

Journalism 436

Section 3

Public Relations Writing

Tuesday-Thursday

2 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Room 3004

Instructor: Jim Haney Office: 3020E 777-0206 haneyj@sc.edu

Required texts: Media Writer's Handbook. George T. Arnold. Fifth Edition. McGraw Hill.

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law.

Learning outcomes

The community of scholars at the University of South Carolina is dedicated to personal and academic excellence. Every graduate of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications will embrace the principles of the Carolina Creed, and will

1. demonstrate the ability to research, gather, write clearly and correctly and present relevant news and/or persuasive information at a professional level.
2. think critically, creatively and independently, evaluate their work and the work of others for accuracy, fairness, clarity, style and correctness.
3. understand the history of journalism and mass communications, the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications and the role of journalism and mass communications in society.
4. understand the ethical concepts, legal implications, considerations and practices that guide the professions.
5. demonstrate the ability to apply tools, concepts and technologies appropriate for the presentation of images and information in the professions.
6. conduct research and evaluate information, apply basic numerical and statistical concepts and methods appropriate for the communications professions.

Journalism 436 objectives

In this course, you will be required to demonstrate writing skills directly applicable to the practice of public relations.

More specifically, you will be required to demonstrate the characteristics of effective information writing, such as inverted pyramid organization, brevity, accuracy and precise word choice. You will be required to demonstrate the ability to use language persuasively and to use language to enhance audience perception of a company or organization.

Goals

You will develop and demonstrate proficiency in writing the following documents a company or an organization typically uses to influence its internal and external audiences:

- news releases
- news features
- opinion columns
- biographical sketches
- letters

You will demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the fundamental rules governing grammar and word usage, and you will demonstrate a working knowledge of Associated Press style.

The Carolina Creed

- I will practice personal and academic integrity
- I will respect the dignity of all persons
- I will respect the rights and property of others
- I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas and opinions
- I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their need for conditions that support their work and development.

Student conferences

Office hours are posted on the school Web site and on my office door. I can be reached by phone, but I prefer e-mail. Conferences can be scheduled as needed.

Attendance

Attendance is strongly encouraged. If you miss an assigned writing exercise without explanation, you will receive a zero for that work.

Missing more than two writing assignments without a valid excuse is likely to lower your final grade by a letter, and missing more than three almost certainly will result in an F. **You may make up missed work if you complete the work before the next class begins.**

Grades

You will receive grades on writing exercises, on AP style exercises and on quizzes on grammar and word usage. The lowest writing grade will be dropped. Grades on quizzes will be approximately 15 percent of your final grade.

Your grade on the AP Style exercises will count as one writing grade.

There is no final exam, but, in accordance with university requirements, your final writing assignment – a media kit – will be due at the beginning of the exam period. The media kit will be approximately 20 percent of your final grade. I reserve the right to give greater weight to grades earned on writing exercises during the last third of the semester.

The grading scale follows. A - 100-94, B+ - 93, B - 92-88, C+ - 87, C - 86-78, D+ - 77, D - 76-70, F - below 70.

Writing assignments that merit an A are suitable for publication at an advanced student level without editing or with minor editing.

B work on writing assignments contains a few easily correctable flaws. Examples include AP Style errors, punctuation errors, awkward phrasing, minor organization faults, typographical errors, minor errors of fact and minor violations of established principles of clear writing.

C work contains numerous flaws such as those previously listed, a major error such as a glaring grammatical error or a misspelled proper name, or major violations of established principles of clear writing.

D and F work contains major errors and multiple flaws.

Academic Responsibility and Honesty

You are expected to follow the University of South Carolina Student Affairs Policy on Academic Responsibility in completing assignments. The Rule of Academic Responsibility can be found in the Student Handbook & Policy Guide. The University of South Carolina's academic honesty policy allows no tolerance for cheating on tests and quizzes, falsification of information or citations, facilitating or assisting someone else's academic dishonesty, or plagiarism.

Spring 2012 Schedule

Tuesday, Jan. 10 - Getting acquainted. Course objectives.

Thursday, Jan. 12 – News release review - organization, precision, AP Style.

Tuesday, Jan. 17 – News release review continued.

Thursday, Jan. 19 - News from a public relations perspective. Quiz chapter 1.

Tuesday, Jan. 24 – News releases. Leveraging information.

Thursday, Jan. 26 – News releases. Quiz chapters 2, 3.

Tuesday, Jan. 31 – News release writing. Information gathering.

Thursday, Feb. 2 - News release writing. Quiz chapters 4, 5, 6.

Tuesday, Feb. 7 – News feature writing. Writing with fact, not fluff.

Thursday, Feb. 9 – News feature writing. Quiz Chapter 7.

Tuesday, Feb. 14 – News feature writing.

Thursday, Feb. 16 – News feature writing. Quiz chapters 8, 9,10.

Tuesday, Feb. 21 – News feature writing.

Thursday, Feb. 23 – Writing to persuade. The syllogism. Quiz chapters 11, 12.

Tuesday, Feb. 28 - Writing to persuade. Rhetoric and logic.

Thursday, March 1 - Writing to persuade. Blogs. Quiz chapter 19.

March 5-9 - Spring Break.

Tuesday, March 13 – Writing to persuade. Opinion columns.

Thursday, March 15 – Writing to persuade. Op/eds. Quiz chapter 23.

Tuesday, March 20 – The pitch letter.

Thursday, March 22 – Solicitation letters. Quiz Part 4, Ref. 1, letter A.

Tuesday, March 27 – Ads and PSAs. Quiz Part 4, Ref. 1, letters B, C.

Thursday, March 29 – Writing to the audience. Quiz Part 4, Ref. 1, letters D – H.

Tuesday, April 3 - Interview assignment. Quiz Part 4, Ref. 1, letters I – Q.

Thursday, April 5 – News release refresher. Quiz Part 4, Ref. 1, letters R – Z.

Tuesday, April 10 – News releases. Quiz Part 4, Ref. 4, pages 319-324 quiz.

Thursday, April 12 – Interview assignment.

Tuesday, April 17 – Social media news releases.

Thursday, April 19 – Fact sheets, bios, media advisories. Media kit assignment.

9 a.m., Wednesday, May 2 – Exam period. Media kit due.