

Writing For media and Promotions | Com 623 | Dec. 12-14 & 19-21, 2003

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Writing for Media and Promotions teaches fundamental media relations and promotional skills. The course builds from a unit on news values and journalistic practices and students learn to write an assortment of public relations documents including: news releases, fact sheets, pitch letters, public service announcements, position papers, pitch letters, and public relations advertisements. Students also learn about journalistic practices and expectations and skills needed to evaluate the success of messages.

Objectives

- To expose students to advanced writing activities while building on current skills.
- To teach students how to create a variety of written documents.
- For students to demonstrate an understanding of theories of communication and human motivation used to create persuasive written documents.
- For students to learn to better analyze organizational needs and effectively plan public relations messages.

Required Text/Readings

Bivins, T. H. (1999). *Public Relations Writing: The Essentials of Style and Format*. Lincolnwood, Illinois: NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group.
Packet of Readings.

Recommended Texts

Bourhis, J., Adams, C., Titsworth, S., Harter, L. (2003). *Style manual for communication studies*. Boston: McGraw Hill.
Bruno, Michael H. (2000). *Pocket pal: A graphic arts production handbook*. Memphis, TN: International Paper.
Diggs-Brown, B., & Glou, J. L. (2004). *The pr styleguide: Formats for public relations practice*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.
Goldstein, N. (ed.) (2000). *Associated press stylebook and briefing on media law with Internet guide and glossary*. New York: Associated Press.

Assignments:	Value:
Exams I & II (10%/10%)	20%
Media Kit Evaluation (5-7 pp + Bib.)	10%
News Release I	10%
Draft I—required (peer reviewed)	
Draft II—required (my review)	
Draft III—required (10%)	
Fact Sheet	10%
Draft I—required (peer reviewed)	
Draft II—required (my review)	
Draft III—required (10%)	
Issue Background—Position Paper (5-7 pp.)	15%
News Conference	15%
News Release II & III (10%/10%)	20%
Total	100%

- **Late assignments will be discounted 10% per calendar day.**

Class Schedule

Day Date Readings/Activities Due

Note: See Day 1 for pre-class activities.

1 Fri.	12.12	Read: Bivins, Chapters 1–6 & 14–15 Identify three different multinational organizations (for profit or nonprofit) that have business dealings in Prague, visit their Web sites and bring in basic information regarding the type of organization and its activities. Cover and distribute Media Kits Cover News Releases Cover Fact Sheets	
2 Sat.	12.13	Bring ruler (scale) & red pen Cover Text Proofreading & Proofreader Marks Cover Pitch Letters Angry Letters Letters to the Editor Cover Backgrounders Activities	
3 Sun.	12.14	Bring ruler (scale) & red pen Cover Communication Theories Cover News Conferences Guest Lecturer on Media Interviewing Advertising Support (issue advertising, institutional advertising, etc.)	News Release & Fact Sheet (draft I, bring 3 copies) (draft II)
4 Fri.	12.19	Read: Bivins, Chapters 7–13 Ethics, ethical codes, ghost writing, Activities Legal Issues Speeches & Public Speaking Print and Broadcast Advertising PSAs	Exam I (Text etc.) News Release & Fact Sheet (draft II) Media Kit Evaluations
5 Sat.	12.20	Design Principles Print Media (paper, ink, special effects, etc.) Practice news conferences Guest Lecture, Maureen Taylor (Building Relations with the media) Digital Media	Backgrounder (draft I, bring 3 copies)
6 Sun.	12.21		Exam II (Text & items noted) News Conferences (Bring final drafts of <u>all</u> written assignments) Evaluating the success of a PR Messages
7—After Class Assignments (due January 3 via e-mail): Complete two additional news releases. News release II, new product announcement. News release III, reporting bad news.			

Attendance policy: The “executive” format requires great commitment and passion for learning to take place. Regular attendance is necessary and required if you are to learn the course material. Because of the compressed timeframe in which to learn course material, students can only miss the equivalent of half a day (four hours) worth of classes without penalty. If five hours of classes are missed, your final grade will be reduced by 5%; if six hours of classes are missed, your final grade will be reduced by 10%. Missing more than six hours worth of coursework will result in a failing grade for the course.

Note: There are no excused absences. Being sick, in an automobile accident, going on a job interview, attending a conference, getting arrested, etc., will not be considered suitable grounds for excusing an absence. Although I am sympathetic to such occurrences, the course calendar does not afford such flexibility.

Professional writing standards are expected on all assignments. Professional standards include: correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and careful proofreading. No spelling errors are allowed—having even one spelling error will result in a zero for the assignment. Except when otherwise noted, all assignments should be double-spaced (25–27 lines-per-page), have one-inch (1”) margins all around, and be written in one of the following fonts: Bookman or Bookman Old Style 11 pt., Palatino 11 pt., New Century Schoolbook 11 pt., or Garamond 12 pt.

Academic Dishonesty: The University is an academic community of scholars. Academic dishonesty is a very serious offense against the integrity of this community and will not be tolerated. All academic work submitted by you is assumed to be your own original work and to contain your own thought, research, and self-expression. Work that borrows the ideas, organization, or wording, from others must be properly acknowledged. Similarly, work that was conducted for another class should not be reused.

Plagiarism is the unauthorized or inappropriate use of the words or ideas of others. Plagiarism occurs when written or spoken material is borrowed (even from oneself), in whole or in part, and passed off as original. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, presenting someone else’s ideas, speech, presentation, essay, book review, news release, fact sheet, or background, as original. It also includes failing to document or cite the source of word-for-word or paraphrased material in oral presentations or written assignments.

It is my policy to pursue plagiarism vigorously, to fail students who plagiarize for the entire class, and to report cases of plagiarism to the administration.



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