

**Introduction to Political Communication**  
**JOMC 232 – Syllabus**  
**Summer Session II - 2014**  
**9:45 – 11:15**  
**Carroll Hall 268**  
**Office Hours: Tue/Thurs after class (11:30-1:30)**

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:**

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Phone: 303-956-8030

I will usually be in my office in the afternoons every day until about 3, so feel free to stop by if my door is open! We can always set up an appointment at a time convenient for you as well.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is an applied writing skills laboratory and a service-learning class. We will cover major communication tools of the public relations trade for multiple communication platforms, including news releases, features, speeches, pitch letters, fact sheets, public service announcements, blogs, social media and more. *The skills of writing are learned by doing; you will have ample opportunities to learn by writing every day.*

**Prerequisites:** To take this course as an undergraduate, you must have successfully completed **JOMC 153: News writing** and **J137: Principles of Advertising and Public Relations**. No exceptions.

**Course Objectives:** By the end of the course, students should be able to

- **quickly produce** any of the professional written materials required in the public relations profession;
- **integrate strategy** into communication pieces to target appropriate/diverse audiences and media and to effectively advocate a cause;
- because this course simulates the working conditions of most public relations firms, you will learn to **professionally present** material,
- finally, you will **develop an online portfolio**.

**Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications** has developed a series of competencies students should demonstrate by the time of graduation:

<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>. No single course could possibly give you a solid grasp of all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on:

- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which you work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate your 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 you work.

## REQUIRED TEXTS AND OTHER INFORMATION:

**Required Text:** Barbara Diggs-Brown, *The PR Style Guide: Formats for Public Relations Practice*; and *The Associated Press Stylebook*. I assign supplemental materials as well – see the syllabus and Sakai for details. All assigned readings should be completed before the appropriate class sessions for which they are assigned to generate discussion and ensure you're prepared to write. If necessary, I will conduct pop quizzes on text material.

**Computer Supplies:** All work should be saved to a thumb drive, laptop or your email and not to the hard drive (it gets dumped regularly). Murphy's law is alive and well in computer labs, and snafus do occur. Save early and often – I can't resurrect lost documents!

**Reference Materials:** Use of reference materials – dictionary, thesaurus, those kind of fun things – to double check accuracy is encouraged (in fact, I'm begging you!). These materials are available in the classroom and in the School's library.

**Sakai:** All PowerPoints and other handouts are/will be posted up on Sakai for your convenience – see the Resources link. Please consult these materials to ensure you produce quality communication tools in this class. This syllabus is also on/Sakai, and assignments will be posted in the Assignments folder (how original!).

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:

All writing assignments must be typed, double-spaced and turned in on time. For outside assignments, late papers (anything after 9:45 a.m.) will receive a reduced grade unless you and I agree before the assignment is due that it can be late. Otherwise the assignment will receive an F. No assignment will be accepted if it is turned in more than 24 hours after its deadline.

**News Content:** Keep up with current events! It's important to know what's going on in the world, and what issues your clients (today and in the future) face or will face. Makes you an effective practitioner!

**Outside Assignments and APPLES clients:** As part of the APPLES Service-Learning Program, you will work with a client organization to produce communication pieces for them – this summer session you will be involved with Carolina Performing Arts. You will be expected to do periodic check-ins on the APPLES experiences and meet with the instructor to discuss progress. Failure to do the check-ins will affect your grade. At the end of the class, you will present your materials in a portfolio.

The APPLES experience is valuable in that it provides professional pieces for your portfolio and gives you experience in working in the professional realm. Although this is summer and your client is "internal," do not forget your professionalism!

### Overview of grade breakdown and due dates:

**Exams:** Two exams, a midterm and a final, will be given. The midterm exam will be a 90-minute in-class writing exercise. The final (take-home) exam will be a longer writing exercise that covers the full session. Failure to show up for the midterm exam or to make prior arrangements to take it later will result in a grade of F. Failure to complete the final will result in an F.

**Course Grade Calculation:** I will calculate your final grade as follows:

In-class assignments	30%	Grading scale:	A = 90-100
Client assignments	30%		B = 80-89
Midterm exam	15%		C = 70-79 (+/-, too)
Final exam	15%		D = 60-69
Participation (class/client)	10%		F = below 60

***I follow the University's Grading Standards:***

"A" students do not miss classes during the semester. They read and critically engage all the assigned textbook chapters and any optional readings on reserve before the material is covered in class. Written assignments and exams are not only complete but 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, and all rewrite opportunities are used. These students keep up with current events.

"B" students miss one or two classes during the semester, but these are excused absences. They usually read the assigned textbook chapters and some of the optional readings on reserve in the library 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, and all rewrite opportunities are used. These students tend to keep up with current events.

"C" students miss one or two classes during the semester, usually excused. They read the assigned textbook chapters and some of the optional readings on reserve in the library 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, and most rewrite opportunities are used. 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; only some rewrite opportunities are used. 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 and fail to use rewrite opportunities.

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

**Honor Code:** It is expected that each student in this class will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class.

If you haven't read the code in a while, please revisit it!

<http://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/Fall2012print.pdf>.

**Nondiscrimination Policy:** The University's policy on Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination is available at <http://policy.sites.unc.edu/files/2013/04/nondiscrim.pdf>. In summary, UNC does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, or disabilities.

**Harassment:** UNC does not tolerate harassment based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, disability, or for any other reason. It is also a violation of the Honor Code and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Title IX of the Educational Amendments. If you need assistance with a harassment issue or problem, bring it to my attention or The Office of the Dean of Students, [dos@unc.edu](mailto:dos@unc.edu) or 919.966.4042.

**Special Accommodations:** If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu> or call 919.962.8300. If you need assistance or services from the Academic Success Program for Students with LD/ADHD please contact them at 919-962-7227 or <http://www.unc.edu/asp/>

### **ATTENDANCE:**

**Attendance:** Regular, on-time class attendance your obligation, and you are responsible for all work, including tests and written work, for all class meetings. No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any given number of class meetings. **Note:** In practical terms, almost one-third of your grade is based on in-class assignments, making regular class attendance vital. An unexcused absence will result in a 0 for that day's assignment.

**Absences:** You may make up work you missed if an absence is pre-approved. It will be easier to obtain permission than forgiveness.

**Pep Talk:** This class will at intervals be time consuming and difficult. Your first few assignments possibly will receive low grades, which can be discouraging. Realize that if you put forth the effort, your work should improve throughout the semester, and this improvement will be reflected in your grades. ***Please, come talk to me at any time if you have questions or concerns about the course. My objective for the course is to make it a positive learning experience, admittedly through your hard work. I am a resource available for your help, not an obstacle in your path.***

## Guidelines for Grading of Assignments

See the next sheet, which is a modified version of the JOMC 153, “News writing,” criteria, for how in-class and outside assignments will be graded. The following guidelines also apply.

### In-class assignments:

- Ample time will be given in class to work on in-class assignments. You may not always complete the piece, however. Don't worry. If you have a good first three paragraphs, you have what is necessary to write the piece. Speed comes with practice. I only grade what you turn in.
- Don't wait until the last moment to print your copy. Give yourself time to proofread. 'Tis better to have quality work that's not yet complete than a completed assignment riddled with errors! I will alert you when there are about 10 minutes remaining in class. Save, save, save!
- For in-class assignments only, edit on your hard copy. Use the standard proofreading marks given in *The Associated Press Stylebook*. I must be able to read your changes!

### Out-of-class assignments (mostly for client):

- Assignments are due at the beginning of class time. Late assignments (and, yes, that includes one minute late!) are docked 30 points. Assignments turned in more than 24 hours late automatically will be assigned a grade of 0.
- Assignments must be typewritten; assignments not typewritten will be docked 30 points. In the “real world,” computer glitches and printing problems happen but are not excused – the same is true in this classroom. Leave yourself plenty of time to cope with these problems and still make your deadline.
- Out-of-class 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, correction fluid, typeovers, etc., will be penalized 10 points each.

### Rewrites:

- You may rewrite any assignment (in class or out of class) that receives a grade of 60 or lower. The rewrite is due no later than two days after you receive the assignment back, no later than the beginning of that class period. It is your responsibility to meet this deadline. The rewrite grade and the original grade will be averaged to determine your final grade for that assignment.
- You must FIRMLY attach the original work with your rewrite. If no original is attached, the rewrite will not be graded.
- Rewrites also will be subject to greater scrutiny. Mistakes I missed the first time around I may catch on the second read. Proofread your rewrites carefully!

## **Grading Criteria for All Assignments** (Look familiar??)

There are two components to each of your grades: Strategy addresses appropriateness and accuracy of the content and approach; and technique addresses spelling, grammar, punctuation, AP style and other formatting issues. I average the two scores for each assignment.

### **I. Writing**

- +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
- 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

### **II. Mechanics**

- 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
- 50 for misspelling a proper name**; -10 for each subsequent misspelling of a proper name

### **III. Research/Gathering Information**

- +/-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)

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

## Service Learning and Client Portfolio

This summer session's service-learning experience will involve working with the Park Library. There are a number of relevant activities for this session – **particularly** if you take the initiative and use your growing knowledge of strategic communication to help advance the visibility of Library.

You may work individually or with other classmates on any aspects of client activities. It's your call, but it is imperative that you begin now to determine how you want to contribute. The session is only 5 weeks; time flies!

**Remember:** Through service learning, you will develop client contact skills, which are essential for professional development. Be sure to write up this experience on your resume and include any communication items you produced/helped create in your portfolio. Much class time will be spent discussing these assignments, and more handouts will follow.

**The Portfolio** you turn in at the end of the semester should include:

1. An updated **resume** (including your service-learning work for this summer session)
2. A 1-2 page **reflection essay** – How did this experience contribute to your education and preparation for the real world? What was the most-valuable part of your service-learning experience? Most challenging? Least valuable? What recommendations would you make to the school regarding its PR efforts?
3. **Final time sheet** – see: <http://ccps.unc.edu/files/2012/10/SLC-Course-Timelog-Form.pdf>
4. A **Communication Audit** (See Assignment link on Sakai for details) should provide an up-to-date overview of the Par Library's communications (and the j-school's communication about the Library), including background, SWOT/situational analysis, and recommendations. Your report should be developed through discussions with Library Director Stephanie Brown, students and faculty, and through an assessment of its current communication materials/vehicles. The report will run about 5 pages. You may work independently or with a classmate.
5. **Fact Sheet and Press Release** for one artist/concert for the 2014/2015 season (you may subdivide in whatever way you see as most useful). More details will be provided in class and on Sakai.
6. **Two Blog Posts** for the Carolina Performing Arts blog. One will be related to the artist/concert you choose for the fact sheet and press release. Another will be on a more general topic. More details will be provided in class and on Sakai.
7. **Optional piece** – you must also do at least one optional piece for your portfolio. There are a lot of potential options for you to choose from, and several ideas follow. If you come up with another idea, please let me know! This is not a complete list!

- Collection of at least 4 testimonials
- Set of at least 2 video testimonials
- Fact sheet and press release for an additional artist/concert

- Additional web pages related to your artist/concert
- Flyer on an upcoming concert
- Targeted tweet series (at least 6)

**Other ideas welcome!!**

## Class Schedule

(Note: This is a guide for the semester, subject to change. You will be notified of any modifications.)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings and Assignments for the Day</u>
June 19	Welcome! Introductory writing exercise	Course syllabus (Sakai – Syllabus link); re-introduce yourself to your <i>AP Stylebook</i> – you’ll love it!
June 20	Research and Communication Audits	Ch. 4, Hallmark’s Communication Audit, OCPYC audit; <b>***Technique Exercise 1 due at the beginning of class***</b>
June 23	Persuasion platform	<i>Program Writing (Sakai)</i> ; Gatorade Beat the Heat campaign; Highway Safety Research Center platform (Sakai); Also – please listen to speech by Dr. Dan Ariely (page down a bit for video) <a href="http://gradschool.unc.edu/news/2013/arielyhooding.html">http://gradschool.unc.edu/news/2013/arielyhooding.html</a>
June 24	Client visit – Mark Nelson, Director of Marketing and Communication, Carolina Performing Arts	<i>Punctuation R Us; Why grammar stinks (Sakai)</i> ; <i>Boolean combinations and search limitations</i> (handout)
June 25	Fact sheets/FAQs	AP Style Primer, Facts R Us; <i>At First Glance – Piedmont Health Services</i> ; fact bio – Annie Godwin (Sakai); <i>How to write a great FAQ page</i> (access online at <a href="http://www.freelancecopywritersblog.com/2130/who-to-write-a-great-faq-page/">http://www.freelancecopywritersblog.com/2130/who-to-write-a-great-faq-page/</a> ) <b>***Persuasion Platform due at the beginning of class***</b>
June 26	News basics, advisories	pp.207-208; Media advisory format; Advisory examples <b>***OPTIONAL - Technique Exercise #2 due at the beginning of class***</b>
June 27	News releases	Ch. 11; news release format; news release examples; <i>Press release advice (Sakai)</i>
June 30	Boilerplates and media lists	Ch. 7; Boilerplates, p. 205; safe harbor statements, Boilerplate examples; AT&T Anti-TWD campaign; <i>New normal for news; Is the press release dead? (Sakai)</i> <b>***Extra Credit – Fog Index Assignment***</b>
July 1	Incorporating visuals	Ch. 6; <i>Digital PR tips for earned media: Use multimedia to tell the story; 3 creative ways brands are using Pinterest</i> ( <a href="http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/creatively-using-pinterest/">http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/creatively-using-pinterest/</a> ) Photo cutline tips; Photo caption format; photo release form (Sakai) <b>***Report in on client activities due (e-mail is fine) – what are you working on? What will you work on?***</b>
July 2	Media relations	Ch. 8; <i>10 digital PR tips for earned media; A reporter’s inbox; Find the silver lining in negative coverage; What does off the record really mean? (Sakai)</i>

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings and Assignments for the Day</u>
July 3	Portfolios, writing job cover letters	Cover letter specifics; Items for Portfolios; Worst cover letter Ever; <i>15 top tips for a successful PR career (Sakai)</i> ; UNC Career Services Web page- letters, found online at <a href="http://careers.unc.edu/students/resumes-and-letters/cover-letters.html">http://careers.unc.edu/students/resumes-and-letters/cover-letters.html</a>

**July 4 – NO CLASS! Happy Holiday-ing!**

<b>July 7</b>	<b>Midterm exam (ewww!!)</b>	<b>Open book, open notes</b>
July 8	Broadcast and streaming media	Ch. 2; Writing for the Ear (Sakai); <i>Broadcasting style tips</i> at <a href="http://www.jprof.com/2013/05/15/broadcasting-style-tips-by-laurie-lattimore/">http://www.jprof.com/2013/05/15/broadcasting-style-tips-by-laurie-lattimore/</a>
July 9	More broadcast	Ch. 15; <i>Video news release guide</i> -Consumer Product Safety Commission - <a href="http://www.cpsc.gov/businfo/vnrprod.html">http://www.cpsc.gov/businfo/vnrprod.html</a>
July 10	PSAs	Ch. 13; PSA examples (Sakai)
July 11	More PSAs	<i>The striking nonprofit PSA Super Bowl ad you didn't see (Sakai)</i>

**\*\*\*Report in on client activities (e-mail is fine) – what are you working on?\*\*\***

July 14	Letters to the editor	Ch. 12; letter to the editor examples; <i>Rivalry for a good cause; Diversity deficit in broadcasting continues</i> ; letter response (Sakai)
July 15	Features	Feature facts, <i>Receiving the gift of life; Lack of computer access a major hurdle for the poor (Sakai)</i>
July 16	Feature pitches	Pitch tips (Sakai)
July 17	Direct mail letters	Ch. 5; BP Letter; direct mail letter-targeting PRSSA (Sakai)
July 18	Direct mail letters, part 2	CWS e-letter; <i>You roared, Time Warner caved (Sakai)</i>
July 21	Blogs, tweets, etc.	Ch. 9; <i>Top 5 blogging mistakes (Sakai)</i> ; and <i>Best practices for blogging (Sakai)</i> <b>Find a PR-related blog that you'd like to critique</b>
July 22	Speeches	Ch. 14; TV Turnoff Week Speech; <i>Worst.Speech. Ever-Essential don'ts for speechwriters (Sakai)</i>

**and...(drumroll)... portfolios!**

**You may provide me with a link to your online portfolio or post your materials in the Sakai dropbox.**

**PLEASE COMPLETE COURSE EVALUATION ONLINE**

July 24 **Take-home exam** due by **11:00 am** in my office. Early papers cheerfully accepted.©