PUR 4100 | Public Relations Writing | Summer 2018

Day	Period	Building/Room
TBA	TBA	TBA
TBA	TBA	TBA

Instructor	Office	Phone/Cell	Email	Office Hours
Katy Robinson	Weimer G042	352-665-1822	robinsonkatyl@ufl.edu	Daily. Schedule ahead

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course, you will develop the writing and editing skills necessary to succeed in a public relations career. You will learn to think critically about global current events and business functions and how strategic communication can be best leveraged to create effective, measurable outcomes in varied settings.
Critical thinking, writing skills and creativity are highly valued competencies for public relations professionals. Skilled, polished and capable writers, with diverse and creative writing styles who quickly synthesize information into digestible pieces who also recognize and meet accelerated deadlines create a competitive advantage for themselves, their organizations, and their publics. Through lecture, workshop, in-class and out-of-class assignments, this course simulates the realities of the professional writing environment to help students create their best competitive advantage.

COURSE FORMAT:

Class time will be dedicated to lectures/discussions and/or time reserved for work sessions. Students should prepare to dedicate ample time outside of classroom hours to complete their writing projects.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, you should be able to:
- Understand, produce and evaluate the basic principles, techniques and tactics of public relations writing, including news releases, fact sheets, backgrounders, brochures, media pitches and social media writing
- Develop a standard of excellence by analyzing "real life," public relations writing utilizing strategic thinking, and creative thinking
- Apply strategic, creative thinking in the development of public relations writing examples
- Determine, analyze, and, develop solutions using growing knowledge of public relations practice and writing
- Develop content across mediums, understand and apply channel appropriateness
- Work effectively independently and in teams to develop public relations skills and confidence to create and maintain competitive advantage

REQUIRED TEXT:

Wilcox, D. L., & Reber, B. H. (2016). *Public relations writing and media techniques*. Pearson.
Goldstein, N. (2006). *AP Associated Press stylebook and briefing on media law*. Associated Pr.
https://www.apstylebook.com/ **(this is a paid subscription, it is discounted for PRSA members)(students may share books, it's need for reference)**

ABSENCES AND PUNCTUALITY:

Set by Study Abroad.

OTHER CLASS POLICIES:

- The University of Florida Honor Code applies to all activities associated with this class.
- Class members are expected to read the assigned reading (if any) before class and participate actively in class discussion.
- Although you may use computers in class, internet messaging and surfing are disruptive and, if caught, you may forfeit computer use in the class.
- All work will be judged by professional standards. All out-of-class work must be well written, typed and visually appealing, with no spelling or grammatical errors.

SPECIAL NOTES:
• Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.   • Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.   • Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up any graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.

Assignments/exercises	Final Communication Plan	Class participation
50% of final grade	**30% of final grade**	**20% of final grade**

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-93	92-90	89-87	86-84	83-80	79-77	76-74	73-70	69-67	66-64	63-60	59

Assignments include individual writing assignments that will require you to apply the principles, techniques, and skills you've learned to real-world scenarios and solve various problems.
Class participation includes online and in-class discussions. On-line posts will be posted before class and discussed in class. Detailed guidelines for discussions can be found below.
The final communication plan is a compilation of your assignments and will serve as a portfolio for employment interviews.
The final communication portfolio requires students to work independently to refine each written submission, resulting ultimately in a full-scale portfolio of public relations writing samples that represents the students' writing competency to potential employers, graduate schools and peers.

COURSE SCHEDULE – SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment	Discussion
Monday May 14	Welcome, Syllabus Handed Out Course Overview The Press Release	Wilcox Chapter 1-3 & 6		Introduction, Personal Strengths & Weaknesses

An introduction to the course. Fundamentals of public relations writing are reviewed including definitions and functions of public relations, evolution of public relations, and why public relations is important for organizations' success in the contemporary world.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment	Discussion
Wednesday May 16	Fact Sheet, Media Kit, Backgrounder, Bios & Comm Mgmt Process	Wilcox Chapter 4-5	Press Release Due	Relationship Management in Media

The public relations content creation process is discussed.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment	Discussion
Thursday May 17	Visual Content, Journalistic Writing, Headlines	Wilcox Chapter 7-9		Changing media channels

How to identify appropriate communication mediums for specific content and adjust public relations writing accordingly. Related discussion topics include the changing media landscape.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment	Discussion
Friday May 18	Strategic Communication via Speech Writing & Online Mediums	Wilcox Chapter 10-12 & 14	Backgrounder, Fact Sheet & Bio Due	The Professional Email

How to communicate and deliver goals and objectives via speech writing is discussed. Communication planning and management techniques are introduced and discussed.

Wednesday May 23	Communication Planning, Business Communication, Public Speaking & Event Management	Wilcox Chapter 13-15	Blog Due Speech Due	Event Planning & Comms

The concepts of business communication, public speaking and event management are discussed in different environments.

Thursday May 24	Campaigns, Legal Considerations, Business Partnership	Wilcox Chapter 16-18		Pitches & Proposals

Different types of messaging strategies for campaigns with legal, ethical and business considerations are discussed.

Friday May 25	Audience Analysis & Measurable Communications	Wilcox Chapter 19	Draft Comms Plan Due	Crisis Comms

The value of a written communication plan with measurable objectives are discussed.

Monday May 28	Field Research Week	Editing communication plans and portfolios	Final Comms Plan Due	Learnings / Start, Stop, Continue

Counseling, coaching and preparing leaders and strategic publics.

Wednesday May 30			Portfolio Due	

Last class together! Final communication plans due.

ASSIGNMENT GRADING			
A fixed grading scale allows you to earn a 0, 70, 80, 90 or 100 on each project, which will be evaluated as follows:			
Grade Earned	**Following Instructions**	**Writing Style**	**Content**
An assignment will earn the grade of **0** if it is not turned in by the deadline OR <u>any</u> of the following occurs:	The assignment is written without any regard for the instructions provided.	Many errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice render the assignment incomprehensible.	The content of the assignment suggests the author is "winging it" without any regard for the assignment OR sources *other than class materials* are not properly referenced.
An assignment will earn the grade of **70** if <u>any</u> of the following occurs:	The assignment is missing major required elements stated in the instructions.	Three or more errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice.	The content of the assignment suggests the author does not fully comprehend the assignment. Some content is correct but major points are missed.
An assignment will earn the grade of **80** if <u>any</u> of the following occurs:	The assignment is missing some required elements stated in the instructions.	Two errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice. Some writing is not very clear and adequate.	The content of the assignment suggests the author does not fully comprehend the assignment. Some content is correct but some points are missed.
An assignment will earn the grade of **90** if <u>each</u> of the following occurs:	The assignment meets the expectations of the instructions provided. All required elements are covered.	No more than one error in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice. Writing style is basic but clear and	The content of the assignment suggests the author has an accurate and thorough grasp of the assignment.

An assignment will earn the grade of **100** if <u>each</u> of the following occurs:	The assignment exceeds the expectations of the instructions provided. Required elements are not only covered, but also enhanced by additional content drawn from class discussions and well-informed insights.	adequate. No errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and/or word choice. Writing style is advanced yet highly readable and engaging.	The content of the assignment suggests the author has an advanced and applied understanding of the assignment. That is, the author incorporates topics covered in class to enhance his/her points in an original way that exceeds expectations.

DISCUSSION GRADING					
A fixed grading scale allows you to earn a 0, 70, 80, 90 or 100 on each project, which will be evaluated as follows:					
	Superior 100	**Excellent 90**	**Good 80**	**Fair 70**	**Poor 0**
Completeness	All required components incorporated into submission	Only 1 component not incorporated	Two or more components not incorporated	Up to half of the required components not incorporated	More than half of the required components not incorporated
Thoroughness	Each topic is treated very thoroughly	Each topic is treated somewhat thoroughly	Only some topics are treated somewhat thoroughly	Some topics are treated somewhat weakly	Each topic is treated only weakly
Readings (Application of case materials)	Very clear that readings were understood and incorporated well	Clear that readings were understood and incorporated well	Somewhat unclear that readings were understood	Submission has questionable relationship to reading material	No evidence that readings were incorporated
Accuracy and/or quality of ideas	Contains well-developed original ideas and/or precisely-worded, accurate information	Contains original ideas and/or accurate information	Contains at least some original ideas and/or some accurate information	Contains few original ideas or some accurate information	Contains only unoriginal ideas and/or inaccurate information
Surface features Surface features (e.g., formatting, correct spelling, grammar, complete sentences, and appropriate citation of sources)	Controls very well for surface features (i.e., formatting, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	Controls well for surface features (i.e., formatting, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	Somewhat lax in control of surface features (i.e., formatting, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	Very lax in control of surface features (i.e., formatting, spelling, grammar, typographical errors, etc.)	Lacks acceptable control of surface features (i.e., numerous distracting flaws in formatting, spelling, grammar, etc.)