

**The University of Texas at El Paso**  
**University Connect**  
**Department of Communication**

**COMM 3320: Writing for Public Relations & Corporate Communication | CRN: 35088**

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:**

Professor: Eli Garcia  
egarcia11@utep.edu

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- Bivins, Thomas H. (2014). Public Relations Writing: The Essentials of Style and Format, 8th Edition ISBN-13: 978-0073526232  
ISBN-10: 0073526231
  
- Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, any edition after 2015

**TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:**

This course is presented in the Blackboard learning management system. To ensure your success in accessing your course materials and completing your assignments, it is recommended that you ensure your computer setup for this class meets the following minimum requirements:

- Broadband Internet connection, such as cable or DSL
- A modern computer (PC or Mac) with the following minimum configuration:
  - Processor: Dual-core or better, at least 2GHz
  - RAM: 2 GB or better
  - Operating System: Windows 7 or 8, or Mac OS X 10.6.8 or better

**TECH SUPPORT:**

The University of Texas at El Paso offers complete technical information and online help desk support at <https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport>

**COURSE INFORMATION:**

Emphasis on writing press releases and a variety of instructional and promotional materials used in corporate and other organizational settings. Students will gain experience in analyzing audiences and contexts for public relations and corporate communication writing, and will develop skills in applied writing contexts.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

- To understand the critical role of strong writing and different types of writing public relations and corporate communication.
- To develop appropriate audience-centered material for diverse publics, contexts and multiple formats, including print and electronic media.
- To learn to organize and write news releases, speeches and other written material used

- in public relations and corporate communication.
- To construct clear and concise messages following The Associated Press Stylebook Guidelines.
- To recognize the importance of creating, integrating strategy and delivering effective public relations messages in order to meet organizational goals.
- To discern the relative priorities of clients, organizations, editors as well as internal and external audiences.
- To understand the ethical obligations and dilemmas faced by PR writers.

**COURSE OVERVIEW:**

Week 1—Introduction, Ethics, PR Writing Basics

Week 2—Writing for the Media, News Releases

Week 3—PR Writing for TV, Radio, the Web & Social Media

Week 4—Speeches & Presentations

*\*\*Note: As a writing course, significant attention will be placed on format, grammar and spelling. Writing assignments should be proofread and adhere to the Associated Press Stylebook Guidelines. Attention to detail is key. For assistance with proofreading, you may visit the UTEP Writing Center at [uwc.utep.edu](http://uwc.utep.edu)*

**GRADING:**

**1)PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING ASSIGNMENTS ( 3 @ 150 points each= 450 points)**

- Press Release..... 150 points
- Radio Script..... 150 points
- Speech.....150 points

Each public relations writing assignment will be graded using the following scale:

• Accuracy	30
• Content	30
• Organization	30
• Application of writing style and concepts, AP Style	30
• <u>Grammar, spelling</u>	30
Total possible points p/ writing assignment	150 points

**2)EXAMINATIONS (4 @100 points each= 400 points):**

Exam week 1.....100 points

Exam week 2.....100 points

Exam week 3.....100 points

Exam week 4.....100 points

Exams are based on modules and chapter reading.

### 3)DISCUSSIONS (5 @ 30 Points each= 150 points)

Discussion postings should be a minimum of 150 words. In addition, you respond to at least two of your peers with a minimum of a 50-word thoughtful, yet **respectful** response to their post as it relates to course content.

**GRADING SCALE:** A=900-1,000 points  
B= 800-899 points  
C=700-799 points  
D=600-699 points  
F=599 points and below

*\*\*Note: It is the student's responsibility to be informed of changes to due dates that are announced in Blackboard. There is no late or make up work. Start assignments early.*

#### **WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE INSTRUCTOR:**

The best way to communicate with your instructor is via email. Always include in the subject of your email "Summer COMM 3320" when sending an email. All emails will be answered within 48 hours. Graded assignments will be posted a week after the submission date.

#### **PARTICIPATION:**

Your active participation is extremely important! There will be an opportunity to discuss and interact with classmates through *discussion questions* and *assignments*, which will be graded. Please refer to the Course Calendar and Grading sections for discussion questions and assignments' points and value.

#### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY STATEMENT:**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of

Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

- *Cheating* may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports.
  - *Plagiarism* occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents another person's words or ideas as his or her own.
  - *Collusion* involves unauthorized collaboration with another person or group to commit any academically dishonest act.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. You can find more information in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures by visiting, <https://www.utep.edu/vpba/hoop/>

**LATE POLICY:**

Deadlines for all exams, discussion questions and written assignments will be strictly enforced. No exams, discussion questions or written assignments will be accepted after deadline. Missing a deadline is equivalent of not doing the assignment. PR professionals must meet strict deadlines. Students are expected to do the same.

**LIBRARY INFORMATION:**

Access the UTEP Library by visiting <https://www.utep.edu/library/> **DISABILITY STATEMENT:**  
Accommodations

**RESPONSIBLE, ETHICAL AND EFFECTIVE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:**

It is important to share a word of caution so we can become wiser about interpersonal distance learning communications. In an online environment, many of the feelings or impressions that are transmitted via body language in face-to-face communications are lost. Consequently, interpreting emotions and innuendos can be difficult. Only what is written, or drawn, carries the message. Often, excitement can be misinterpreted as anger or insult. We all need to keep this in mind as we communicate.

Words in print may seem harmless, but they can injure us emotionally when working at a distance. Hence, we must be conscious of how we communicate while working at a distance and use good *netiquette*, that is, online communication etiquette. For example, your classmates may not know who is posting a comment, so clearly identify yourself when posting to a discussion board. Furthermore, avoid using all capital letters in electronic communication, as all caps come across as shouting.

The standard netiquette for participation in networked discussion requires that all comments focus on the topic at hand, without becoming personalized, and be substantive in nature. **In other words, you certainly may disagree with others, but you must do so respectfully.** You may express beliefs or emotions, but you may not get so carried away that you lose all perspective on the course itself.

You can find more information on netiquette, the etiquette of Internet communication at [www.albion.com/netiquette](http://www.albion.com/netiquette).

**DISABILITY STATEMENT**

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit the office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106.

For additional information, please visit the CASS website at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass>

**DROPPING THE COURSE:** If necessary, it is the responsibility of the student to drop the course by the date indicated in the UTEP Academic Calendar. The professor reserves the right to drop students for lack of course pursuit or failure to maintain proper decorum.