

Fundamentals of PR Writing

Department of Strategic Communication

STRC 3543-001, Spring 2016

T/TH: 2 pm – 3:20 pm

Tuttleman Hall, Room 8

Mandatory prerequisites: STRC 2496, STRC 2551 and STRC 2552

Professor: Gregg Feistman

Office: 228 Weiss Hall
(215) 204-0532

Office E-mail: greggf@temple.edu

Home E-Mail: gcfpr@verizon.net

Office Hours: T/TH: 9:30-11 am & TH: 1-2 pm (Or by appointment)

Text: **Dennis L. Wilcox & Bryan H. Reber, Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques, Eighth Edition**, Pearson Publishing. Or e-book (Revel)
Bringing text to each class is required.
Associated Press Stylebook (you should have received an email to activate your free access to the online account. If you didn't receive one yet, let me know).
Additional readings as assigned.
Strongly Recommended: newspapers, a dictionary, thesaurus and grammar aide

Objectives:

1. To understand the role of public relations in the larger world.
2. To build an understanding of public relations writing styles as a persuasive influence.
3. To develop public relations writing skills.

Assignments:

Tests will cover lecture and classroom discussion, as well as textbook assignments and outside reading materials. Additionally, several homework projects will be assigned and graded on content, creativity, syntax, grammar, spelling and punctuation. **I do not tolerate typographical errors**, therefore, each spelling mistake is an automatic two-point deduction. Each punctuation error is a one point deduction. Each error in grammar is a three-point deduction. Various assignments will be given throughout the semester based on classroom instruction, such as writing news releases, contemporary issues in news coverage, PSAs, website writing, developing a press kit, etc. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must be typed, double-spaced and submitted on the assigned due date. **No work will be accepted late.** If extenuating circumstances will prevent you from completing an assignment on time, please discuss it with me first. If you are asked to cite Internet sources for assignments, please note that Wikipedia is not an acceptable source. If possible, I will try to arrange a guest speaker from time to time.

Grading: All Homework, Tests, and Participation are 100 points each.

Participation: 15%

Tests/Quizzes: 30%

Homework: 40%

Final Exam: 15%

Grade Levels:

A: 94-100 A-:90-93

B+: 87-89 B: 84-86 B-:80-83

C+: 77-79 C: 74-76 C-: 70-73

D+: 67-69 D: 64-66 D-: 60-63

F: 59 and below.

All of your grades will be posted on Blackboard. It is important you frequently check your grades.

Assignments Schedule: (Subject to revision)

Week 1: First class: Introductions, Types of PR Writing. Reading Assignment: Chapter 1.

Week 2: Getting Organized for Writing (homework). Reading Assignment: Chapter 2

Week 3: Getting Organized for Writing homework due. Persuasive Writing, Communication Theories (homework). Reading Assignment: Chapter 3

Week 4: Persuasive Writing homework due. Finding and Making News (homework). Reading Assignment: Chapter 4.

Week 5: Finding and Making News homework due. Working with Journalists and Bloggers (homework). Reading Assignment: Chapter 5.

Week 6: Working with Journalists and Bloggers homework due. Writing the News Release (homework). Reading Assignment: Chapter 6.

Week 7: Writing for the Mass Media homework due. Preparing Fact Sheets, Advisories, Media Kits & Pitches (homework). Reading Assignment: Review Chapters 1-6. Mid-term. Reading Assignment: Chapter 7

Week 8: Spring Break.

Week 9: Preparing Fact Sheets, Advisories, Media Kits & Pitches homework due. Creating News Features & Op-Eds (homework). Reading Assignment: Chapter 8.

Week 10: Creating News Features & Op-Ed homework due. Publicity Photos & Infographics (homework). Reading Assignment: Chapter 9.

Week 11: Publicity Photos & Infographics homework due. Radio, TV and Online Video (homework). Reading Assignment: Chapter 10.

Week 12: Radio, TV and Online Video homework due. Websites, Blogs and Podcasts (homework). Reading Assignment: Chapter 11

Week 13: Websites, Blogs and Podcasts homework due. Social Media and Mobile Apps (homework).

Week 14: Social Media and Mobile Apps homework due. Reading Assignment: Final Exam Review - Chapters 1-11. Open discussion.

Week 15: Final exam, Thursday, April 28, 1 pm.

Policies:

Most of you are here to learn how to be public relations professionals and to work in the field once you've graduated. I will treat you as a professional and expect the same treatment from you and to each other. The policies below are based on policies you'll find in the real world.

1. Punctuality. Lateness is a disruption, so be on time. Being punctual is a courtesy to me and your fellow students. It's also professional. I will close the door approximately five minutes after the scheduled start time. After I close the door, the class begins. If you're outside the door, you miss the class. Cell phones are disruptive. Please turn them off before entering class – if they ring during class, *I* answer them. Because we're in a computer lab, please no eating or drinking in class. No leaving class early unless you have discussed it with me previously. And *please* use the bathroom before or after class, not during.

2. Attendance. Attendance counts towards your Participation grade. You will be asked to sign in at each class. The only legitimate excuse for missing class is an illness, family emergency or religious holiday. All missed classes require documentation, e.g., a doctor's note. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to see that you get copies of any materials and are up-to-date on assignments and deadlines. Multiple absences from class are not acceptable and will affect your grade.

Tardiness is unprofessional. Being late will negatively impact your participation grade. If you are late, it is your responsibility to enter the classroom in an appropriate manner and time so as to not exacerbate the awkwardness of the situation and detract from the efforts of others.

3. Participation. Your participation in class is extremely important to the learning process and the success of the class. I strongly encourage in-class discussions and exchanges of points of view, as well as paying attention to lectures/discussions. Please raise your hand to contribute something or ask a question, but most of all, communicators must communicate, so participate! Because we're in a computer lab, there's great temptation to e-mail, websurf, etc., during class. Once class begins, *please* turn off your monitor.

4. Inattentiveness. As part of class participation, please pay attention. Believe it or not, from the front of the room I will notice if you're reading a newspaper, filling out your day planner, doing another class' work, finishing a crossword puzzle, websurfing, e-mailing, texting or making out with your neighbor in the back of the room during class time. If I catch you, I will embarrass you in front of your peers, and/or ask you to leave the class. And even if I don't say anything in class, that doesn't mean I won't remember when it comes time to figure out – and lower - your participation grade.

You are NOT permitted to text message or receive calls during class unless you receive prior approval from the instructor.

You are NOT permitted to use a laptop in class unless you received prior approval from the instructor.

5. Deadlines. Public Relations is a deadline-intensive field. Therefore, **no work will be accepted late**. All assignments must be completed and turned in on the required date at the beginning of class. If you email me an assignment in lieu of giving it to me at the beginning of class, *I must receive it* before 2 pm on the due date. At 2:01 pm, it will be considered late and you get a zero. If you know ahead of time you're going to miss a class, turn in your assignment early. Emailing me a link to a Google Doc is not acceptable—download, save and send it.

6. Tests/Quizzes. Tests/quizzes and other in-class activities cannot be made up except in a case of extenuating circumstances (ex. – a hospital stay). If you miss a test/quiz, you lose those points. If you feel that a test/quiz or other assignment has been graded in error, please discuss the matter with me as soon as possible. Tests & quizzes count the same towards your final grade.

7. Format. All homework assignments must be typed, double-spaced, 12 point type (minimum). Please staple all multiple page assignments before handing them in. (A one page assignment means one full page – approx. 250 words - not two short paragraphs.) Handwritten work will not be accepted. If I can't read your assignment due to poor legibility, I will hand it back to you. Computer problems are not acceptable excuses.

8. Extra credit. There is no extra credit. I do not grade on a curve.

9. Incompletes. I do not give incompletes, except for serious extenuating circumstances (ex. – hospital stay).

10. Blackboard. I will post all homework assignments on Blackboard either before or as soon as possible after class. There may also be additional messages or instructions from time to time, so please make sure to check Blackboard on a regular basis. If you wish to discuss a specific assignment or your performance in class, please make an appointment. I also post your grades on Blackboard in a timely manner so you can see how you're doing throughout the semester. Do not wait until the last week of the semester to ask me how you can get a passing grade if you have failed every assignment up to that point!

11. Honesty and professional ethics are vital to your success. Cheating and plagiarism on any examination or assignment will result in automatic failure of the course and recommendation to the University Disciplinary Committee for further disciplinary action. All the pleading, begging and crying in the world will not help you. You cheat or plagiarize, you fail. And note: if you can find it on the Internet, so can I.

12. Students with Disabilities. It is Temple University's policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities under the American Disabilities Act (ADA). At the beginning of each semester, any student with a disability should inform the course instructor if instructional accommodations or academic adjustments will be needed. For more information about the ADA and academic accommodations or adjustments, contact the Office of Disability Resources and Services (<http://www.temple.edu/disability>; 215-204-1280; hellodrs@astro.temple.edu).

13. Academic Rights: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facts of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on student and faculty academic rights and responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02

14. Plagiarism: Temple University believes strongly in academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism and academic cheating are, therefore, prohibited. Essential to intellectual growth is the development of independent thought and a respect for the thoughts of others. The prohibition against plagiarism and cheating is intended to foster this independence and respect.

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, another person's words, and another person's assistance. Normally, all work done for courses -- papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. It is the instructor's responsibility to indicate the appropriate manner of citation. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism.

Academic cheating is, generally, the thwarting or breaking of the general rules of academic work or the specific rules of the individual courses. It includes falsifying data; submitting, without the instructor's approval, work in one course which was done for another; helping others to plagiarize or cheat from one's own or another's work; or actually doing the work of another person. The penalty for academic dishonesty can vary from receiving a reprimand and a failing grade for a particular assignment, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or expulsion from the University. The penalty varies with the nature of the offense, the individual instructor, the department, and the school or college. (Source/further details: Temple Undergraduate Bulletin 2007-2008)

http://www.temple.edu/bulletin/Responsibilities_rights/responsibilities/responsibilities.shtm

I reserve the right to refer any cases of suspected plagiarism or cheating to the University Disciplinary Committee.

14. Civil Behavior in Class: I expect students to behave civilly toward me and guest lecturers, as well as other students. If one-on-one conversations between a disruptive student and me are not fruitful, I will turn the matter over to the University Disciplinary Committee and/or other judicial bodies. In recent years many college and university professors, administrators, and mental health professionals report a growing number of students on campus who become disruptive to the educational mission of the institution. The disruptive student is one who persistently makes inordinate demands for time and attention from faculty and staff, habitually interferes with the learning environment by disruptive verbal or behavioral expressions, verbally threatens or abuses college personnel, willfully damages college property, misuses drugs or alcohol on college premises, or physically threatens or assaults others. The result is the disruption of academic, administrative, social, or recreational activities on campus.

15. School of Media and Communications Grievance/Grade Appeal Policy. STRC 3543 follows the School of Media and Communication grievance policy which can be found on the SMC website.

A grade appeal may only be pursued after the completion of the semester in which the alleged improper, unfair, or arbitrary academic action took place.

16. Course & Teaching Evaluations. Temple University is committed to high quality instruction in graduate, undergraduate and professional programs. Student feedback regarding instruction is an integral part of assuring quality in the University's educational programs. Student evaluations of faculty occur toward the end of semester. This is your opportunity to voice your opinion regarding my effectiveness and the course overall. Also, this process allows you to assist us as we strive to constantly improve upon efforts and make this a better experience for those students who follow you. For more information about student evaluations of courses and teaching, please refer to Policy #02.78.14 which can be found on the University's Policy & Procedures website at <http://policies.temple.edu>.

17. University Writing Center for Students. The University Writing Center provides services to students across the University. These services include tutoring, technology, a computer classroom, a resource library, workshops, and seminars. Many of these services, including tutoring, are accessible online through the Center's Website at <http://www.temple.edu/writingctr/>. All services are free-of-charge to you. Tutoring services are offered on a drop-in basis or by appointment. After reviewing some of your writing efforts, I may recommend some of you take advantage of this center and this service.

The instructor DOES NOT consent to his or her lecture, class discussions, etc., being recorded by students for later distribution through such channels as YouTube, email, etc.

By accepting this syllabus, you agree to abide by these policies as stated.