

Syllabus: JOMC 232.001

Public Relations Writing, Fall 2013



Instructor: Professor Esther Campi
Classroom: 141 Carroll Hall
Time: M/W 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Office hours: Room 378, By appointment only
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Congratulations, you're hired!

This course simulates the working conditions of a real-world PR firm. Think of it as PR Boot Camp. Work hard. Actively participate. And by the end you'll be a pro – with the skills to excel at any PR firm, nonprofit or corporation. You will also have a professional portfolio of work *you* created for *real clients*.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Create a **PR plan** to accomplish a client's PR goals on time and on budget.
- Quickly write top-notch **PR materials**, including media alerts, hard-news press releases, feature press releases, public service announcements, fact sheets, speeches and more.
- Manage **client** relationships.
- Pitch **media** and prep your clients for media interviews.
- Market yourself as a PR pro with a polished **portfolio, personal elevator pitch and cover letter.**

Course Structure

This course is made up of two parts:

- **Writing Lab** – This consists of lectures, timed writing drills and out-of-class writing assignments.
- **Client Portfolio** – You will be assigned in teams to work with real nonprofit clients. Your work for these clients will be packaged into a portfolio that your team will present to both the class and the client at the end of the semester. *This portfolio is an excellent tool for internship or job interviews.*

Grades

I will calculate your final grade as follows:

Writing Lab	75%
Graded Assignments	20%
In-Class Writing Drills	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	15%
Participation	10% (See table on page 3 for a detailed explanation.)

Client Portfolio **25%**

***** Be advised that I grade on a curve.*****

Writing Lab

(75% of Grade)

PIDs Only

Type your PID, not your name, on every page of every assignment, drill or exam. To avoid bias, I prefer not to know whose paper I am grading. Do not staple anything, as I make copies of your work for my records.

Graded Assignments (20%)

- You will complete **three** out-of-class writing assignments that each receive a letter grade. These assignments are due at the *beginning* of class on their due date at **11 a.m. sharp**. It is your responsibility to put assignments in my hand, even if I have not made an announcement to collect them. Once class starts, assignments are considered late. ***Late assignments (even one minute late) are docked 25 points. So if you think you will be late, email me your assignment before 11 a.m. – and bring a printed copy with you to class, with the email you sent me attached to it. I only grade printed-paper copies. I use emails as proof that you made the deadline, but it is not my job to track down your assignment by email and print it. If your email did not come across, or I cannot open the attachment, it does not count.*** It is your responsibility to make sure I have your paper assignment in hand.
- Assignments turned in after 12:15 p.m. -- the end of the class period -- on their due date automatically will be assigned a grade of 0.
- All writing assignments must be typed and in the proper format. Assignments not typewritten will be docked 25 points. In the “real world,” computer glitches and printing problems happen but are not excused. Leave yourself plenty of time to cope with these problems and still make your deadline.
- Graded assignments should be *picture perfect* when they are turned in. They may NOT be edited on hard copy. Obvious corrections, such as penned-in material, will be docked 10 points each.

In-Class Writing Drills (15%)

- Class drills are timed, in-class writing exercises designed to help you produce professional PR materials under deadline pressure.
- These drills must be typed, in the proper format and turned in on deadline. While class drills are not assigned individual letter grades, in aggregate they account for 15 percent of your grade and I often provide valuable tips and feedback on them. ***If you are absent, you get a zero for that day’s drill. Even if the drill is due on a later date, you may NOT turn it in if you were absent for the instruction. Also, if you are present and turn in a drill of poor quality, I will give you a “0” for that drill.***
- Don’t wait until the last moment to print your copy. Give yourself time to proofread. Save, save, save! For in-class drills only, you may edit on paper. Use the proofreading marks in the *AP Stylebook*.

Midterm Exam (15%)

This is an in-class, timed exam. Failure to show up for the exam will result in a grade of F on the midterm.

Final Exam (15%)

This is an in-class, timed exam. Failure to complete the final exam will result in an AB.

Participation (10%)

This is a lab class, so attendance and participation are critical.

- Students are permitted to miss up to **2 classes** without being penalized for class participation. However, you still lose points for in-class drills regardless of the reason for your absence.
- Students who miss **3 classes** for any reason will receive **half points** for class participation. In addition, you also lose points for in-class drills regardless of the reason for your absence.
- Students who miss **4 classes** for any reason will receive **ZERO points** for class participation. In addition, you also lose points for in-class drills regardless of the reason for your absence.
- Students who miss **5 or more** classes will receive an **automatic F for the overall course**.

Absences	Points deducted from final course grade for missing in-class drills	Points deducted from final course grade for failure to participate	Cumulative points deducted from final course grade
1	1 point	0 points	1 point
2	2 points	0 points	2 points
3	3 points	5 points	8 points
4	4 points	10 points	14 points
5	5 points	10 points	FAIL

If you anticipate excessive absenteeism this semester, please take this course another time.

In life, things happen that will pull you away from class, such as illness, family emergencies, etc. I suggest you save up your absences so you can use them for these unexpected emergencies. Remember that when you are absent, you are already missing points for missed in-class writing drills. Don't compound this by losing points for lack of class participation.

Client Portfolio

(25% of Grade)

As part of the APPLS service-learning program, you will work in teams to produce PR materials for nonprofit organizations. They will be your clients. You will be their pro bono PR consultants. Designate one student to be the client's main contact, and copy all team members on any emails to the client. Meet with your team regularly, and your clients as needed. Remember that you are representing the university. *The highest level of professionalism is expected.* Due dates for client pieces are on the class schedule. At the end of the semester, your team will package all of the PR pieces you produce for your client into a final portfolio – and give a 15-minute team presentation to the class about your experience. Your portfolio should be professionally and attractively produced. Appearance counts. Use page numbers, binding, tabs, graphics and a splash of color. Do not include handwritten notes, staples, clips, sticky notes or other clunky items.

Below is a list of what your final portfolio should include, in this order. For your convenience, I have also attached the actual “Portfolio Checklist and Evaluation Form” (pages 5-6) that I use to calculate your team’s portfolio grade. You will fill in the red blanks and submit that form with your portfolio.

1. **Cover Sheet** – Include client’s logo, date, team member names, etc.
2. **Table of Contents** – Include page numbers.
3. **Resumes** - Update each team member’s resume. Include your client work for this semester.
4. **Reflection Essay** – As a group, write a 1-page or 2-page essay that answers these questions: How did this experience prepare you for the real world? What was the most valuable part of your service-learning experience? What obstacles did you overcome and how? What were your biggest “wins” for the client?
5. **Signed Time Sheet & Client Survey** – *Your portfolio will NOT be graded without time sheets for each team member signed by the client, certifying that each team member provided at least 30 hours of work. The client must also complete one short survey.* The relevant forms are posted to Sakai.
6. **PR Plan** – This plan must follow the format we learn in class.
7. **News Release** – This must be an *original* hard news or feature release written *by the team* for the client, NOT one already turned in as one of your individual class drills or assignments.
8. **PSA** – This should be at least 30 seconds on a topic you and your client choose.
9. **Client’s Choice (4 points)** -- Working with the client, prepare pieces of the client's choice. These pieces must total at least *four points*. Suggestions for pieces and point values follow. Other ideas are welcome, but must be cleared with me in advance. Label each of these pieces so I know what they are (flyer, pitch letter, etc.) – and include the point value for each.

1 point

tweet series
fact sheet
letter
media alert
direct mail piece
flyer
media list update

2 points

updated Website
feature release
company or donor list
newsletter template
blog posts (3 or more)
media list from scratch
PowerPoint with script

3 points

brochure (design and text)
written & designed newsletter

4 points

media relations guide
website from scratch
special-event plan

Portfolio Checklist & Evaluation Form

Instructions: Complete only the sections marked in red. Type the answers. Turn in with your team portfolio.

Client Organization	X
Team Members	X X X X

Content (90%)

Item	Grade (out of 100%)
PR Plan (This is the plan your team submitted 10.07.13 as Team Client Portfolio Piece #1 . Submit a cleaned-up, latest version, no professor markings. Attach markup to outside of binder.)	Enter grade you got
News Release (This is the release your team submitted 10.30.13 as Team Client Portfolio Piece #2 . Submit a cleaned-up, latest version, no professor markings. Attach markup to outside of binder.)	Enter grade you got
PSA	
Client's Choice – List each item and expected points for each. Item Name (X point/s) Item Name (X point/s) Item Name (X point/s) Item Name (X point/s)	
Total	
Divided by 4	
X .90	

Appearance (10%)

Good elements -- binding, color, graphics, page numbers, tabs, general attractiveness Bad elements – staples, paper clips, Post-It notes, handwriting +0 sloppy, unprofessional, unattractive +3 some of the above good elements are present +5 most, but not all, of the above good elements are present +10 all of the above good elements are present, professional and attractive	
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Deductions for Missing Elements

<p>The following elements are mandatory. If missing, the penalties below apply.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cover Sheet Table of Contents Resumes Team reflection essay</p> <p>-3 if one element is missing -5 if two elements are missing -10 if three or more elements are missing</p>	<p>YES / NO YES / NO YES / NO YES / NO</p>
<p>Time Sheets & Client Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any student who fails to turn in an individual time sheet for at least 30 hours of service, signed by the client, will receive a zero for the portfolio. Have all team members submitted <i>individual time sheets</i> signed by the client, certifying that each student served at least 30 hours? • Has the team as a whole submitted <i>one survey</i> completed by the client and signed by the client? 	<p>YES / NO YES / NO</p>

Final Portfolio Grade:

Notes from Professor Campi:

Additional Course Information

Prerequisites

To take this course as an undergraduate, you must have successfully completed:

- JOMC 153: News Writing
- J137: Principles of Advertising and Public Relations

Readings

This syllabus, class readings, lectures, writing drills and instructions for graded assignments will be posted to Sakai. Required textbooks for this course are:

- Barbara Diggs-Brown, *The PR Style Guide: Formats for Public Relations Practice*, 3rd edition
- *The Associated Press Stylebook*

You should always carry your Stylebook with you. Dictionaries are available in the classroom. All assigned readings should be completed before class to generate discussion and ensure that you're prepared to write. Also, you are expected to keep up with current events by reading and watching national and local news. To be an effective PR professional, you must know what's going on in the world, and what issues your clients face. You would never walk into a client's office without knowing what's in the news. The same rule applies here.

Office Hours

I am available for office hours **by appointment only**.

If you have a question about an assignment, I strongly prefer talking with students in person rather than trying to keep up with multiple emails. If you must email me about an assignment, be sure to email me **AT LEAST 48 hours** before deadlines to ensure that your questions are answered. If queries are received after this time, there is no guarantee that I will be available. Please plan in advance so that you can avoid last-minute stress.

Assignment-Grade Disputes:

There could be times in which I overlook something or make a math error in calculating scores, in which case I will correct the grade immediately when brought to my attention. In all other cases, for an assignment to be re-graded, you must submit a typewritten document no longer than one page explaining why you believe this assignment should be re-graded. This petition must be filed within **three days** of receiving the original grade. If your request is deemed reasonable, the entire assignment will be re-graded and returned within a week of your petition. Re-grades also will be subject to greater scrutiny.

I follow the University's Grading Standards:

"A" students do not miss classes during the semester. They read and critically engage in all the assigned textbook chapters and any optional readings before the material is covered in class. Written assignments and exams are not only complete but also cover more than just the minimum requirements. The assignments exhibit proper style and format, are well organized, integrate strategic planning and targeting, and are written precisely and concisely. All materials are turned in on time or early. These students keep up with current events.

"B" students miss one or two classes during the semester. They usually read the assigned textbook chapters and some of the optional readings before the material is covered in class. Written assignments and exams usually exhibit proper style and formatting, integrate strategic planning and targeting, are well organized, and are written precisely and concisely. All materials are turned in on time. These students tend to keep up with current events.

"C" students miss one or two classes during the semester. They read the assigned textbook chapters and some of the optional readings just before the material is covered on the exam. Written assignments and exams usually exhibit proper style and formatting, but they do not always integrate strategic planning and targeting and are not always well organized or written precisely and concisely. All materials are turned in on time. These students sometimes keep up with current events.

"D" students miss three or more classes during the semester and skim assigned readings. Written assignments and exams usually exhibit proper style and formatting, but they often lack integrated strategic planning and targeting and are often not well organized or written precisely and concisely. Materials are not always turned in on time. They don't keep up with current events.

"F" students fail to come to class on a regular basis. They miss exams and written assignments.

Please Note: Students who earn less than a C-minus in the course will have to retake the class.

Honor and Campus Code: It is the responsibility of each student to abide by the UNC Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity; and the Campus Code, which prohibits students from significantly impairing the welfare or educational opportunities of others in the University community. If you haven't read the code in a while, please do.

Detailed Criteria for Grading Writing Assignments

There are two components to each of your grades: Writing Strategy addresses appropriateness and accuracy of the content and approach. Style/Mechanics addresses spelling, grammar, punctuation, AP style and other formatting issues.

I. Writing Strategy

- +5 for an exceptionally effective lead and supporting material
- +5 to +10 for exceptionally effective organization and treatment of material
- +2 for effective transition or introduction of material
- +2 to +10 for excellence in quality of information gathered and used
- +2 to +10 for excellence in determining targeting strategy
- 2 to -5 for ineffective or missing treatment of material, including, but not limited to: wordiness; use of jargon or clichés; inclusion of unnecessary or obvious information; redundancy; inappropriate choice or use of quoted material; incorrect word choice, including sexist language
- 5 to -10 for an ineffective lead that needs work or for lack of supporting material for lead
- 15 to -20 for missing the lead entirely or burying it
- +/-5 to 10 for resource selection: quality and number of sources used; appropriateness of individual sources, including the level of expertise or authority involved
- +/-5 to 20 for thoroughness of material: existence of loose ends, holes, or unanswered questions; development of significant angles; inclusion of needed detail
- +/-5 to 15 for backgrounding; research necessary to make the work complete or to provide needed explanations
- +/-20 for handling of legal matters, such as libel, violation of legal right of privacy and copyright violations
- +/-15 for addressing material to appropriate publics
- +/-15 for making the message or statement clear (i.e., a news peg; inclusion of key message)

II. Style/Mechanics

- 25 for misspelling a proper name***
- 5 for each error or inconsistency in style
- 2 for excessively long or complicated sentences or paragraphs
- 5 for each spelling error (yes, typos are spelling errors)
- 5 for each punctuation error
- 5 for each grammatical error
- 10 for each minor factual error
- 10 for failure to include contact information on pieces
- 10 for failure to include phone number, address, etc., of your organization or your client's organization

Note: Many of these plus and minus points may be applied to the same story for recurring errors or for continual superior performance.

Class Schedule
JOMC 232.001 - Public Relations Writing – Fall 2013

Unit #1: Planning & Strategy

Date and Topic	Readings	Deadlines and Notes
08.21.13 (Wed) Session #1 - Welcome & Syllabus	<i>See Sakai for the syllabus.</i>	
08.26.13 (Mon) Session #2 - Public Relations 101	<i>See Sakai for readings.</i>	
08.28.13 (Wed) Session #3 - Working with Clients	<i>See Sakai for readings.</i>	
09.02.13 (Mon) NO CLASS - Holiday		This is a holiday. There is no class.
09.04.13 (Wed) Session #4 - Writing a PR Plan	Communication Audits Chapter 4 <i>See Sakai for other readings, especially the PR Plan template.</i>	
09.09.13 (Mon) Group & Client Meetings NO FORMAL CLASS		This week is reserved for your teams to meet amongst yourselves and with clients. Use this time wisely. Schedule your client meetings right away!
09.11.13 (Wed) Group & Client Meetings NO FORMAL CLASS		This week is reserved for your teams to meet amongst yourselves and with clients. Use this time wisely. Schedule your client meetings right away!
09.16.13 (Mon) Session #5 - Research: What's the Buzz?	<i>See Sakai for readings.</i>	

Unit #2: Writing

Date and Topic	Readings	Deadlines and Notes
09.18.13 (Wed) Session #6 - Media Alerts	Media Kits, Chapter 6 Advisories, 207-208, 215-216 See Sakai for other readings.	*** Individual Graded Assignment #1” Buzz – due at 11 a.m., at the start of class.
09.23.13 (Mon) Session #7 - Press Releases (1 of 3)	News Releases, Chapter 11 <i>See Sakai for other readings.</i>	
09.25.13 (Wed) Session #8 - Press Releases (2 of 3)	<i>See Sakai for readings.</i>	
09.30.13 (Mon) Session #9 - Press Releases (3 of 3)	<i>See Sakai for readings.</i>	
10.02.13 (Wed) Session #10 - Feature Releases	<i>See Sakai for readings.</i>	*** Individual Graded Assignment #2: “Press Release” -- due at 11 a.m., at the start of class.
10.07.13 (Mon) Session #11 - Op-Eds	Opinion-Editorials, Chapter 12 <i>See Sakai for other readings.</i>	*** Team Client Portfolio Piece #1: PR Plan -- due at 11 a.m., at the start of class.
10.09.13 (Wed) Session #12 - Public Service Announcements	PSAs, Chapter 13 <i>See Sakai for other readings.</i>	*** Individual Graded Assignment #3: “Op-Ed” -- due at 11 a.m., at the start of class.
10.14.13 (Mon) Session #13 - Midterm Exam		
10.16.13 (Wed) NO CLASS		No class. Get a head start on your break!
10.21.13 (Mon) Session #14 - Speeches	Speeches, Chapter 14 <i>See Sakai for other readings.</i>	
10.23.13 (Wed) Session #15 - Speeches	<i>See Sakai for other readings.</i>	

Unit #3: Media Relations & Crisis Management

Date and Topic	Readings	Deadlines and Notes
10.28.13 (Mon) Session #16 - Media Relations: Pitching	Media Lists, Chapter 7 Media Tours, Chapter 8 <i>See Sakai for other readings.</i>	
10.30.13 (Wed) Session #17 - Prepping Clients for Media Interviews	<i>See Sakai for readings.</i>	*** Team Client Portfolio Piece #2: Press Release -- due at 11 a.m., at the start of class.
11.04.13 (Mon) Session #18 – Crisis Communications		
11.06.13 (Wed) Session #19 - Crisis Simulator		Step into the “Crisis Simulator,” where you’ll manage crises ripped from the headlines.
11.11.13 (Mon) Group & Client Meetings NO FORMAL CLASS		Use this time wisely to meet with your team and finalize your presentation and portfolio.

Unit #4: Marketing Yourself

Date and Topic	Readings	Deadlines and Notes
11.13.13 (Wed) Session #20 - Marketing Yourself: The Elevator Pitch	<i>See Sakai for readings.</i>	
11.18.13 (Mon) Session #21 - Marketing Yourself: The Cover Letter	<i>See Sakai for readings.</i>	
11.20.13 (Wed) Session #22 - Team Presentations		
11.25.13 (Mon) Session #23 - Team Presentations		
11.27.13 (Wed) NO CLASS – Holiday		This is a holiday. There is no class.
12.02.13 (Mon) Session #24 - Make-up Day		We will use this day to make up any days missed during the semester due to unforeseen circumstances.
12.04.13 (Wed) Session #25 - PR Pro Bowl		<p>*** Team Client Portfolios due at 11 a.m.</p> <p>After you turn in portfolios, we'll have some PR fun. Face off with classmates to see who win bragging rights as this year's "PR Pro Bowl" champions.</p>
12.06.13 (Friday) Session #26 - Final Exam Noon in 141 Carroll Hall		Please note that your final exam is Friday at noon in our regular room.

***The class schedule is subject to change.**