



Public Relations Writing, Fall 2025
PUR4443, section 292B, Weimer Hall 3028
11:45 AM - 1:40 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Frazer

Office: Weimer Hall 2066B

Office hours: To Be Announced, and by appointment.

Email: r.frazer@ufl.edu (Email is the best way to reach me when I'm not in my office. Please allow 36 hours for a response before following up, excluding weekends and holidays.)

Office Phone: (352)-392-3081

Course description and goals:

Public relations professionals must be strong, polished writers who can work quickly and adapt to changing environments and needs. Students must recognize the importance of excellent writing for success in both the public relations profession and day-to-day business. In this course, you will master the core qualities of excellent public relations writing and develop the skills to build communications materials for real clients.

This course is centered on you and your needs. As such, the course will provide the opportunity for hands-on learning and real-world applications to help you gain experience and build a robust portfolio that showcases your strategic writing skills.

Course objectives:

Students will master the basic writing skills of public relations professionals to prepare them to meet the demands of today's industry. Upon completing this class, students will learn to:

- Recognize the importance of excellent writing for success in both the public relations profession and day-to-day business;
- Write clear, concise, compelling, accurate and logically organized materials and content, following style and grammar rules;
- Develop public relations materials (such as key messages, backgrounders, media briefs, media lists, etc.) that effectively and strategically meet your public relations objectives;
- Explain the purpose of such public relations materials and decide when and how to strategically use these;
- Tailor communications – including content, style and format – based on your target audiences and public relations objectives;
- Develop and apply critical thinking, listening and professional skills through assignments that mimic industry work with clients and peers.

College of Journalism and Communications objectives

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

CLASS LOGISTICS

Deadlines

Unless stated otherwise in the assignment description on Canvas, all written assignments **must** be submitted **to Canvas**, in word (.doc, .docx) or .pdf format, by the assigned deadline unless otherwise stated.

*****NOTE: Only assignments submitted**

- 1) **through Canvas AND**
- 2) **before the assigned deadline AND**
- 3) **in .doc, .docx, or PDF file format**

will be accepted and graded. Assignments not conforming to the above guidelines may be given a grade of 0.***

Unless I determine that an extenuating circumstance has occurred (per [university guidelines](#) regarding reasons for failure to engage in class), submissions emailed to me after the Canvas submission box has closed will not be graded. **It is your responsibility to not wait until the last minute** to finish assignments, in order to avoid technical problems such as spotty internet connections, computer crashes, etc. that may interfere with timely submission.

If submission of your assignment is delayed because of technical issues with Canvas, please report the problem immediately, receive a ticket number from the UF Computing Help Desk and email it to me immediately. The ticket will document the time and date of your issue.

For technical issues related to Canvas, contact the UF Help Desk at <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu> or (352) 392-HELP (4357).

Course technology

You will need reliable Internet access and a reliable computer with Microsoft Word (or other word processing software that can generate a .doc or .docx file), Adobe flash (for viewing video content) and Adobe PDF reader. Please bring your computer or tablet to class.

Class attendance

Attendance is important to student success in this class. That said, absences happen, and it is the student's responsibility to communicate with the instructor regarding absences in order to maintain their standing/progress in this course. Please carefully read the policies below regarding the two different types of absences (excused and unexcused):

Excused Absences: I follow the university's guidelines regarding student absences that are excusable (i.e., absences that will not result in a penalty to the student's grade). Please read [these guidelines](#) carefully to note what types of absences can be excused. Examples of excusable absences include health emergencies, required university athletics participation, and religious holidays. Please note that for such an absence to be excused by the instructor, the student **must provide prior written (or email) notice to the instructor prior to the event whenever possible**. In the event of an unexpected emergency, the student must notify the instructor of the reason for their absence in a timely manner as soon as the emergency has passed. A student may not wait until weeks after a crisis or illness has passed to contact the instructor about excusing absences or making up missed work; I will not honor such requests. The instructor reserves the right to request supporting documentation for excused absences as appropriate.

Unexcused Absences: A student may miss up to two classes for reasons not covered in the "excused absences" policy without a penalty to their grade at the end of the course. However, the instructor is not responsible for providing the students with notes or class recordings for unexcused absences, nor may the student make up in-class activities that might occur when they are absent. If a student misses more than two classes (unexcused), each additional absence will result in a 5% grade reduction in their overall class grade.

Class Professionalism and Participation

Please be on time to class. Please do not text, check email or social media unrelated to the class, browse unrelated websites, or do other work during class. Please be collegial and respectful in your interactions with your fellow students, and welcome and treat with respect the different perspectives of others. Threats, profanity directed at others, personal attacks, discriminatory slurs, etc. are never appropriate in any type of class communication.

Additionally, the following behaviors may result in a penalty assessed to your grade.

- Persistent tardiness or regularly leaving class early without prior permission.
- Failure to actively participate in class activities.
- Inattentiveness in class (e.g., texting, checking social media/email, sleeping, etc.).
- Disrespectful or unprofessional behavior or communication with the instructor or peers.

The instructor will warn any student of a potential participation penalty prior to implementing the penalty, in order to give the student the opportunity to correct their behavior and avoid a grade reduction.

Class-related notifications

Please log in to Canvas daily to check for class-related announcements. You may set up alerts to forward messages directly to your UF email address. To adjust your notification settings in Canvas, [follow these guidelines](#).

Grading

Here's how the grading will be weighted (note: assignment details are tentative and subject to change):

Assignment Summaries (Details Provided on Canvas)	Due Dates	Points / %
In-class Writing Assignments and Quizzes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grammar Quizzes• Email Writing• Social Media Writing• [More TBA]	TBA – see Canvas	30 pts / 30%
Out-of-class Writing Assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal Bio• Narrative Article• News Pitches• Press Kit (Multiple Items)• Op-ed	TBA – see Canvas	40 pts / 40%
Exams (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taken in class, closed note/book	Sept 16 th , Oct 16 th Nov 18 th	30 pts / 30%
TOTAL		100 pts / 100%

Grading scale [For more information, please see the university's policy on [grades and grading](#).]

A = 93.00 - 100%
A- = 90.00 - 92.99%
B+ = 87.00 - 89.99%
B = 83.00 - 86.99%
B- = 80.00 - 82.99%
C+ = 77.00 - 79.99%
C = 73.00 - 76.99%
C- = 70.00 - 72.99%
D+ = 67.00 - 69.99%
D = 63.00 - 66.99%
D- = 60.00 - 62.99%
E = 59.99% and below

[Note: Grade penalties may be assessed for attendance and participation violations; please see sections above on class attendance and class participation/professionalism.]

Plagiarism

The Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code states that "A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
- Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
- Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
- Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author."

In every assignment for this course, you must clearly attribute the source of your information, including information obtained from organizations' web sites or internal documents. You cannot copy anything word for word, regardless of the source, without putting quotes around it and crediting the source.

Use of Generative AI

In this class I want you to produce all your own work. Unless explicitly stated in the assignment description, the only appropriate use of generative AI without citation in this course is for spelling and grammar check purposes. Any other use of generative AI's assistance must be clearly cited within your work. No direct quotes from generative AI may be used, and any summary or paraphrasing of ideas generated by AI must be clearly cited as such. It is important for me to be able to ascertain what you know and can produce unaided on your own. The use of generative AI for your assignments in this class that do not conform to the standards just detailed is a violation of the honor code, as you are presenting content as your own that was not fully created by you. There are various AI detection tools available (built within Canvas and externally such as ZeroGPT), and many AI platforms follow very formulaic response patterns. If I am concerned that your work is not your own, I will try to verify the originality of your work, and if evidence is found that your work is AI generated, I will submit your assignment as violating the honor code.

Please see additional University of Florida Academic Policies & Resources at the following link:
<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule may change as the semester progresses to reflect the progress and needs of the class. Last updated 8/6/2025.

UNIT 1: Fundamentals of PR Writing (Style, Grammar, Professionalism)

Week 1 (Thurs, Aug 21st)

Week 2 (Tue, Aug 26th and Thurs, Aug 28th)

UNIT 2: Internal Communications (Memos, Reports, Newsletters)

Week 3 (Tue, Sept 2nd and Thurs, Sept 4th)

Week 4 (Tue, Sept 9th and Thurs, Sept 11th)

UNIT 3: Self-published External Communications (Website Materials, Blogs/Success Narratives, Social Media)

*****Exam 1 (in class): Tues, Sept 16th*****

Week 5 (Tue, Sept 16th [exam] and Thurs, Sept 18th)

Week 6 (Tue, Sept 23rd and Thurs, Sept 25th)

UNIT 4: Earned Media / Media Relations (Press Releases, Pitches, Press Kits, Op-eds)

Week 7 (Tue, Sept 30th and Thurs, Oct 2nd)

Week 8 (Tue, Oct 7th and Thurs, Oct 9th)

Week 9 (Tue, Oct 14th and Thurs, Oct 16th [exam])

*****Exam 2 (in class): Thursday, Oct 16th*****

Week 10 (Tue, Oct 21st and Thurs, Oct 23rd)

UNIT 5: Writing for Crisis (Writing Under Pressure, Media Advisories, Press Statements, Talking Points)

Week 11 (Tue, Oct 28th and Thurs Oct 30th)

Week 12 (Tue, Nov 4th; and Thurs, Nov 6th)

UNIT 6: Writing to Get the Job (PR Agency Tests, Cover Letters)

Week 13 (Thurs, Nov 13th)

Week 14 (Tue, Nov 18th [exam] and Thurs, Nov 20th)

*****Exam 3 (in class): Tuesday, Nov 18th*****

Week 15 (THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY; no class)

Week 16 (Tues, Dec 2nd; [No class Thursday—reading day])

[NOTE: THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS COURSE]

READING MATERIALS

Suggested Book:

The Associated Press Stylebook 2018 and Briefing on Media Law. The Associated Press, 2018. (ISBN: 0917360672) or the online subscription. You can access the AP Stylebook online through the UF Library.

Any additional required assigned readings will be provided to students at no charge through Canvas.
