Third, design no fewer than five possible combinations of letterhead, envelope, and stationery. These will be thumbnails and sketches. Fourth, once I approve one of the designs, you will create five variations on that design. Fifth, once I approve the final design (from your variations), you will create templates for each of the documents so that I can easily use them, and samples printed off on paper, envelopes, and cardstock (for business cards). The final templates should also be burned to a CD and submitted with the hard copies.

**Cannon, Shea**

**Photographs (5%):** You will take photographs suitable for use on the Gaylord Web site or Gaylord publications. You must have a digital SLR for this (not a camera on your cell phone or a pocket camera). A SLR camera may be checked out from the booth in Gaylord with my permission. Find out what is required and see me for permission. All photographs will eventually be presented to Celia Perkins, Director of Publications, Gaylord, on a CD. All photographs should be color corrected, cropped, and labeled with the name of the people in the photograph. Get at least ten pictures of five professors (50 pictures) “teaching.” Do not use Jim Avery, we have plenty of pictures of him. You should obtain at least 30 “good” (screened and cleaned) photographs. Arrange the photographs into color proof sheets (about 9-12 per page). Be sure to create proof sheets for *all of the pictures* and separate proof sheets for the *corrected* pictures. Obtain signed photo releases from everyone you photograph giving permission to use their image as mentioned above. Be sure that the photographs are taken with a digital SLR (only) on the best setting so that they can be used in other publications. Photoshop will create proof sheets automatically. See me for instructions.

**Media Kit (5%):** Creating a media kit is a big endeavor. Since your other assignment will not have you creating sufficient

content to fill a media kit, you will instead critique/analyze several of them. Come by my office and pick up three media kits. Write 4–6 double-spaced pages in APA style.

- **Cover each of the following areas in your critique (justify your claims by reference to items in the kit and/or concepts from the textbook):**
- Does the kit contain adequate contact information for organizational members?
- What kind of kit do you have (media, investor, marketing, etc.)?
- What sort of publics (customers, professionals, experts, investors, internet, television, radio, magazine, newspaper, etc.) are being targeted by the kit and why?
- Does the kit contain adequate information to write a feature story about the organization, individual, event, product, service, etc., the kit was prepared for?
- Does the kit contain adequate background information on the organization (and its members) for a journalist (customer, investor, etc.) who is new to the area, the profession, etc., to write a story or make an informed decision?
- Does the kit contain all of the appropriate information listed on the media kit checklist?
- Was the physical design of the kit appropriate given its area and why?
- Is the information organized “rhetorically?” I.e., has it been placed into the folder in the best way, are there items that seem out of place or do not belong?
- Do you find the kit compelling and why? Be specific. What other information/documents would have been useful to include? What news or feature stories might be written based on the content of your media kit? Be specific.
- How could the kit be improved? Be specific.

**Proofreading (5%):** Review how to use proofreader marks in the AP Guide. E-mail me for a sample document on using them. Practice with them on some of your own papers from the past until you feel comfortable using the marks. Then, contact me for some documents to edit.

**Design Web Content (10%):** (1) Visit several (at least three) Web sites for Web survey software (e.g., SurveyMonkey, etc.). (2) Write a one-page memo explain what each type of software offers (follow my handout on memos: [faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf)). (3) Using one of the three companies to conduct a survey (whichever one allows you to ask at least ten questions, otherwise use more than one of the companies). (4) Ask you fellow classmates several questions about a public relations issue. Finally, (5) prepare a one-page memo reporting the results of your survey.

**DuFran, Sabrina**

**Memo (5%):** Interview two people, not students, about the professional risks involved in using Facebook, Myspace, etc. Write a 1.5–2 page memo (follow my handout on memos: [faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf)) for your fellow students explaining the risks. Contact me for two short newspaper articles on the subject before you begin writing.

**Fliers (5%):** Obtain a copy of the upcoming Gaylord events this fall from Kathy Adams, Dean’s office (she is busy, send her a nice e-mail explaining that you need it for this assignment) and prepare a one-page flier announcing to your fellow students the events that are available to students. Get together with Katlin Francis who also needs this and ask once). Include at least one graphic in the flier and identify at least five other possible graphics downloaded from a stock photo site or taken yourself, not from the Web. Use InDesign, Photoshop, or Illustrator not Microsoft Word or Publisher. Use at least two colors (Black and something else) and not more than two fonts.

**Interviews (20%).** You will conduct interviews to be used when writing a historical background. (1) Conduct no fewer than six hours (total) of in-depth interviews with at least 6–8 of your family members (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.). Be sure to prepare an interview guide before you begin and ask about the same issues. (2) Record these interviews on a digital or analog recorder (and submit copies on a CD with your document). (3) Create transcripts of “loose transcription” for each interview. (4) Write a 2,000 word historical document “telling the story of your family.” Submit everything to me with the first draft.

#### Foerster, Meredith

**Flier (5%):** Katherine Jenson White and Elanie Steyn have another dream course next year. You will create a flier announcing some of the details of the event. First: obtain at least ten sample fliers from different sources. Note: You might find it useful to buy some design magazines like *How* for ideas. Second: write a half-page memo explaining what images, typography, colors, etc. would be appropriate. Third: draw at least ten thumbnails for possible design and get approval from KJW about which one to use. Fourth: based on KJW or Steyn’s choice, layout the flier in InDesign, Photoshop, etc. (not Word, Microsoft Publisher, or any other Microsoft program). E-mail me for the flier I prepared last year for KJW and Ralph Beliveau. Be sure to include images as appropriate taken from a stock photo Web site not from the internet.

**Fact Sheet (10%):** Visit Beloit College’s ([www.beloit.edu/~pubaff/mindset/2010.php](http://www.beloit.edu/~pubaff/mindset/2010.php)) mindset list and create a fact sheet that illustrates the differences between students who graduate in 2002 and those who graduate in 2012. The fact sheet should be at least two-pages long (back to back), color, and use at least three graphics taken from a stock photography Web site (not the Web). **Note:** this should not just be “here it was then and here it is now.” Rather you should be creative and develop several ways of creatively comparing the lists.

**Special Event (15%):** You will plan the after dinner speech night for the class. (Do not drop the ball here. This needs to happen.): (1) Identify three possible venues. Note: we will want some privacy (a back room, etc. if possible), we need to be able to have room for about 20 people (there will be guests). The possible location needs to know that people will be people giving speeches, and that there will be multiple checks, 8 or 10 (you will encourage people to pair up to make checks easier in your e-mail message). (2) Get me a list of possible locations based on the feedback from your fellow students. (3) Contact each of the locations to see if we can reserve the space for the day of the event (see syllabus for the day), how much notice is needed, to be sure that there is no cost for “rental,” etc. Note: Do not make the reservation until you get confirmation from me. (4) Create an e-mail message inviting everyone to attend the event, letting them know where and when to attend the event, letting people know that they can bring guests, and reminding everyone to RSVP their guests ahead of time. Prepare a second e-mail to send the morning of the event to remind everyone. (5) Create a flier/poster to announce the event and post this in Gaylord make copies for the class, etc. (Again, after you have approval). See me for past posters used. (6) Prepare a program for the night of the event. See me for a sample.

#### Francis, Katlin

**Feature Story (10%):** Write a 1500-word feature story about a “line of public relations research” (not one project) by one of the Gaylord public relations faculty (Tsetsura is studying international public relations; Veil is studying crisis; Taylor studies International, technology, etc.; Kent studies Dialogue, technology, the media, etc.; Tindall studies Gender and women’s issues; Carstarphen studies race). Be sure to discuss any new research submissions to recent or upcoming conferences and any influential work by the person whom

you select. Be sure to read some of their articles/essays/projects and integrate specific reference to the work in the document. Assume the audience will be potential graduate students reading a Gaylord newsletter used as a recruiting tool. Focus on public relations. If the person you contact is not studying a public relations issue, pick someone else.

**News Conference or Event (10%):** Conduct some online research about Speaker Series that have been held at research universities. (1) Prepare a one-page memo reporting on what you found, where they were held, what the themes, who were the speakers, etc. (2) Based on what you discover, conduct some informal interviews with at least seven of your fellow students asking them for their input on potential speakers (make it clear no athletes, and no public relations, marketing or advertising professionals). Encourage your fellow students to identify potential academic speakers. (3) Plan a speaker series with at least three speakers over the course of an academic year. (4) Identify dates when nothing else is happening and students re likely to attend (obtain a copy of the upcoming Gaylord events this fall from Kathy Adams, Dean’s office—she is busy, send her a nice e-mail explaining that you need it for this assignment. Get together with Sabrina DuFran who also needs this and ask once), write letters of invitation for the speakers in business letter format ([faculty.staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters & Memos.pdf](http://faculty.staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters%20&%20Memos.pdf)), prepare a one-page backgrounder with the biographies of each speaker and a head shot of him or her. Create one poster for the event that can be changed for each speaker (see Ralph Beliveau for samples of this).

**Fact Sheet (10%):** Create a two-page (single-spaced) fact sheet useful as a document on a Web site or for special events (PDF). Design three versions of the document (with thumbnails) and, after approval of one of the versions (by me), create a final draft document. The fact sheet should be related to the topic you selected in class for the activity on agenda setting. Include facts about the organization/Industry. Take some of the facts and turn them into a more interesting point (as the samples in chapter seven). Include at least two (¼–1/6- page) photographs. Format as proper fact sheet using a creative layout, grid design, full bleed, etc. Fill the space; do not create five “facts,” 25 words each. Include complete contact information, proper header information, etc.

#### Graham, Christina

**News Release (5%):** Write a seven-paragraph news release about an article that has recently been published by one of the public relations faculty. Use an *article* not a book chapter, etc., and use an article that has been *published*, rather than is only *in press*. Write the news release to be appropriate for the Gaylord News. Be sure to read the article before you begin writing. Be sure to include compelling quotations that are not cut and pasted from the article. Be sure to include details about the significance of the article and relate it to the target audience.

**Feature Story (10%):** Write a 1500-word feature story about the role of new technology in public relations. E-mail me for a chapter on the subject. This should be an “academic treatment” of the subject, for this assignment. I do not care what professionals on the Web say. The sources that you consult should be academic. Make the story interesting, include some anecdotes, include some stories about how much your fellow students or Gaylord faculty members know, etc. Assume this was for an online publication for Gaylord students. Do not just mimic the tone from the chapters/articles that you read—see Chapter 7—make this interesting and readable. Tell us something that we did not already know.

**Stationery/Business Cards (15%):** You will design stationery, letterhead, and business cards for a student chapter of the “IABC.” Visit the IABC Web site and find out what they do. First, begin by obtaining at least ten samples of professional stationery, business cards, and envelopes (these will be submitted with your first draft). Second, write a one-page



memo (in memo form) explaining what colors, typefaces, and images might be proper for an organization like the IABC. Third, design no fewer than five possible combinations of letterhead, envelope, and stationery. These will be thumbnails and sketches. Fourth, once I approve one of the designs, you will create five variations on that design. Fifth, once I approve the final design (from your variations), you will create templates for each of the documents so that I can easily use them, and samples printed off on paper, envelopes, and cardstock (for business cards). The final templates should also be burned to a CD and submitted with the hard copies.

#### Johnson, Christopher

**Letter of invitation (5%):** Locate a public relations researcher or scholar who you think might be interesting to have visit Gaylord college to give a lecture to students. Write a one-and-a-half-page letter of invitation (Be sure to follow business letter format here: [faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf)). Frame the letter as if we had funding for this already (we do). I.e., your goal is not to *persuade* them to come (on their own, etc.), your goal is to invite them to come some time this semester (assume they would come), and to make them feel honored to visit. Length: 500–750 words. Review the text on how to write such letters and review at least half-a-dozen samples from books etc. to learn the proper style.

**Feature Story (10%):** Write a 1,500-word feature story about the importance of international public relations skills. E-mail me for a chapter on the subject. Your story should be written for a practitioner magazine like PRSA's *PR Tactics*. The background text sources that you consult should be academic, however, you should also interview at least three public relations professionals with international experience. (Maureen Taylor and Katerina Tsetsura on the Gaylord Faculty do, contact each of them politely by e-mail—Taylor is out of the country right now—and ask for some time for an interview). Make the story interesting, include some anecdotes, include anecdotes in your story about international experiences, language and translation issues, cultural issues, etc. Try to tell your readers something that they do not already know.

**Brochure (15%)** Using some of the current Gaylord literature as a model, see Celia Perkins, Director of Communications, Gaylord, for what the specifications are on fonts, colors, etc. (1) Obtain at least a dozen samples of informational brochures. The "Welcome to Oklahoma" booth at the Texas border has about 100 brochures (submit these with your first draft). (2) Design ten possible brochure formats—thumbnail these design each on a separate piece of paper. (3) Show me the designs and sample Gaylord documents and I will select one to be final draft. (4) Lay out the final brochure. Include headshots for each person featured. Feature three of the following Gaylord broadcasting faculty: Ken Fischer, Gerald Loessberg, Jason Balas, or Lynn Franklin. Highlight their areas of expertise, experience, courses taught, etc. Include headshots for everyone The size of the brochure should be determined by you, 8.5" x 11" is likely too small for all this. Final drafts will go to Celia Perkins.

#### Knutson, Courtney

**Letter 5%:** Your organization has received an angry letter from a customer (below). Using the recommendations for angry letters in the "Written Documents" chapter, and the framework below, **write a 500–750 word letter** responding to the customer. Be sure to follow business letter format here: [faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf).

**Letters responding to customer/client complaints should do the following**

- Take responsibility and apologize/express remorse for what has happened.
- Explain your normally high standards by describing your "normal procedures" and how/why they were violated.

- Explain what changes have been made, or are being made, in company procedures to make sure that what happened to the client/customer does not happen again.
- Explain how you hope to regain the customer/client's trust again.
- Invite the customer back by offering some "reasonable" (neither extravagant nor insulting) compensation.

Dear Central Valley College,

I am a 1995 graduate of CVC. Up to now, I have been proud to be an alumni. However, since I learned of your support for proposition 17 [a proposal to raise fees 200%] to hire a high priced administrator, I am not so sure anymore. The community college should serve all citizens and not an elite few! If I had to pay such tuition rates, I'm sure I would not be where I am today. I have decided not to make my yearly contribution of \$1,000 and I suspect many other graduates will as well.

Disappointed,

Roberto E. Phillips, Esq.

**Poster/Billboard (5%):** Visit some Web sites for printers and conduct some research on printing. The Web site ([www.PrintingForLess.com](http://www.PrintingForLess.com)) provides a lot of background information on printing in general but *not* posters or billboards. Find out about sizes, costs, photo resolution, printing options (color, materials, dpi, etc.), file requirements, etc. Everything relevant for *posters and billboards*. A search for "billboard printing" in Google will get you started on billboards. Then, prepare a one or two-page fact sheet outlining all of the details, including at least half-a-dozen links to publishers, etc. for your fellow students.

**Point of Purchase Display (5%):** Design a display for the advising office where literature on the various majors, faculty members, etc. might be displayed. Create a display that might accommodate at least 20 documents. Be sure to do the following: (1) Identify a dozen examples of displays that you think would be effective and include pictures of these with your first draft. (2) Create five to ten thumbnail drawings of your own of possible displays and include pictures of these with your first draft. (3) Identify which design you believe works best, and is not outrageously priced, and describe in a one page memo why that design would be best, where it could be obtained, how much it would cost, etc. (Be sure to follow business letter format here: [faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf)).

**Stationery/Business cards (15%):** You will design stationery, letterhead, and business cards for a student chapter of the "WIC (Women in Communication)." Visit the WIC Web site and find out what they do. First, begin by obtaining at least ten samples of professional stationery, business cards, and envelopes (these will be submitted with your first draft). Second, write a one-page memo (in memo form) explaining what colors, typefaces, and images might be proper for an organization like the WIC. Third, design no fewer than five possible combinations of letterhead, envelope, and stationery. These will be thumbnails and sketches. Fourth, once I approve one of the designs, you will create five variations on that design. Fifth, once I approve the final design (from your variations), you will create templates for each of the documents so that I can easily use them, and samples printed off on paper, envelopes, and cardstock (for business cards). The final templates should also be burned to a CD and submitted with the hard copies.

#### Massey, Kayla

**Transit Signs (5%):** Like Courtney Knutson, above, you will research Transit signs. Identify all of the relevant features: sizes, placement on busses, bus stops, costs, duration and flexibility placement, etc. Then, based on what you learn, create a one or two-page fact sheet reporting the results to

the class. Be sure to include at least half-a-dozen links to sites/organizations that do this (including all local sources such as in OKC). Be sure to include graphics illustrating the possible options.

**Photographs for (10%):** Using the stock photography service that we have licensed for out students, locate, download, and burn to a CD with 50 images that might be used in various ways on the Gaylord Web site. Begin by writing a two-page memo (follow my handout on memos: [faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf)) explaining what types of images might be used, where on the Web site they might appear, and why images like you select would be good. Since this is for the Web, download low-res images. Create a proof sheet in Photoshop for the images you select. See me for details on this. Note: you will need to examine hundreds of images for this. I expect each image to be self-evidently useful given your memo and analysis. Thus, be prepared to scour the site, use multiple key words, etc.

A login you can use is:

[http://www.jiunlimited.com/en/sign\\_in/index](http://www.jiunlimited.com/en/sign_in/index)

Username: KJWGaylord2008 (username and password are case sensitive)

Password: Contact me by e-mail for it.

**Stationary and Business Cards (15%):** You will design student stationery and “business cards” (“calling cards,” really, used extensively throughout Europe and Asia but less common in the U.S.), based around Gaylord and PRSSA membership. First, begin by obtaining at least ten samples of professional stationery and business cards (these will be submitted with your first draft). Second, write a one-page memo, in memo form, (Be sure to follow business letter format here: [faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf)) explaining what colors, typefaces, and images might be appropriate for this. Be sure to focus on what is “professional” and not what *you* might like—i.e., no script fonts, etc. Third, design no fewer than five possible combinations of letterhead, envelope, and stationery. These will be thumbnails and sketches. Fourth, once I approve one of the designs, you will create five variations on that design. Fifth, once I approve the final design (from your variations), you will print off samples on paper and cardstock.

#### **O'Kelley, Kaitlyn**

**Stationery/Business Cards (10%):** You will design personal stationery, letterhead, and business cards. First, begin by obtaining at least ten samples of professional stationery, business cards, and envelopes (these will be submitted with your first draft). Second, write a one-page memo (in memo form) explaining what colors, typefaces, and images might be appropriate for this. Be sure to focus on what is “professional” and not what *you* might like—i.e., no script fonts, etc. Third, design no fewer than five possible combinations of letterhead, envelope, and stationery. These will be thumbnails and sketches. Fourth, once I approve one of the designs, you will create five variations on that design. Fifth, once I approve the final design (from your variations), you will print off samples on paper, envelopes, and cardstock (for business cards).

**News Letter (10%):** You will design a “Friends of Kaitlyn” newsletter. (1) Obtain at least ten sample newsletters and select one of them to be used as a model for your own newsletter. The samples must be submitted with your first draft. (2) Write a one page memo (follow my handout on memos: [faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf)) explaining what typefaces you will use, what colors, and what images etc. Be specific and identify at least ten possible images from Jupiter that might be appropriate. In theory, most images would be pictures that you took but they do not have to be. Locate images from the Jupiter database (<http://www.jiunlimited.com>), *not* from Google. Write a 1,000 word essay about how this semester is going for

your friends and indicate in the manuscript where images should be placed. Write the essay in APA style (i.e., double-spaced, 1" margins, etc.). Include everything (samples, memo, images, essay) with the first draft.

**Media/Informational Kit (10%):** You will critique several media/informational kits and then make one of your own. Come by my office and pick up three media kits. Write 4–6 double-spaced pages in APA style.

- **Cover each of the following areas in your critique (justify your claims by reference to items in the kit and/or concepts from the textbook):**
- Does the kit contain adequate contact information for organizational members?
- What kind of kit do you have (media, investor, marketing, etc.)?
- What sort of publics (customers, professionals, experts, investors, internet, television, radio, magazine, newspaper, etc.) are being targeted by the kit and why?
- Does the kit contain adequate information to write a feature story about the organization, individual, event, product, service, etc., the kit was prepared for?
- Does the kit contain adequate background information on the organization (and its members) for a journalist (customer, investor, etc.) who is new to the area, the profession, etc., to write a story or make an informed decision?
- Does the kit contain all of the appropriate information listed on the media kit checklist?
- Was the physical design of the kit appropriate given its area and why?
- Is the information organized “rhetorically?” I.e., has it been placed into the folder in the best way, are there items that seem out of place or do not belong?
- Do you find the kit compelling and why? Be specific. What other information/documents would have been useful to include? What news or feature stories might be written based on the content of your media kit? Be specific.
- How could the kit be improved? Be specific.

Next: Obtain a Gaylord or OU folder, and create an informational kit showcasing your own work. Essentially, you will create a mini portfolio. Review portfolios in the syllabus and review media kits in Chapter 7 before you begin. Submit your folder and essay together.

#### **Rainer, Paul**

**PSAs (5%):** Write scripts for (and record copies of) four versions of a PSA about a free lecture series about “media literacy” that will begin at Gaylord later this semester. Create four versions of the PSA: 15, 30, 45, and 60-second. Be sure to prepare four different PSA scripts and include information about music, SFX, narrator, etc.

**Fact Sheet (10%):** Obtain a book on using Photoshop (see me for suggestions). You should be able to inexpensively order a used copy online (less than 10\$), or borrow one from the library. Additionally, you will find tutorials on the Adobe Web site, and in Podcasts, etc. Learn how to create “contact sheets” and how to use Photomerge. Create a fact sheet for the class on how to do this. Be sure to include screen shots showing the process, step-by-step instructions, and a list of resources to learn more. At least two-pages with graphics and text. See me with questions.

**Brochure (10%):** Using one of the syllabi for a course in the public relations sequence that you have taken at Gaylord, design a brochure about the class. You will thumbnail (create mockups) at least ten versions (front and back, to scale) and bring them to me for approval (I will select one to become a final draft document). Go beyond what is in the syllabus. Visit the professors Web page, include graphics/images appropriate to the class, etc. Include at least five appropriate photographs and five possible pull-quotes with your mockups. Make the brochure resemble other Gaylord materials (see Celia Perkins, Director of Communications, Gaylord, for

sample materials). Keep the dimensions to letter/legal paper (8.5" x 11" or 8.5" x 14"). How many panels (6 or 8), and how the document will be folded, are up to you.

### Reames, Kiley

**Memo (5%):** Visit the Web sites for the IABC, PRSA, and WIC. Thoroughly explore each site and then write a 3–3 page memo (follow my handout on memos: [faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf)) for your fellow students explaining what membership in these organizations offers. Be sure to include specific examples and references, cites to the Web sites, etc.

**Poster/Billboard (5%):** Design a series of billboards for an advertising campaign for Gaylord hall. First: do some background research on billboards and then write a memo explaining your design choices: typography, color, etc. Additionally, in your memo, do a client analysis and explain what the symbols, icons, heroes, villains, etc. are for Gaylord College. Second: write the advertising copy for at least ten different versions of the sign and identify what you believe to be the three best slogans to use. Third: thumbnail at least ten different designs using proper dimensions for a billboard.

**Plan Event (20%):** You will plan the "First Gaylord Speech Competition." Create the following: (1) letters of invitation for participants and judges (two letters); (2) thank you letters for judges/guests (one letter); (3) a poster for the event; (4) a five paragraph news release about the event; (5) speech evaluation forms and instructions for the judges; (6) a theme for the competition (which will go on the sign and other materials); (7) instructions for the participants and judges; (8) create award certificates for the winners. (8) In a memo: Identify three on campus venues. Identify appropriate prizes and where they will come from. Include a timeline for everything. Be sure everything conforms to Gaylord "House Style." See me for samples

### Segun, Ibukunoluwa

**Letter 5%:** Write a letter of recommendation for one of your fellow students or professors to receive the following award: "Gaylord College Student (or Faculty) of the Year." **Write a 500–750 word letter.** Be sure to follow business letter format here: <[faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf)>. The requirements of the award are that the nominee must have done something that demonstrates "excellence, professionalism, and compassion for his/her fellow students/faculty members." See the "Written Documents" chapter for details here as well as books of sample letters. Direct the letter to Dean Joe Foote, Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication, 395 W. Lindsey, Norman, OK 73019–4201 (**Note: be sure to give the letter to me NOT Foote**).

**Poster (5%):** Obtain copies of Posters used in recent Gaylord events like the *Gaylord Prize* from Celia Perkins. Electronic copies are fine if she cannot provide print copies. Then, you will redesign one of the posters. First: obtain at least a dozen samples of professional posters from graphic arts magazines, books, etc. (do not use posters from around campus as samples, and do not use "50-year-old" posters as samples). Second: sketch at least ten thumbnail designs on pieces of blank paper (to scale, and in paint or colored pencil if you are artistically inclined, or in pencil or pen otherwise). Third: write a memo explaining which of your ten choices is best (and better than the original poster) and why. Base your design and claims on principles of effective design from Chapter 11 (e-mail me for it). Be sure to follow business letter format here: <[faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf](http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/K/Michael.L.Kent-1/PDFs/BusinessLetters&Memos.pdf)>.

**Fact Sheet (10%):** At last year's NCA convention in San Diego, one of the top three papers argued that public relations professionals need to be up-to-speed on environmental and

political issues that have relevance to organizational interests. Examples included the oil supply and global warming (e-mail me for a copy of this section of the paper). Pick one of the big environmental issues facing the world today (see me for a special issue of *New Scientist* that describes dozens of issues). Read 6-10 "substantive" (more than 200 words) newspaper or magazine articles on the topic and create a two-page fact-sheet on the topic for your fellow public relations professionals. Be sure to include citations on the fact sheet to substantive sources that interested professionals might consult for more information. Before you create the fact sheet, create five thumbnail sketches of possible designs and get approval on one of them from me. Be sure to follow the rules of effective design from Chapter 11 (e-mail me for a copy).

**Letterhead/Business cards (10%):** You will design personal stationery, letterhead, and business cards. First, begin by obtaining at least ten samples of professional stationery, business cards, and envelopes (these will be submitted with your first draft). Second, write a one-page memo (in memo form) explaining what colors, typefaces, and images might be appropriate for this. Be sure to focus on what is "professional" and not what *you* might like—i.e., no script fonts, etc. Third, design no fewer than five possible combinations of letterhead, envelope, and stationery. These will be thumbnails and sketches. Fourth, once I approve one of the designs, you will create five variations on that design. Fifth, once I approve the final design (from your variations), you will printed off samples on paper, envelopes, and cardstock (for business cards).

### Van Tuyl, Jennifer

**Letter (5%).** Write a letter to the editor on an issue of importance related to Gaylord College or OU. Your letter should conform to the requirements of the newspaper you are sending the letter to (not the student newspaper). Include a copy of the length requirements, etc., from the newspaper with your first draft. The tone of the letter should be to support Gaylord or OU rather than to complain about something etc. Your letter should be based on some actual issue or story from the newspaper if you have any hope of actually getting published (and you will actually mail this letter). Monitor the newspaper for several weeks until you find an issue of significance and then be prepared to get your letter written and edited within a few days of the story or news item.

**Feature Story (10%):** Write a 1,500 word feature story about the upcoming opening of Gaylord II. Contact Kathleen Adams, Dean's office, and ask her if you can interview her about the building. Offer to take her to lunch somewhere (this is a standard interview technique) and after lunch, ask her questions about the new building, take notes, etc. Additionally, see if she can arrange a tour so you can really see how cool it will be. Ask Adams to recommend other you might talk with if you do not get enough from her. Include half-a-dozen photograph recommendations with your story.

**Brochure (15%):** Select your favorite public relations textbook from the last few years and create a promotional brochure for it. (1) Obtain at least a dozen samples of informational brochures. The "Welcome to Oklahoma" booth at the Texas border has about 100 brochures (submit these with your first draft). (2) Design ten possible brochure formats—thumbnail these design each on a separate piece of paper. (3) Show me the designs and sample documents and I will select one to be final draft. (4) Lay out the final brochure. Include graphic or images as appropriate. The size of the brochure should be determined by you, 8.5" x 11" is likely too small for all this. Final drafts will go to Celia Perkins.