

Grady College

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

ADPR 5920 – PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMUNICATION
DEPARTMENT OF ADVERTISING/PUBLIC RELATIONS
HENRY W. GRADY COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION
FALL, 2009

INSTRUCTOR: JUSTIN PETTIGREW
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**usually the best way to reach me*
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PREREQUISITES: JOUR 3410 & ADPR 3850
OFFICE HOURS: MON. 2-3 P.M., WED. 10-11 P.M.
AND BY APPOINTMENT
CLASS LOCATION/TIMES: Lab 243, M/F – 12:20-2:15

“Public relations is the business of relationship management.”

- John Pavlik, Rutgers University

“Of all their skills, the ability to write – coherently, cohesively and quickly – distinguishes good public relations teams and organizations from [really] bad ones.”

- Justin Pettigrew, UGA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed for students to develop professional and practical writing skills to produce and effectively manage public relations messages and campaigns. Students will build a theoretical foundation and learn tactics and techniques used by public relations practitioners. During the course, students will complete assignments to culminate in a final project and professional portfolio to aide in their internship and job searches. The curriculum combines lecture and lab assignments designed to produce critical and practical skills to be a successful practitioner. One of the most important keys to being an effective PR practitioner is being a professional. That conduct will be a requirement for this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the course is to learn effective, professional public relations writing. At the completion of the course, you will:

- Understand the various types of public relations writing
- Develop professional writing skills required of public relations practitioners
- Develop critical thinking and research skills necessary to plan and implement public relations plans
- Become proficient at writing under pressure and for a deadline
- Understand and develop the ability to interact with clients and public relations plans

- Recognize and develop professionalism for the public relations environment

COURSE MATERIALS (REQUIRED)

- 2007 AP Stylebook
- Bivins, T. (1999) *Handbook for public relations writing: The essentials of style and format*. NTC Publishing Group: New York
- ***Packet for 5920 available at Athens Blueprint (269 Dougherty St.)
- Storage device (USB)
- Supplemental readings as provided by the instructor

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

- Suggested texts: a dictionary and a thesaurus, Strunk, White & Angell's *Elements of Style*; Zinsser's *On Writing Well*; LaRocque's *The Book on Writing: The Ultimate Guide on Writing Well*; Fiske's *The Dictionary of Concise Writing: 10,000 Alternatives to Wordy Phrases*

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Since we are treating this course as a corporate environment, consider your attendance as crucial to your success. You are allowed two (2) absences over the course of the semester with no explanation to the professor. Three (3) absences without a legitimate excuse will result in your final grade being lowered by a full letter grade. If you are absent, please contact one of your classmates to find out what you missed that day.

Professionalism: Think about this class as a job. Represent yourself professionally throughout the semester in classroom and through your work. Respect for your colleagues, the professor, and the curriculum should be displayed at all times. Cell phones should be shut off **prior** to entering the classroom. Please turn it completely off. If it rings during the class period or if I see you sending a text message, I will answer it or read the text message aloud and propose a response if one is received. You will be reading and evaluating the work of your classmates, so courtesy towards each other is mandatory. All e-mail communication with the instructor should be grammatically correct, contain a salutation and an appropriate close. Failure to do so could have an effect on your final grade. Absolutely no text messages will be accepted by the professor as legitimate communication. If you do feel the need for immediate contact, please phone.

Assignments: All work must be professional, typed and turned in on time. This policy runs consistent with the rest of the course in establishing a professional working environment. No assignments will be accepted late unless there are extenuating circumstances, and you must submit a written request which must be approved by the instructor. **NO WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED UNSTAPLED. PERIOD.** Scoring sheets will be provided for most assignments so that you will know exactly what is expected.

Extra Credit/Pop Quizzes: You will have the opportunity to complete 2 extra credit assignments over the course of the semester. More details to follow. You will also have several pop quizzes over the course of the semester covering your assigned readings, for extra credit, so preparation for class is necessary.

UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The UGA policy on academic honesty states: "All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense." Cheating in any form compromises your grade and lowers the quality of your diploma. Cheating in this course means:

- Stealing another person's words or ideas from a publication or fellow student;
- Fabricating information for assignments unless directed to do so;
- Using cheat-sheets or collaborating on exams;
- Asking someone who has taken the test early what is on the test;
- Turning in a paper that is not your work;
- Sharing any answer or information with another student during a quiz or exam;
- Fabricating documentation from your client;

For more information, see <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

Students with Disabilities

UGA is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws including the American Disabilities Act. If you have not already done so, please register with the Disability Resource Center (706) 542-8719 (voice) or (706) 542-8778 (tty). Then make an appointment with the instructor to discuss the accommodations needed.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS/REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Writing Assignments (WWA): (30%) These assignments will apply the PR tactics you learn in the lecture portion during the lab. Assignments are indicated on the schedule below, but will include more detailed instructions. Each assignment is evaluated for AP style, grammar, and overall writing proficiency. For each mistake made, points will be deducted. You are encouraged to rewrite assignments at least once to correct mistakes as part of the learning process.

Peer Editing: (5%) One of the most important skills of any writer is their ability to edit efficiently and effectively. This course will apply those skills just as often as your writing skills. By editing your peers' work, you are providing them with an additional perspective on their work as well as learning proper editing practices yourself. In the workplace, you will often work in teams to get projects accomplished; therefore, this is an opportunity to experience that process as well. Before the first assignment, we will discuss effective ways to edit work.

Final Project: (40%) - (Due during the Final Exam Session) This portfolio will be the culmination of the semester's work. At the beginning of the course, each student will select a client to produce a complete PR portfolio. The assignments included in the portfolio are the following (detailed assignments will follow):

- Initial client contact letter
- Situational Analysis & Plan of Action
- Client Press Kit
 - o By the end of the semester your portfolio will include the following in a style and format suited to your client: a press release, a fact sheet, a pitch letter to an

- appropriate media contact, a feature story or feature pitch, website suggestions and a special events plan
- And one of the following:
 - o Plans for a newsletter for your client, including target audiences, an outline of the contents, a finished layout of the first page (including art and copy)
 - o A Webpage designed to address a specific client need focused on a specific target audience. The Webpage must include optimized copy and art. This does not have to be in HTML, you can do the design and copy in whatever program you feel most comfortable
- All material will be presented in an appropriate press kit format. This will be discussed later in the semester.
- ◆ Each student will also give a 5 to 10 minute presentation of their plan and press kit during the last week of class.

Technology Post: (5%) Each student will be required to complete a blog post for the class blog about a particular technology relevant to the public relations field. The post should be 400-500 words and include at least three hyperlinks to outside content. It would also be a plus to incorporate relevant graphics and/or pictures. The content should include an overview of the technology, features, PR uses, and examples. You will also be required to comment on at least 3 posts over the course of the semester. The blog will be set up by the instructor during the first week of class.

- Topics will include: Twitter, podcasting, Second Life, RSS feeds, YouTube, LinkedIn, MySpace, Facebook, blogs, Social Media News Releases (SMNR), RSS feeds, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Google Reader, Flickr, Digg, De.li.ous, Skype

Gatekeeper interview (15%): This assignment will involve each student selecting and interviewing a mass media editorial gatekeeper about the relationships between public relations practitioners and journalists. The interview can be conducted in person or by phone, but the interviewee should be at a prominent media outlet. Feel free to base your choice on an area of interest to you (the Style section editor, for instance). Based on your findings, you will produce a 3-5 page feature article. In addition, you will present your findings in class.

Class Participation/Attendance (5%): At the instructor's discretion.

Grading Scale: Final grades conform with UGA's +/- system.

Numeric grades will translate to letter grades as follows:

92.5-100=A

89.5-92.4=A-

87.5-89.4=B+

82.5-87.4=B

79.5-82.4=B-

77.5-79.4=C+

72.5-77.4=C

69.5-72.4=C-

65-69.4=D

64 and below=F

COURSE CALENDAR
(Tentative, schedule subject to change)

Week 1 – Introduction

- WWA: none
- Aug. 17 - introductions, overview of course
- Aug 21 – open discussion, what you want out of the course, special guest

****Deadline for Drop/Add: Thursday, August 20 at midnight**

Week 2 – Media Relations, Ethics (PAGES 1 – 8)

Read from PRSA website http://www.prsa.org/aboutUs/ethics/preamble_en.html

- WWA: begin research on non-profit client
- Aug. 24 – Persuasion and messaging, ethics, client discussion
- Aug. 28 – Media relations overview

Week 3 – Public Relations Research, Planning & SWOT Evaluation (PAGES 9 – 23)

- WWA: SWOT Evaluation, questionnaire
- Aug. 31 – A word on research
- Sept. 4 - SWOT Evaluation- Memo about Client for Final Projects due

Week 4 – Editing (PAGES 24 – 31)

- WWA: Editing Exercise
- Sept. 7 – LABOR DAY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS
- Sept. 11 – Editing exercise, SWOT Evaluation Plan & Draft Questionnaire Due

Week 5 – News Announcements, Fact Sheets (PAGES 32 – 62)

- WWA: News Release, Fact Sheet for client
- Sept. 14 – News Announcements, fact sheets, boilerplates
- Sept. 18 – News release writing day (in class)

Week 6 – Feature pitches, in-depth coverage (PAGES 63 – 78)

- WWA: Feature pitch
- Sept. 21 - Pitching, in-depth stories
- Sept. 25- Fact sheet writing day, News Release Due

Week 7 – Print vs. broadcast media, VNRs, PSAs (PAGES 79 – 81)

- WWA: PSAs
- Sept. 28 – print vs. broadcast PSAs, VNRs, B-roll
- Oct. 2 – In class news release writing, PSA due, Feature Release/Pitch Letter Due

Week 8 – Event planning, speech writing (PAGES 82 – 90, 94 – 130)

- WWA: Client Speech for event with idea for event
- Oct. 5 – Event planning, Discuss gatekeeper interview (PAGES 361 – 367)
- Oct. 9 - Event planning
 - o PROOF OF INITIAL CONTACT WITH GATEKEEPER PROSPECTS DUE

****Term Mid-point: October 8****

Week 9 – Newsletters, brochures (PAGES 91 – 93, 131 - 184)

- WWA: Newsletter article
- Oct. 12 –Speech writing, talking points
- Oct. 16 - Peer editing day, Client Speech Due

Week 10 – PR Plans (PAGES 185 – 204, 368 - 369)

- WWA:
- Oct. 19 – Writing PR plans

Mid-Point Withdrawal Deadline: Oct. 22

- Oct. 23 - Writing PR plans, ,evaluation

Week 11 – Client plans (PAGES 205 – 271)

- WWA:
- Oct. 26 – NO CLASS – Justin available in office to talk about plans
- Oct. 30 – HAPPY FALL BREAK!

Week 12 – Web PR (PAGES 272 – 298)

- WWA: Web site critique
- Nov. 2 –Social media overview– speaker (Kristin English)
- Nov. 6 – Social media press releases, Newsletter article due

Week 13 – Crisis Communication (PAGES 299 – 315)

- WWA: crisis exercise (in-class)
- Nov. 9 – Crisis communication
- Nov. 13 – crisis/in-class work day

Week 14 – Jobs in PR (PAGES 316 – 360)

- WWA: Resume & Cover Letter for Job/Internship
- Nov. 16 –
- Nov. 20 – Resume & Cover Letters

Week 15 –THANKSGIVING

- Nov. 23 – NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
- Nov. 27 – NO CLASS

Week 16 – Final Projects/Gatekeeper Presentations

- Nov. 30 – Final Project Workday (no class) – Justin available in office
- Dec. 4– Gatekeeper Interview Due/Presentations, Student course evaluations

Week 17 – Final project presentations

- Dec. 7 – Final project presentations
- Dec 8 – Holdover day for presentations (no class if we get done on Monday)

Reading Day – December 9

*****FINAL PROJECTS DUE AT NOON ON DECEMBER 14th*****

LATE PROJECTS WILL AUTOMATICALLY LOSE ONE (1) FULL LETTER GRADE.

Student Information Sheet

Please fill out and bring to the next class meeting.

Name: _____ Age: _____ Year: _____

Major: _____ Minor: _____

Permanent Address: _____

Local Address: _____

Local Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

(yes/no - please indicate whether email can be shared w/classmates)

What other PR course(s) have you taken?

Have you have any PR experience (i.e. internships, projects, volunteer work)? If so, where?

What are 2 fears you have coming into this course?

What are 3 goals you would like to accomplish during this course?