

J440: Strategic Writing and Media Relations



Dr. Tiffany Gallicano, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 11:50 a.m., Allen 304, Fall 2010

In this class, you will learn the many forms of writing that public relations practitioners must know to perform the communication functions of their jobs, such as news releases, pitch e-mails, media advisories, fact sheets, backgrounders, biographical sketches, public service announcements, and op-eds.

You will also analyze and evaluate online news rooms. You will learn the journalistic style of writing used by media outlets around the world and practice the art of proofreading to produce assignments free of errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling and accuracy.

In addition, you will learn how to pitch stories to the media and how to cultivate strong relationships with the media. Through this course, you will see why writing is considered to be one of the most important skills in the practice of public relations.

Office Hours

Tuesday: 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Thursday: 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

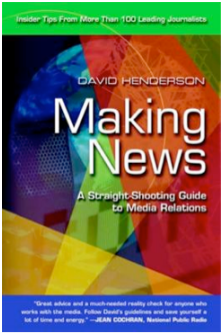
Office: 215C, (541) 346-2035

I am also available by appointment.

Course Objectives

To complete this course successfully, your objectives should be to

- learn how to cultivate strong relationships with the media
- understand the protocol necessary for working with gatekeepers of the media
- produce newsworthy communication in terms of headlines and copy
- create basic forms of public relations writing and update your resume for use in a portfolio
- evaluate online news rooms
- write in the journalistic style of the Associated Press
- grab the attention of print, broadcast and online media with article and program ideas
- publish communication materials free of errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling and accuracy
- approach every assignment with a commitment to writing and rewriting copy repeatedly until it meets professional standards



Required Materials

- Making News, David Henderson
- The 2010 Associated Press Stylebook (or online access)

Optional

- Webster's New World College Dictionary

Writing Sessions

Mastering grammar and punctuation is fundamental to succeeding in this class and in a public relations career. In fact, job interviews often involve writing tests that potential employers use to assess your knowledge of writing rules. There are four writing sessions to prepare you for success:



- Writing session one: comma, semicolon, colon, period
- Writing session two: quotation marks, slash, dash, hyphen
- Writing session three: parallel structure, apostrophe, capitalization, numbers
- Writing session four: AP Style, active voice, brevity, other rules

With each session, we'll review the rules in class, you'll complete three practice exams on your own, and then you'll take an exam that follows the same format as the practice exercises. The writing session rules and practice exams are available on Blackboard. You'll bring a hard copy of the Blackboard practice exams to class on our exam day to show that you have completed them. You will take a pretest on the first day of class to measure how much you already know, and then you will take a final exam that is similar to the pretest.

Revisions

You will revise your work in this class, and I will average your scores. When submitting your revised work, attach the original copy that I edited with a paperclip. You are responsible for making every revision I mark to your work. If you are unsure about a revision or if you disagree with it, you can ask me about it before or after class or via e-mail.

Corrections List

When a corrections list is noted on the course schedule, meet with me and explain the rules that would correct the errors I marked or type a list of rules that explain the revisions. If you choose to write your corrections list rather than meet with me, you can proof subsequent tactics against the list and use it to prepare for writing tests by potential employers. The corrections list ensures that you understand the reason for each revision. It also heightens your awareness of areas to focus on during the course. If I write "see me" on your edits list, you need to meet with me to discuss the rules and you need to resubmit your corrections list within a week.

Grading Rubric

To ensure a consistent, clear grading policy that prepares you for a desired entry-level job, the following grading scale will be used, which is based on content, the number of corrections and the severity of corrections.

A: Excellent

You only need to make up to three advanced corrections. Your work exhibits excellent comprehension and performance. The material is ready for publication and shows outstanding scholarship, mastery of facts, narrative flow, and writing. You must make all of my corrections to receive an A on your revision. If you disagree with a revision, meet with me or send me an e-mail. A revision may only receive an A if the original draft was free of basic errors.

B: Good

You only need to make four to seven advanced corrections. Your work exhibits good comprehension and performance. It shows mastery of the subject and good scholarship but needs minor changes before publication.

C: Minimum Standards

You need to make eight to 11 corrections. The material needs significant revision before publication. The work exhibits adequate comprehension and performance. If the work has a basic correction, it starts at a C.

D: Below Standards

You need to make 12-15 corrections. The work exhibits inadequate comprehension and performance. Work with two basic corrections begins at a D.

F: Unacceptable

You need to make at least 16 corrections. The work demonstrates unsatisfactory comprehension and performance. Work with three or more basic corrections results in a failing grade.

Basic Correction Examples

Spelling error, fragment, missing period, extra period, quotation marks facing the wrong way, factual error, poor content

Advanced Correction Examples

Wordiness, passive voice, AP Style, poor framing, organizational problems, comma placement



Professionalism

Your professionalism score is based on meaningful participation in discussions of the reading, professionalism, and adherence to class etiquette. You could lose one point for each occurrence of unprofessional behavior. Examples of deductions are listed below:

- Not coming to class prepared
- Not focusing entirely on the lesson, including multitasking during class discussions
- Not attending a meeting with me that is scheduled outside of my office hours
- Not completing a practice exam
- Not submitting a corrections list on time
- Arriving to class late or leaving class early

Late Assignments

Public relations is a deadline-oriented business. Assignments are late if they are submitted after I ask for them. An assignment submitted by 12:30 p.m. on the day it is due would receive a letter grade deduction from the final assignment score. An additional letter grade would be deducted from the final score for each subsequent class period until the assignment is submitted. I do not grade work that is sent via e-mail.

Absences

Notify me in advance of missing class. You can send me your work via e-mail to avoid a late penalty and then bring a hard copy to the next class you attend. If you are too sick to complete your assignment on time and send it via e-mail, bring a doctor's note when you return to class to avoid a late penalty.

If you are sick, be courteous to your classmates by not coming to class until you feel better. If you have a fever, wait to come to class until you have been well for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Get notes from a classmate and see me if you have additional questions.

Incomplete

You are eligible for an incomplete if you are passing class, if you have completed most of the work in class, and if you need to miss several classes for a legitimate reason. An "I" for "incomplete" would be your temporary grade. You would be responsible for completing the remaining assignments within one year, or the "I" would be changed to a "F" or "N" on your transcript. You are responsible for contacting me within the year to schedule the remaining assignments.

Disability

If you have a disability, I encourage you to see me during office hours to talk with me about it, regardless of whether you plan to use accommodations. This will help me understand your needs and pay extra attention to your progress. For disability testing and official accommodations, you can visit Disability Services (<http://ds.uoregon.edu>). Request an instructor note from Disability Services that lists possible accommodations that would assist you and see me during office hours to discuss how I can help you.

	Points Possible	My Score	Points Missed	Total of 310
Session One Exam	20			
Resume	10			
TV PSA Script	10			
Radio PSA Scripts	10			
Session Two Exam	20			
Feature Article	20			
Session Three Exam	20			
Op-Ed	20			
Session Four Exam	20			
Client News Release	10			
Backgrounder	30			
First Timed Release	10			
Biography	10			
Fact Sheet	10			
Media Advisory	10			
Pitch E-mail	10			
Second Timed Release	10			
Portfolio Presentation	5			
Third Timed Release	10			
Portfolio	5			
Professionalism	10			
Final Exam Post-test	20			
Final Exam Release	10			
Total	310			

Use the chart to calculate the number of points missed on each exam and assignment. If you received a score of 8/10, you would record 2 in the points missed column.

Add the number of points missed for all assignments. Then deduct this number from 310 and record the result in the far right column. Check your grade using the chart below.

A+	299-310
A	287-298
A-	278-286
B+	268-277
B	256-267
B-	247-255
C+	237-246
C	225-236
C-	216-224
D+	206-215
D	194-205
D-	185-193
F	0-184

University of Oregon Policy on Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate and specific references. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed by quotation marks.

A student can avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is an acknowledgement of indebtedness.

Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever

1. one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product
2. one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data or theories
3. one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials -- unless the information is common knowledge



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Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. If in doubt, consult the instructor or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services (68 PLC, 346-3226). In addition, submitting as your own any academic exercise (e.g., written work, design work) prepared totally or in part by another is considered plagiarism.

Plagiarism also includes submitting work in which portions were substantially produced by someone acting as a tutor or editor.

Fabrication

Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.

Examples include but are not limited to

1. citing information not taken from the source indicated
2. listing sources in a reference not used in the academic exercise
3. inventing data or source information for research or other academic exercises

University of Oregon Policy on Academic Dishonesty (Continued)

Cheating

Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise.

Examples include but are not limited to

1. copying from another student's test, paper, project or performance
2. collaborating without permission or allowing another student to copy one's work in a test situation
3. using unauthorized materials during a test, such as notes
4. resubmitting substantially the same work that was produced for another assignment without the knowledge and permission of the instructor
5. taking a test for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is the intentional violation of university policies, such as tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of an unadministered test or any information about the test. For this particular class, distributing administered tests also violates class conduct.

Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to

1. stealing, buying or obtaining in any other unauthorized manner all or part of an unadministered test
2. selling, trading or giving away all or part of an unadministered test, including answers to an unadministered test
3. attempting to change, altering or being an accessory to changing or altering a grade in a grade book, work submitted on a test or a final project, a "supplementary grade report" form, or other official academic records of the university which relate to grades
4. entering a building or office for the purpose of obtaining an unadministered test

University of Oregon Policy Statement on Equal Opportunity



The University of Oregon affirms and actively promotes the right of all individuals to equal opportunity in education and employment at this institution without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or any other extraneous consideration not directly and substantively related to effective performance. This policy implements all applicable federal, state, and local laws; regulations; and executive orders. Direct related inquiries to the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, 474 Oregon Hall, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403; telephone (541) 346-3123; TDD (541) 346-0852.

University of Oregon Affirmation of Community Standards

The University of Oregon community is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and the development of integrity. To thrive and excel, this community must preserve the freedom of thought and expression of all its members. The University of Oregon has a long and illustrious history in the area of academic freedom and freedom of speech. A culture of respect that honors the rights, safety, dignity and worth of every individual is essential to preserve such freedom. We affirm our respect for the rights and well-being of all members.

We further affirm our commitment to

- respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals
- promote a culture of respect throughout the university community
- respect the privacy, property and freedom of others
- reject bigotry, discrimination, violence or intimidation of any kind
- practice personal and academic integrity and expect it from others
- promote the diversity of opinions, ideas and backgrounds that is the lifeblood of the university

The University of Oregon is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This publication will be made available in accessible formats upon request.

J440: Strategic Public Relations Writing and Media Relations Fall 2010

Assignments are returned on Tuesdays and revisions are due on Thursdays. Attach the original graded assignment to the revised assignment with a paperclip. Each assignment should be stapled separately if it exceeds a page. Not following format requirements would result in a deduction of one point from the final assignment score.

Public relations is a deadline-oriented business. Assignments are late if they are submitted after I ask for them. An assignment submitted by 12:30 p.m. on the day it is due would receive a letter grade deduction from the final assignment score. An additional letter grade would be deducted from the final score for each subsequent class period until the assignment is submitted.

Tuesday, Sept. 28: Course Overview, Client Project, Resume, and Pretest

- ❑ Bring an electronic copy of your resume in case you have time to work on it

Thursday, Sept. 30: VNRs and PSAs

Class preparation

- ❑ Read the syllabus
- ❑ Read pages ix-xiv and pages 35-43 of “Making News”
- ❑ Bring an electronic copy of your resume in case you have time to work on it

Tuesday, Oct. 5: Writing Session One Rules, Feature Article

Assignments due

- ❑ Resume
- ❑ Two 10-second radio PSAs and a 30-second radio PSA (scripts)
- ❑ One 30-second video PSA (script)

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 3-24 of “Making News” and bring the book with you to class
- ❑ Print writing session rules, practice exams and answer keys from Blackboard and bring them

Thursday, Oct. 7: Feature Article, Writing Session One Exam

Assignment due

- ❑ Writing session one practice exams (staple them)

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 25-34 of “Making News”
- ❑ Study for writing session one exam

Tuesday, Oct. 12: Writing Session Two Rules, Op-Ed

Assignments due

- ❑ Client adoption form
- ❑ Feature article

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 44-60 of “Making News”
- ❑ Print writing session rules, practice exams and answer keys from Blackboard and bring them
- ❑ Bring electronic copies of your resume and PSA assignments

Assignments and exam returned

- ❑ Resume
- ❑ Television and radio PSAs
- ❑ Writing session one exam

Thursday, Oct. 14: Op-Ed, Writing Session Two Exam

Assignments due

- ❑ Resume revision
- ❑ Television and radio PSA revisions
- ❑ Writing session two practice exams

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 61-72 of “Making News”
- ❑ Study for writing session two exam
- ❑ Come to class with your op-ed topic and any materials you need to work on it

Tuesday, Oct. 19: Writing Session Three Rules, News Release

Assignment due

- ❑ Op-ed

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 155-171 of “Making News”
- ❑ Bring the materials you need to start writing your client news release
- ❑ Bring an electronic copy of your feature article
- ❑ Print writing session rules, practice exams and answer keys from Blackboard and bring them

Assignments and exam returned

- ❑ Feature article
- ❑ Resume revision
- ❑ Television and radio PSA revisions
- ❑ Writing session two exam

Thursday, Oct. 21: Writing Session Three Exam, News Release

Assignment due

- ❑ Feature article revision and edits list
- ❑ Writing session three practice exams

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 73-81 of “Making News”
- ❑ Study for writing session three exam
- ❑ Bring the materials you need to work on your news release

Tuesday, Oct. 26: Writing Session Four Rules, Backgrounder

Assignment due

- ❑ Client news release

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 82-96 of “Making News”
- ❑ Bring the materials you need for writing your backgrounder
- ❑ Bring an electronic copy of your op-ed
- ❑ Print writing session rules, practice exams and answer keys from Blackboard and bring them

Assignments and exam returned

- ❑ Op-ed
- ❑ Feature article revision
- ❑ Writing session three exam

Thursday, Oct. 28: Writing Session Four Exam, Backgrounder

Assignments due

- ❑ Op-ed revision and corrections list
- ❑ Writing session four practice exams

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 97-109 of “Making News”
- ❑ Study for writing session four exam
- ❑ Bring the materials you need for writing your backgrounder

Tuesday, Nov. 2: Fact Sheet, Media Advisory, Pitch E-mail

Assignments due

- ❑ Backgrounder

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 147-154 of “Making News”
- ❑ Bring what you need to write the fact sheet and pitch e-mail
- ❑ Bring an electronic copy of your news release

Assignments and exam returned

- ❑ Client news release
- ❑ Op-ed revision
- ❑ Writing session four exam

Thursday, Nov. 4: Biography, First Timed News Release

Assignments due

- ❑ Client news release revision and corrections list

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 119-125 of “Making News”
- ❑ Bring the materials you need to write the biography
- ❑ Bring your AP Stylebook

Tuesday, Nov. 9: Pitching and Revision Work Period

Assignments due

- ❑ Biography
- ❑ Fact sheet
- ❑ Media advisory
- ❑ Pitch e-mail

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 179-198 of “Making News”
- ❑ Bring an electronic copy of the backgrounder and first timed news release

Assignments returned

- ❑ Backgrounder
- ❑ First timed news release
- ❑ Client news release revision

Thursday, Nov. 11: Portfolio, Second Timed News Release

Assignments due

- ❑ Backgrounder revision with corrections list
- ❑ First timed news release revision with corrections list

Class preparation

- ❑ Read portfolio document on Blackboard
- ❑ Bring your AP Stylebook

Tuesday, Nov. 16: Revisions Work Period

Class preparation

- ❑ Bring an electronic copy of all of the assignments you'll receive back today
- ❑ Bring your AP Stylebook

Assignments returned

- ❑ Biography
- ❑ Fact sheet
- ❑ Media advisory
- ❑ Pitch letter
- ❑ Second timed news release
- ❑ Backgrounder revision
- ❑ First timed news release revision

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 142-146 of "Making News"
- ❑ Bring an electronic copy of the materials you need to complete the revisions due on Nov. 18

Thursday, Nov. 18: Online News Rooms, Third Timed News Release

Assignments due

- ❑ Biography revision and corrections list
- ❑ Fact sheet revision and corrections list
- ❑ Media advisory revision and corrections list
- ❑ Pitch letter revision and corrections list
- ❑ Second timed news release revision and corrections list

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 199-207 of "Making News"
- ❑ Bring your AP Stylebook

Tuesday, Nov. 23: Portfolio Presentation Rehearsals and Work Period

Class preparation

- ❑ Read pages 208-211 of “Making News”
- ❑ In case you’d like to display your materials in a formal portfolio, I’ll bring a paper cutter, and you can bring an adhesive of choice, paper, and the portfolio
- ❑ Bring an electronic copy of your third timed news release
- ❑ Bring hard copies and electronic copies of all materials you plan to use in your portfolio, including your resume

Assignments returned

- ❑ Third timed news release
- ❑ Biography revision
- ❑ Fact sheet revision
- ❑ Media advisory revision
- ❑ Pitch letter revision
- ❑ Second timed news release revision

Tuesday, Nov. 30: Portfolio Presentations, Allen 215C

10 a.m.	11:30 a.m.	2 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
10: 30 a.m.	1 p.m.	2:30 p.m.	
11 a.m.	1:30 p.m.	3 p.m.	

Assignments due

- ❑ Portfolio if your meeting is today
- ❑ Third timed news release revision and corrections list if your meeting is today

Thursday, Dec. 2: Portfolio Presentations, Allen 215C

10 a.m.	11:30 a.m.	3 p.m.
10: 30 a.m.	2 p.m.	3:30 p.m.
11 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	4 p.m.

Assignments due

- ❑ Portfolio if your meeting is today
- ❑ Third timed news release revision and corrections list if your meeting is today

Wednesday, Dec. 8: Final Examination, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Class preparation

- ❑ Study for the final examination
- ❑ Bring your AP Stylebook

Assignments returned

- ❑ Portfolio
- ❑ Third timed news release and revision