

Loyola University Chicago
COMM 318/Writing for Public Relations
Spring 2016
Tuesdays/Thursdays, 2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.
Instructor: Jennifer Grosshandler
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Course Description

This course will introduce students to the *new frontier* of writing for those seeking careers in public relations or other marketing disciplines. Center stage will be learning to write persuasively, passionately and, above all, with clarity and confidence. Prepare to become storytellers!

Course Objective

To understand how to create meaningful content and deploy that content to drive business results for clients through owned, earned and paid media and other engagement channels.

Learning Outcomes

You will learn the tools to write press releases, media alerts, public service announcements, op-eds, blogs, key messages, executive bios, speeches, company fact sheets, social media content and more. Equally important, you will learn that **important stuff happens before** you write that first word. The formula for meaningful content = research, preparation, writing and editing. By the end of the course, students will have the confidence and strong writing samples needed to thrive during those job interviews on the horizon.

Personal Statement

Writing can be a wild ride. For many, the act of writing can be frustrating. Perplexing. Anxiety-producing.

It's my goal to take these bad boys out of the equation. I pledge to create a comfortable classroom environment, free of judgment. We will learn to organize and structure our thoughts and information based on what we want our outcomes to be. We will discuss when to take risks. In exchange, I expect you to bring your best game each time we meet. Be prepared and ready to engage. I also expect you to support and help each other. You will learn that collaborative journalism (working together to produce content) is gaining massive momentum, and we'll spend a fair amount of time mastering this skill during the semester.

Required Text

Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques, 8th Edition, by Dennis L. Wilcox, Bryan H. Reber

The Associated Press Stylebook 2015, by the Associated Press.

Class Requirements

Over the course of the semester, students will write press releases, blog entries, executive memos, a PSA, an executive speech, feature articles, social posts and other communications collateral. A final portfolio of work will be due at the end of the semester.

Additionally, you will be required to read and give summaries on daily news coverage of local, national and international significance. Short quizzes may be used to review discussions and readings. There will be a midterm and final exam. Attendance, participation and professionalism will affect your final grade.

Grading

Students will be expected to know material covered in lectures. Our classroom will have a dynamic environment where real-time events will be threaded throughout the lectures. Therefore, it's critical you do the assigned readings and keep up-to-speed on news here and around the world. You should expect to write and edit materials before receiving a final grade. Editing is an incredibly powerful skill. Students will have opportunities to improve their work for higher grades.

Becoming a strong writer takes time, patience and the ability to take risks. Your grade will depend, in part, on the progress you demonstrate during the semester.

Final Grade scale

100-94: A
93-90: A-
89-88: B+
87-83: B
82-80: B-
79-78: C+
77-73: C
72-70: C-
69-68: D+
67-64: D
62-60: D-
59-0: F

Instructor Office Hours

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:45 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. or by appointment

Classroom Environment

Students are expected to act in a professional manner in class. This includes showing up and on time. You must let me know ahead of time if you'll be absent. Unexcused absences will affect your final grade.

Additional Classroom Policies

- Students are responsible for all readings whether or not they are discussed in lecture.
- No late assignments will be accepted unless there are significant, extenuating circumstances. Students must communicate with me immediately if they are unable to meet a deadline.
 - All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced and proofread. Errors in grammar, spelling and organization will result in a lower grade.
- Please turn off all laptops, cell phones, etc. Do not text or Tweet in class.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher
- Providing information to another student during an examination
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work that is completed outside of the classroom
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines
 - Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such

influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at <http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source>.

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the appropriate area head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

A complete description of the School of Communication Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <http://www.luc.edu/soc/Policy.shtml>

Schedule

Week One

- Course Overview (bring textbook and style guide)
- Expectations and Outcomes
- Chapter 1: Getting Organized
- Diagnostic assignment

Week Two

Chapter 2: Becoming a Persuasive Writer

Chapter 3: Finding and Making News

Week Three

Chapter 4: Working with Journalists and Bloggers

Week Four

Chapter 5: Writing the News Release

Week Five

Chapter 6: Preparing Fact Sheets, Advisories, Media Kits and Pitches

Week Six

Chapter 7: Creating Feature Content and Op-Eds

Week Seven

Chapter 8: Publicity Photos and Infographics

Week Eight

No Class – Spring Break

Week Nine

Midterm Exam: Multiple Choice & Writing Exercise

Chapter 9: Radio, Television and Online Video

Week Ten

Chapter 10: Websites, Blogs and Podcasts

Week Eleven

Chapter 11: Social Media and Mobile Apps

Week Twelve

Chapter 12: Intranets, Newsletters and Brochures

Week Thirteen

Chapter 13: Writing Email, Memos and Proposals

Week Fourteen

Chapter 14: Giving Speeches & Presentations

Chapter 16: Using Direct Mail and Advertising

Week Fifteen

- Wrap Up and Prep for Final
- Final Exam: Multiple Choice & Writing Exercise
- Portfolio Due