

# PUR5107: Strategic Writing for Public Relations

Academic Term: Spring 2022  
3 Credit Hours

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## Instructor

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Office Phone Number and Times: For emergencies, text 503-707-6384. Otherwise, please email to schedule an appointment.

Virtual Office Hours: Available by appointment only. To schedule, please contact me via email. I will do my best to respond to you within 24 hours.

## Course Description and Prerequisites

**Course Description:** The students in this course will learn the fundamentals of strategic writing communications including measurable objectives, storytelling, and audience/channel analysis to design a comprehensive communication plan to achieve internal and external organizational goals. The students will be able to analyze and evaluate new information that may impact a communication plan.

**Course Prerequisites/Co-Requisites:** None

## Course Expectations

This is a fully online course, and you must log in to Canvas with your Gatorlink username and password to access the materials and assignments. The course is organized into modules with due dates. Unless otherwise specified, each module begins on Monday at 12:00 AM, ET, and ends on Sunday at 11:59 PM, ET.

### Time Commitment & Student Workload Expectations

Expect to spend between 10 to 20 hours per week, per course, watching or attending lectures, reading, working on assignments and projects, and engaging in discussions.

### Expectations for Writing Assignments: Writing Style

To meet the academic rigor and standards of a graduate program, all students are required to use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition style in their courses when appropriate for the assignment. The APA 7th Edition Manual has a plethora of guidelines that includes scholarly writing, publishing principles, elements, and format for your papers, writing style, and grammar, bias-free language guidelines, mechanics of style, in-text citing references, etc. For additional information on notable changes, see changes between APA 6th Edition and APA 7th Edition.

### Attendance Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. [Click here to read the university attendance policies](#) for information on absences, religious holidays, illness, and the twelve-day rule. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and require appropriate documentation.

### Late Assignment Policy

Late assignments will not be accepted unless it is a [University excused absence](#) as stated in the attendance policies. **No late work will be accepted for final projects or work due in the final week of class due to the university grading deadlines.** If potential issues arise concerning submitting final work, students should contact their instructors before the assignment deadline.

1. Late Assignment Grade Reductions
  - a. 0-24 Hours Late: 10% reduction in grade.
  - b. Over 24 Hours (24 hours and 1 minute) to 7 Calendar Days Late: 20% reduction in grade.
  - c. After the 7<sup>th</sup> Calendar Day: Work will not be accepted.
2. Late Discussions will not be accepted.

### Student Guidelines for Course Challenges

A student with questions regarding course content such as assignments, assessments, instructional materials, lectures, meetings, course objectives, course module objectives, or other areas of the course, please adhere to the following guidelines: first, *approach the faculty member who is teaching the course* to ask for clarifications regarding the course assignments, assessments, materials, lectures, meetings, etc. Use the instructor's contact information to request an appointment where you can address any concerns and/or questions. If after meeting with *the faculty member teaching the course* you are still not clear on the course assignments, assessments, materials, lectures, meetings, etc., then the next step would be to contact online advising ([onlineadvising@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:onlineadvising@jou.ufl.edu)) for additional guidance.

### Accessibility/Students with Disabilities Information

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letters with their instructors and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

### Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback professionally and respectfully is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email, they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

## Course-Level Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify organizational best practices in communication. (CO: 1)
2. Explore different writing styles across corporate communication, media communication, crisis communication, and social media. (CO: 2)
3. Write clear, concise, and strategic messages to drive public relations for a range of media formats. (CO: 3)
4. Identify and apply elements of crisis communication. (CO: 4)
5. Evaluate communications plan components. (CO: 5)
6. Perform audience and channel analysis. (CO: 6)
7. Identify target audiences. (CO: 7)
8. Write stories showcasing public relations storytelling. (CO: 8)
9. Demonstrate ethical standards in storytelling. (CO: 9)
10. Collaborate with peers on crisis communication, communications plan and writing stories. (CO: 10)
11. Create on-demand crisis communication plan with a variety of components (CO: 11)
12. Author a communication plan for a fictional company. (CO: 12)

(CO = Course-Level Objective)

## Textbooks and Materials

### Required Course Textbook(s)

Thompson, William., & Browning, Nicholas. (2022). *Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communications*. Cognella, Inc.

- ISBN-13: 9781793511881

Associated Press. (2020). *Associated Press Stylebook*. Basic Books.

- ISBN-13: 978-0-917360-69-5

### Course Pack

Harvard Business Education Publishing Leadership Simulation: Patient Zero.

### Recommended Textbook(s)

This textbook is recommended in all CJC Online classes to support student expectations for writing style.

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7th ed.).

- ISBN-13: 978-1433832161
- ISBN-10: 143383216X

## University and Course Grading Policies

### University Honor Code

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies the number of behaviors that violate this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable; especially, in academic communities. All academic work must be an original work of your own thought, research, or self-expression. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, prohibited collaboration, consultation, submission of academic work that has been purchased or obtained (see the [UF Policy: Student Conduct Violation](#)). In addition, self-plagiarism is also unacceptable. Self-plagiarism is defined as recycling or reusing one’s own specific words from previously submitted assignments or published texts. Remember that plagiarism is not acceptable in any of your work including all discussion board posts, journal entries, wikis, and other written and oral presentation assignments. It’s important to always cite your sources in your assignments.

### Grading Criterion

Your grade will be calculated based on the following:

Assignments/Assessments	Weight (%)
<b>Course Orientation:</b> These assignments are required; however, they do not count towards the final grade. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student Introduction</li><li>• Course Evaluation</li></ul>	0%
<b>7 Discussions and 8 Engagements</b>	15%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worth up to 100 points each.</li> </ul>	
<b>1 Required Patient Zero Activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worth up to 100 points each.</li> </ul>	15%
<b>13 Weekly Writing Assignments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worth up to 100 points each.</li> </ul>	25%
<b>1 Final Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worth up to 90 points. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 points are allotted to the rough draft.</li> <li>20 points are allotted to peer feedback.</li> <li>50 points are allotted to the final draft.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	45%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Grade	Percentage
A	92.5-100%
A-	89.5-92.4%
B+	86.5-89.4%
B	82.5-86.4%
B-	79.5-82.4%
C+	76.5-79.4%
C	72.5-76.4%
C-	69.5-72.4%
D+	66.5-69.4%
D	62.5-66.4%
D-	59.5-62.4%
E	0 – 59.4%

The only passing grades for graduate students are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, and C. Letter grades of C-, D+, D, D- or E are not considered passing at the graduate level, although the grade points associated with these letter grades are included in grade point average calculations. See the [Graduate Catalog](#) and [UF graduate school grading policy](#) for more information.

### Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

## Technology Requirements

### Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students at the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

### Software

- [Microsoft Office 365](#).
- [UF Apps](#) – access UF software applications from any device from any location, at any time.
- [Adobe Reader](#)

- [Zoom](#)

## Technical Support

If you have technical difficulties with your course, please contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) either by filling out an [online request form](#) or calling 352-392-4357 (HELP).

If your technical difficulties cause you to miss a due date, you must report the problem to the Help Desk and then email your instructor. Include the ticket number that you are given from the Help Desk in an email to the instructor to explain the late assignment/quiz/test.

### IT Support

For all Technical assistance questions please contact the UF Computing Help Desk.

Phone: 352-392-HELP (4357)

Email: [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu)

## Communication Policies

### Student Expectations

You are expected to check your UF email at least once every 24 hours.

### Announcements

You are responsible for reading all announcements posted in the course each time you log in.

### Email

You are responsible for reading all your course emails and responding promptly (within 24 hours).

### Video Conferencing

You are responsible for attending course video conferencing meetings. If you cannot attend the video conferencing meeting, please advise the instructor and/or your team at least 24 hours in advance (exceptions can be made for legitimate emergencies). You are expected to demonstrate netiquette and etiquette communication expectations during these meetings.

### Instructor Communications

#### Email Policy

Except for weekends, holidays, and University breaks, the instructor will typically respond to emails within 48 hours. For course-related questions please post on the Canvas FAQ discussion board. If you have questions of a personal nature, please email me directly.

#### Assignment Feedback Policy

I will provide feedback/grades on submitted assignments within two weeks of the due date. Some assignments may require a longer review period, which I will communicate to you, if necessary.

### Course Policies

#### Video Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under [UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code](#).

### **Privacy**

If your course includes live synchronous meetings, the class sessions will all be recorded for students in the class to refer to and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who unmute during class and participate are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. Please see UF's Information Technology [policies](#) for additional information.

### **Challenging Topics**

In this course, we may cover subjects that may be sensitive and/or challenging. As in all our courses, we do this not to indoctrinate but to instruct, to prepare you to be the most effective and successful media professional or scholar that you can be. We encourage you to understand all concepts presented in class, but we know that what you personally believe is your choice. If you would like to discuss anything regarding this, please feel free to contact me directly.

### **Commitment to Diversity**

The College of Journalism and Communications embraces diversity as a shared responsibility among faculty, staff, and students and strives for tangible expressions of this responsibility. We are committed to fostering a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for individuals of all races, genders, nationalities, religions, sexual orientations, identities, and abilities to express their culture and perspectives through the art and science of journalism and communication.

## Academic and Student Resources

### **Academic Resources**

- E-learning Technical Support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 (HELP) or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- [Career Connection Center](#): Career assistance and counseling. Reitz Union, Phone: 352-392-1601.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance concerning using the libraries or finding resources. [UF Library Services for Distance Students](#)  
[Ask a Librarian](#) – chat with librarians online.  
CJC Librarian - April Hines, Phone: 352-273-2728, Email: [aprhone@uflib.ufl.edu](mailto:aprhone@uflib.ufl.edu).

- [Writing Studio](#): Provides one-on-one consultations and workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate). 302 Tigert Hall, Phone: 352-846-1138.

## Health and Wellness

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), call 352-294-2273, or visit the website to refer or report a concern, and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department: Visit the [UF Police Department](#) website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal well-being, including wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

## Course Schedule

Week Number	Topic and Assignments
1	<p><b>The Flexible Yet Universal Nature of Strategic Writing for Public Relations</b></p> <p>--Engagement #1            --Writing Assignment #1            --Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter One</i></p>
2	<p><b>Putting Your Audience First: The Audience-Centered Model of Public Relations Writing</b></p> <p>--Discussion #1            --Writing Assignment #2            --Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter Two</i></p>
3	<p><b>Tell Me a Story: The Value of Narratives in Public Relations Writing</b></p> <p>--Engagement #2            --Writing Assignment #3            -- Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Storytelling: The New Strategic Imperative of Business</a> by Billee Howard for <i>Forbes</i></li> <li>2. <a href="#">The Untold Story: The Power of Corporate Storytelling</a> published by Financial Times Corporate Learning Alliance</li> </ol> <p>Lectures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Magical Science of Storytelling</a> by David JP Phillips for TEDxStockholm</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Clues to a Great Story</a> by Andrew Stanton for TED2012</li> </ul> <p>Recommended Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Seven Companies that are Killing It with Brand-Driven Storytelling</a> by Sujan Patel, Co-founder WebProfits</li> </ol>
4	<p><b>The Devil's in the Details...and So Are the Angels: Market Research and Public Relations</b></p> <p>--Discussion #2</p>

	--Writing Assignment #4 --Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter Four</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>Reaching the Right Audience: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?</b> --Engagement #3 --Writing Assignment #5 --Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter Six</i>
<b>6</b>	<b>Standing Between You and Public Relations Success: Navigating Media Gatekeepers</b> --Discussion #3 --Writing Assignment #6 --Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter Ten</i>
<b>7</b>	<b>I Love It When A Plan Comes Together: Strategic Planning in Public Relations Writing</b> --Engagement #4 --Final Project Rough Draft --Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter Three</i>
<b>8</b>	<b>Nobody Thinks They're The Villain: Our Ethical Commitments in Public Relations Writing</b> --Discussion #4 --Writing Assignment #7 --Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter Five</i>
<b>9</b>	<b>Not One Step Backward: Building a Persuasive Case in Public Relations Writing</b> --Engagement #5 --Writing Assignment #8 --Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter Seven</i>
<b>10</b>	<b>Spring Break!</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Part 1: Fostering Interactivity: Getting Your Audience to Spread the Message</b>  <b>Part 2: Crisis Communications</b> --Discussion #5 --Writing Assignment #9 --Final Project Peer Review --Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter Nine</i>
<b>12</b>	<b>Creating Online Content</b> --Engagement #6 --Writing Assignment #10 --Required Activity: <i>Harvard Business Education Publishing Leadership Simulation: Patient Zero</i>
<b>13</b>	<b>Delivering Uncontrolled Messages: Reaching Media Gatekeepers</b> --Engagement #7 --Writing Assignment #11 --Required Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter Eleven</i>
<b>14</b>	<b>Advertising and Internal Communication: When the Organization Controls the Message</b> --Discussion #7 --Writing Assignment #12 --Required Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter Twelve</i>
<b>15</b>	<b>Say Something, Then Be Ready for Anything: Delivering Semi-Controlled Messages</b> --Writing Assignment #13 --Required Reading: <i>Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication - Chapter Fifteen</i>
<b>16</b>	<b>Review and Recap</b> --Engagement #8 --No required reading

The instructor reserves the right to adjust this syllabus, as necessary.