

## PUR4100 – PR WRITING – Fall 2025

### CONTACT INFORMATION

---

**Instructor:** Kera Felton  
**Email:** [jakera.felton@ufl.edu](mailto:jakera.felton@ufl.edu)  
**Office:** Virtual  
**Office Hours:** By appointment via Zoom – [schedule here](#)

### CONTACT PREFERENCES

---

- Please email me in Outlook. My email address is [jakera.felton@ufl.edu](mailto:jakera.felton@ufl.edu). **I do not respond to emails in Canvas.**
- When emailing, and for faster responses, please include “PUR4100” in the subject line of your email.
- Please allow 48 business hours for a response. If you do not hear back from me by then, please follow up in the original email thread.

### COURSE INFORMATION

---

**Prerequisites:** To enroll in this course, you must have completed and received a grade of C or better in PUR3000 (Principles of Public Relations) and JOU3101 (Reporting).

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

---

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.

# COURSE REQUIREMENTS

---

## SUGGESTED TEXTBOOKS

---

*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.

Strunk, William, and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed., Pearson, 2014. (ISBN: 020530902X)

### ***Additional Readings as Assigned***

Students are expected to regularly read industry news, examples include: [PRWeek](#), [PProvoke](#), [IPR Research Letter](#), and [PRNEWS](#).

Additional readings may be assigned over the semester.

## PREREQUISITES

---

*Prerequisite: Sophomore standing*

# COURSE POLICIES

---

### **Instructor Interaction:**

The best way to reach me is by e-mail. I check my e-mail account regularly, but please do not expect a response by e-mail after normal business hours/over the weekend. If I have not written back within 24 hours, please send your email again. As my email is considered a state public record, I do not discuss grades or any student records issues via e-mail. Please schedule a meeting with me to discuss these issues.

### **Late or Missed Work:**

Deadlines for each assignment will be given and students are expected to meet them. **I do not accept late work unless it was approved by me beforehand** or unless with an official excuse. You have one week from the excuse date to turn in any missing assignments that were due during that time away. Some consideration, however, might be given (at the discretion of the instructor) if there are extenuating circumstances such as prolonged hospitalization, family death, or extended individual sickness; however, **you need to notify me before the deadline is missed, not after the fact.**

**Attendance:**

Though there is no official “attendance” for an online setting, **I do not accept late work**. I believe professionals should be treated like adults because we *are* adults. The same is true of UF students. Life happens, and if anyone understands that, it's this professor! However, in your professional career, you will have to adhere to deadlines.

**Email Policy:**

As a state employee, my email is considered a public record, and can be requested via an open-records request. Because of this, you should not email things that you would be uncomfortable with anyone else reading (personal information, information about grades, etc.). In general, face-to-face meetings tend to take less time, and result in less confusion than emailed conversations. While you are welcome to email me, I may indicate that you need an in-person meeting depending on the complexity of the issue. Also, please be aware that email is considered formal communication, and it is important to practice professionalism. Never email something that you would not say to your boss' face.

**University Honesty Policy:**

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 honesty 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 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with me.

I will document and report all honor code violations, including cheating and plagiarism. The minimum penalty for a violation of the honor code is a zero on the assignment or exam but may be higher depending on the severity of the violation.

**Professionalism:**

As PR students I expect you to maintain a high level of professionalism in all of our interactions. This includes being courteous and respectful to all members of the course. Being respectful includes making sure you are not distracting to others via your cell phone or computer usage, talking with others during lecture, or arriving or leaving late – practice your professionalism now!

**Students Requiring Accommodations:**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

## PR DEPARTMENT AI PRINCIPLES

---

1. Ultimately, you are here to learn how to be a communications professional, which means you need to learn the basics of writing and creative thinking and be able to execute those skills on your own.
2. AI can be useful to help and refine, but ultimately the work needs to be your own.
  - a. If AI wrote your assignment, that is not your own work
  - b. It's best as a brainstorming tool
3. You need to be transparent when AI is used.
  - a. Each assignment will state if AI use is allowed or not, and if allowed how documentation needs to take place
4. When you use AI, use it creatively.
  - a. Be thoughtful with your prompts
  - b. Use multiple prompts
5. FACT CHECK
  - a. Do not trust anything that is created without checking anything it produces

### AI Policy

In this course you may be asked to use generative AI for some assignments. AI is commonly used in the profession, so familiarity with generative AI tools is important. However, do not let your creative thinking and editing skills lapse! When AI is allowed or encouraged in assignments, you will need to document how AI was used. This could include providing your prompts, showing the editing that you did to the created content, or using appropriate citation of information obtained via generative AI. If you are using AI when not explicitly allowed, that is considered 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. If unable to do so, I may ask you to resubmit the assignment detailing how you arrived at your submission.

## GRADING POLICY

---

I will be as fair and impartial as is humanly possible in the grading process. Each of you will be graded on the same criteria. Because of this, no extra work or special assignments will be given. Grades are earned; they are not gifts. Grades are awarded on the basis of quality, not the amount of time expended. I will keep grades posted on Canvas - it is your responsibility to check on your progress throughout the semester.

Grade components for the class are as follows:

**Writing Assignments (60 percent)** – You will be graded on several writing assignments. For select assignments, you will submit the first draft (for in-class critique and revisions) and a final draft. All assignments, including drafts, must be submitted to receive credit. Select writing assignments will be completed “on deadline” and due in class, simulating industry demands.

**Final Project (20 percent)** – This is your final project for the course, which will serve as a compilation of much of your work throughout the semester. If you received a low score on any of your assignments, this is your opportunity to revise accordingly. I’m available during office hours, one-on-one meetings and working days to answer any questions and provide guidance.

**Quizzes (20 percent)** – Quizzes will be given throughout the semester. I will let you know which topics will be covered on each quiz. You will be expected to know topics from previous quizzes.

### **Submitting Assignments:**

All assignments must be “client-ready,” which means they have been proofread, reviewed and formatted so that they are ready to submit to your client – or in this case, to your instructor.

Everything you write for this course must be coherent, logical and carefully edited. Fact errors, misspellings, and syntax and grammatical errors are unacceptable, especially in work by public relations students, and will greatly affect your grade. AP Style guidelines should be followed for all materials. All work should be uploaded on Canvas.

You can earn up to three additional points per assignment if you also include an “email” to your client in the comments section of your submission. This mimics how you will submit materials to your clients for review in the workplace. I will share best practices for submissions in the first weeks of the course.

Public relations professionals are often bound by tight, important deadlines and missing these can damage their and their clients’ credibility.

Lost files are not an acceptable excuse for late or missing work. Remember Murphy’s Law. Please back up all your files; you may choose to do so on a USB flash drive, Google Drive, iCloud, Dropbox, etc.

See the current [UF Grading Policies](#) for more information.

Please see UF academic policies and resources [here](#).

The grading scale for the course is:

A	94.0 – 100%	B	84.0 – 86.99%	C	74.0 – 76.99%	D	64.0 – 66.99%
A-	90.0 – 93.99%	B-	80.0 – 83.99%	C-	70.0 – 73.99%	D-	60.0 – 63.99%
B+	87.0 – 89.99%	C+	77.0 – 79.99	D+	67.0 – 69.99%	E	Below 60%

## COURSE SCHEDULE

---

Module	Course Overview	Due Date
Module 1	Foundations of PR Writing	Week 1
Module 2	Writing Effective Press Releases	Week 2
Module 3	Media Relations	Week 3
Module 4	Executive Communications and Briefing Documents	Week 4
Module 5	Strategic Message Development with Key Messages	Week 5
Module 6	Opinion Writing and Brand Voice	Week 6
Module 7	AI Tools and Prompt Engineering Writing for PR	Week 7
Module 8	Research Communications in PR	Week 8
Module 9	Speechwriting Fundamentals	Week 9
Module 10	Social Media Writing and Influencer Content Strategy	Week 10
Module 11	Crisis Communications Management	Week 11
Module 12	PR Project Management	Week 12
Module 13	Professional Development in PR Final Project	Week 13 & 14
No module	Fall break	Week 15
Final Project	Final projects are due on Wednesday, December 3, 2025	Week 16