

The University of Texas at El Paso
Department of Communication

COMM 3320, (CRN 18543):
Writing for Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Fall 2016 M, W 9-10:20 a.m. Cotton Memorial, 104

Instructor: Lauren Macias-Cervantes

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Office: Hertzog Building, Room 103

Office Hours: M, W: 11a.m.-1p.m., F: 10a.m.-Noon or by appointment

Course Description:

This course focuses on understanding and practicing the writing techniques utilized in diverse public relations media. Emphasis will be given to audience analysis, news releases, media kits, as well as other relevant written promotional materials/formats.

Required Materials, textbook:

- Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques. 7th edition

Author: Dennis L. Wilcox, Bryan H. Reber

- The Associated Press Stylebook, any edition 2012 or later

- The New Rules of Marketing & PR, 5th Edition

Author: David Meerman Scott

Course Learning Objectives:

- Learn the diverse writing techniques used in a variety of public relations media
- Understand the diverse steps involved in the public relations writing process
- Write in a concise, factual, organized and persuasive manner
- Understand the strategic role public relations writing practices represent for all type of organizations
- Develop critical thinking, teamwork and strategic planning skills, as these are an integral part of the corporate communication/public relations field

Course Methodology:

- The course consists of a combination of lectures, discussions, individual/group projects and presentations
- Students will participate in diverse class projects that will demand the practical application of the theoretical concepts discussed in class
- Throughout the semester students will be required to demonstrate the skills and knowledge learned through the entire course by developing and presenting diverse public relations writing samples (news releases, media kits, etc.)

Learning Outcome:

- Competence in writing for different public relations media

Outcome Assessment/Grading:

- Students will demonstrate their skills and knowledge by successfully fulfilling the assignments required to pass this course.

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Grading:

Your final class grade will be an average of your scores in the following six categories.

Assignments and Possible Points:

1. Class participation (individual)	100 points
2. Test (individual)	100 points
3. Assignment #1 News Release (individual)	100 points
4. Assignment #2 Media Kits (team project)	100 points
5. Assignment #3 Video Project (team project)	100 points
6. Assignment #4 PR Program Project (team project)	100 points

Final Grade= Sum of scores (points earned for each assignment) divided by 6.

Assignment Details:

- The test will cover the first chapters of the book to ensure the basics of public relations.
- The news release will cover an actual event for a local organization. Topic must be pitched and approved; no duplications will be accepted.
- The media kit, video and PR program are team projects and entail class presentations. Subject matter is factual and actual; it may change by assignment with approval.

Each writing assignment, including the final, will be graded on a 1-100 scale based on the following criteria:

- Accuracy - 20
- Content - 20
- Organization - 20
- Application of writing style and concepts, AP Style - 20
- Grammar, spelling - 20

Total possible points per assignment: 100

Grading Scale

- 90 -100points = A
- 80 - 89points = B
- 70 - 79 points = C
- 60 - 69 points = D
- 59 or below = F

Class participation:

It is expected that students read the assigned material ahead of the coordinating class time and be ready to discuss chapter topic. Participation in class discussions is not optional. Be courteous to classmates by paying attention to presentations, questions and comments. Be open-minded in regard to the opinions and ideas of others.

Your responsibilities for the course:

- All written assignments can be hard copy or electronic, but MUST be turned in on

time. Use 12-point type, Times New Roman, Verdana, Tahoma or Arial font.

- Deadlines for all assignments will be strictly enforced. I won't accept assignments after deadline. Missing a deadline is equivalent of not doing the assignment. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for assignments due.
- Students are expected to attend each and every class and to be punctual.
- Respect is expected. The use of cell phones and text messages won't be allowed during class time. Please turn cell phones to silent mode before entering the classroom. My biggest pet peeve is having someone in class that is "not present". Please pay attention in class.

Late Work Policy:

Late work will not be accepted except as arranged with the instructor on an individual basis and for serious reasons. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with assigned reading, activities and exams. Due dates are firm.

Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism & Cheating WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

If you need help writing, please visit the staff at the university writing center.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses. Plagiarism, cheating or collusion is a violation of the norms and ethics of the academic community. Anyone suspected of academic dishonesty will immediately be reported to the Chair of the Department of Communication and to the Dean of Student Affairs. Academic Dishonesty will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism consists of submitting someone else's work, thoughts or ideas as your own without giving proper credit to the source. Cheating consists of obtaining information from someone other than the instructor during an exam. Most cases of plagiarism are the result of incorrectly referencing and/or citing sources in research papers. Do not be a victim of ignorance. There are too many reference resources to help you avoid this embarrassing situation.

Disability Statement (American with/Disabilities Act [ADA])

UTEP offers a variety of services to persons with documented sensory, mental, physical, or temporary disabling conditions to promote success in classes. If you have a disability and believe you may need services, you are encouraged to contact the Center for Students with Disabilities to discuss your needs with a counselor. All discussions and documentation are kept confidential.

Tentative Course Schedule Attached.

(Instructor reserves the right to change the class schedule depending on the needs of the class and external factors.)

August

2016

COMM 3320

M, W 9-10:20 a.m.

Writing for Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 Fall semester begins Class introductions, syllabus overview	23	24 Chapter 1: Getting organized for writing	25	26	27
28	29 [PR Pitch Due] Ch. 2: Becoming a persuasive writer	30	31 Chapter 3: Finding and making news			

September

2016

COMM 3320 M, W 9-10:20 a.m.

Writing for Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 Labor Day Holiday, No Class	6	7 Fall Census Day Chapter 4: Working with Journalists and Bloggers	8	9	10
11	12 Crisis Communication	13	14 [Test] Chapter 5: Writing the News Release	15	16	17
18	19 Release Writing Practice [News Release]	20	21 Ch. 6: Preparing Fact Sheets, Advisories, Media Kits, and Pitches	22	23	24
25	26 Insight from the Media	27	28 Chapter 7: Creating Feature Content and Op-Eds	29	30	

October

2016

COMM 3320

M, W 9-10:20 a.m.

Writing for Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Chapter 8: Publicity Photos and Infographics	4	5 Chapter 9: Radio, Television, and Online Video	6	7	8
9	10 Industry Insight	11	12 Chapter 10: Websites, Blogs and Podcasts	13	14	15
16	17 The New Rules of Marketing & PR	18	19 [Video Project Presentations]	20	21	22
23	24 Chapter 11: Social Media and Mobile Apps	25	26 Best Practices and Examples	27	28 Fall Drop/ Withdrawal Deadline	29
30	31 Chapter 12: Intranets, Newsletters and Brochures					

November

2016

COMM 3320

M, W 9-10:20 a.m.

Writing for Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Ch. 13: Writing Email, Memos and Proposals	3	4	5
6	7 Ch. 14: Giving Speeches and Presentations	8	9 Ch. 15: Organizing Meetings and Events	10	11	12
13	14 Event Public Relations	15	16 Media Kits Ch. 16: Using Direct Mail and Advertising	17	18	19
20	21 Ch. 17: Working with a Legal Framework	22	23 Ch. 18: Planning Programs and Campaigns	24 Thanksgiving Holiday No Class	25 Thanksgiving Holiday No Class	26
27	28 Ch. 19: Measuring Success	29	30 Behavioral Marketing			

December

2016

COMM 3320

M, W 9-10:20 a.m.

Writing for Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Fall Last Class Day	2 Fall Dead Day	3
4	5	6	7 Final [Team Project Presentations] 10 a.m.- 12:45 p.m.	8	9	10 Fall Commencement
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31