

# Syllabus

## Public Relations Writing

Course Code: PUR4100

### Instructor:

Pamala Proverbs, MBA, M.P.S, APR, ABC

**Office:** Weimer: 036

**Email:** pproverbs@ufl.edu

**Telephone:** (352) 846-1090

**About Me:** [www.pamalaproverbs.com](http://www.pamalaproverbs.com)

**Consultation:** Directly following class or by appointment

**Class Days:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday

**Class Time:** Periods 4-5 (10:40 a.m -12:35 p.m.)

**Classroom:** Weimer 3028



### Course Goal

In this class, you will further develop the conceptual information used by a public relations strategist, sharpen your writing skills, and become familiar with the major writing tools used by public relations practitioners.

## Course Description

Writing is a significant aspect of public relations. My theory is that creativity and empathy are two more important aspects. Of course, this theory is open to rich, healthy, and respectful debate in my class. Public relations is a very practical field so expect writing about current events. If you are not in the habit of scanning the news daily, you need to start doing so now to keep up in class. As an incentive, we will have pop quizzes on daily news headlines.

The emphasis in this class is on clear and accurate writing. Please familiarize yourself with AP style as this is used for all assignments for which you will be graded. Weekly assignments are to be loaded on Canvas. You are expected to post your assignment and comment on two assignments posted by your peers. These comments will form 20% of your course grade. This exercise is geared toward collaborative learning. As you critique others' assignments, give kudos and offer suggestions to others; it will help develop critical thinking skills and improve your writing.

Typically, we are more careful about our writing when we know it will be widely read. At the end of this course, you will have created a portfolio of your work for a real-life company of your choice. You can use this information as a communications asset.

## Course Objectives

- Develop proficiency in writing and formatting strategic communications (e.g., press releases, blogs, announcements etc.)
- Improve writing mechanics including correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar
- Strengthen critical thinking skills and the adherence to public relations professional codes of ethics
- Apply conceptual knowledge to portfolio planning and design through assignments for real clients

## Textbooks

### **Required:**

Marsh, C., Guth, D. W., & Short, B. P. (2018). Strategic writing: Multimedia writing for public relations, advertising and more. (4). Routledge. NY. New York, NY. ISBN: 9781351712187

### **Recommended:**

The Associated Press Stylebook, 2017 Edition. Associated Press. ISBN-13: 978-0465093045

## Class Participation

Public relations practitioners need to master both the written and spoken word. Therefore, class participation will be assessed as part of your overall grade. There are no silly questions or answers in this class. Every question or answer is a learning opportunity. However, your contributions will be more effective if you are informed and prepared. How well-prepared you are will be considered in your class participation grade. Each week, there will be a class quiz that requires either a cell phone or computer. This will be the only time cell phone use is acceptable in class. I expect to learn from you and look forward to sharing my insights on public relations.

## Weekly Assignments

In-class or brief writing assignments will include:

- newsletter/magazine stories
- backgrounders
- fact sheets
- speeches
- VNR
- blogs
- news releases
- announcements
- class quizzes
- print ads and web ads
- business letters

## Final Portfolio

For your final assignment, you will create a portfolio with a compilation of your public relations work that is worthy of presenting to a client. Beginning with our first class, you must start thinking of a company that you know well and for which you can create a new initiative. This initiative must strictly be in the area of public relations. For example, the initiative could be the launch of a corporate social responsibility program or an internal event to benefit employees. Try not to delve too deeply into the areas of sales and marketing. You must select a company for this assignment by week two of the class. Post the company's name on Canvas and briefly explain your choice. There is a benefit in choosing a company early and posting its name, because each student must select and work for a different company. Please check all the discussions before you post to ensure that your selection has not been taken. If you post a company already chosen by a classmate, you will receive zero points for this activity.

## Assignments Weighting

Weekly writing assignments:	<b>50%</b>
Client/Portfolio Projects and Presentation:	<b>30%</b>
Class Participation:	<b>20%</b>
Total Points	<b>100%</b>

## Performance Indicators

The below standard will be used to assess assignments. Individual assignments may have customized rubrics so refer to Canvas for all assignments.

Factor	Standard	Percentage of Grade
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Good organization</li> <li>· Clarity of thought and writing</li> <li>· Accuracy</li> <li>· Well researched</li> </ul>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Correct punctuation</li> <li>· Subject/verb agreement</li> <li>· Sentence construction</li> <li>· Avoidance of dangling participles and modifiers</li> <li>· Correct use of “that and which” and “I and me” etc.</li> </ul>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Adherence to AP Style</b>	The style elements will be judged on correct use of AP style.	<b>15%</b>
<b>Presentation</b>	Presentation is key. All work must be of business quality. Please note that there will be a five-point deduction for assignments without names.	<b>5%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

## Grading Policy

Grading for the course follows current UF grading policies for assigning grade points (see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>).

Range	Final Grade
93 - 100 pts	A
90 - 92 pts	A-
87 - 89 pts	B+
83 - 86 pts	B
80 - 82 pts	B-
77 - 79 pts	C+
73 - 76 pts	C
70 - 72 pts	C-
67 - 69 pts	D +
60 - 66 pts	D
Below 59 pts	F

## Course Professionalism

The College of Journalism and Communications is a professional school and professional decorum is expected at all times. Therefore, the students, and the professor, adhere to workplace norms for collegial and respectful interaction. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain in class for its duration unless prior notice is given of early departure.

Further, students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest, ethical, and courteous manner — with classmates, and the professor. Eating, drinking, and privately chatting in class do not demonstrate professional behavior. Chatting while the professor, or another student is speaking is unacceptable behavior; such actions can result in being asked to leave the classroom and will result in a lowering of your class participation grade.

Electronic devices, cell phones, laptops, and tablets will be permitted during the live simulation so that you can draft documents, access the internet, create materials as needed as part of the response effort. Ringing phones or other disruptive technology are not permitted.

**UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge found at:**

*<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>*

## Students Accommodation

I am committed to helping students with special challenges overcome difficulties with comprehending the subject matter, while abiding by the standard code of confidentiality. In order to address academic needs, I must be informed of the student's circumstance at the beginning of the semester before performance becomes a factor.

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (Disability Research Center – 352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)). Once registered, you will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to me when requesting accommodation. Students with challenges should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

# Weekly Schedule

Date	Class Description	Readings	Class Activity
Mon. May 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course Introduction</li> <li>• The Importance of Good Writing</li> <li>• Research, Planning and the Writing Process</li> <li>• AP Familiarization</li> </ul>	Syllabus & other course materials in Canvas Guth, March & Poovey Short (2016) p. 9-18	Bio about yourself
Wed. May 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Writing</li> <li>• Broadcast/Postcast Writing</li> <li>• Writing for the Web</li> <li>• Strategic Design</li> <li>• Integrated Marketing Communications</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p. 19-33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post on Canvas due next day of class</li> <li>• Comma Quiz</li> <li>• In class writing assignment</li> </ul>
Fri. May 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethics</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Persuasion</li> <li>• Laws</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p.42-56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AP Quiz</li> <li>• In class writing assignment</li> </ul>
Mon. May 21	Strategic Writing in Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News Release Guidelines</li> <li>• Announcement News Release</li> <li>• Feature News Release</li> <li>• Social Media News release</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p. 87-111	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post on Canvas</li> <li>• AP Quiz</li> <li>• In class writing assignment</li> </ul>
Wed. May 23	Strategic Writing in Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media kit Guidelines</li> <li>• Backgrounders</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p.126-137	• Comma Quiz
Fri. May 25	Strategic Writing in Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media Advisories</li> <li>• Pitches</li> <li>• Video News Release</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p.112-128	• AP Quiz
Mon. May 28	Memorial Day Holiday		
Wed. May 30	Strategic Writing in Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Photo Opportunity Advisories</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p126-137	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post on Canvas</li> <li>• AP Quiz</li> <li>• In class writing assignment</li> </ul>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class Description</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Class Activity</b>
<b>Fri. June 1</b>	Strategic Writing in Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Newsletters and magazines</li> <li>· Speeches</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) 138- 158	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· In class writing assignment</li> </ul>
<b>Mon. June 4</b>	Strategic Writing in Public Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Websites</li> <li>· Blogs</li> <li>· Podcasts</li> <li>· Microblogs and Status Updates</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p.61-86	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Post on Canvas</li> <li>· In class writing assignment</li> </ul>
<b>Wed. June 6</b>	Strategic Writing in Advertising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Print</li> <li>· Radio</li> <li>· Television</li> <li>· Web</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p. 119 -153	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· In class writing assignment</li> </ul>
<b>Fri. June 8</b>	Strategic Writing in Advertising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Radio and TV Promotions</li> <li>· Radio and TV PSAs</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p.154-160	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Post on Canvas</li> <li>· In class writing assignment</li> </ul>
<b>Mon. June 11</b>	Strategic Writing in Sales and Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Proposals and Marketing Plans</li> <li>· Fundraising Letters</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p.165-173 and 183-187	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· In class writing assignment</li> </ul>
<b>Wed. June 13</b>	Strategic Writing in Sales and Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· E-blasts</li> <li>· Brochures</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p.177-183 and 187-199	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Post on Canvas</li> <li>· In class writing assignment</li> </ul>
<b>Fri. June 15</b>	Strategic Writing in Business Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Business letters</li> <li>· Request Letters</li> <li>· Job Request Letters</li> <li>· Jobs in Strategic Writing (57-59)</li> </ul>	Guth, March & Poovey (2016) p.199-216	
<b>Wed. June 20</b>	Review and finalizing Media Kit		Portfolio Review
<b>Fri. June 22</b>	Final Reflection and Course Evaluation		Have a wonderful break!