

**COMM 270: Foundations of Public Relations**  
**Spring OL 2: March 10-May 9, 2013**  
**Day/Time: Tuesdays, 6:00pm-10:00pm**  
**Location: P003**  
**Instructor: Wendy Ames**  
**Email: wames@nwc.edu**

Hello and welcome! I am Wendy Ames, your COMM 270 Instructor this term. This means that I will be the one assessing your participation (a very important part of success in this course), speech and written work in order to assign a final grade. To learn more about me please read my profile in BeaconLearning or visit my LinkedIn profile online.

If you have any questions or concerns as the course unfolds please reach out to me directly. The best way to do that is to send me an email. You can also do this if you'd like to request a time to talk face-to-face outside of our regular class time. I check messages regularly, but not at all on Sunday, and will strive to reply to any messages within 24-48 hours.

### **Why this course?**

In this course we will explore the fundamental guiding principles and basic practices of public relations practitioners. You will author several standard PR documents and begin to build your own personal brand online. The profession of public relations is one career path for which coursework in communication may prepare you. Even if you don't choose public relations as your ultimate career, the skills of writing, visual communication, understanding of audience and reputation building will serve you in many other ways throughout your life.

This course will help you begin to develop the professional writing skills expected of a public relations practitioner. It will help you refine your ability to write clear, concise messages that stand out from the clutter in today's information age. In completing your reading and assignments for the course, you will:

1. hone in on your individual writing style and voice
2. begin to establish more specific goals to effectively direct your career development
3. prepare portfolio pieces that will prepare you for the job search

### **Course Objectives**

- Apply theories from the text to writing strategic PR documents
- Learn to write and create PR using an appropriate voice and style for defined publics
- Develop an understanding of direct-to-consumer communications in several contexts, including non-profit and corporate environments
- Confidently use new media communication channels while learning to visually and verbally present information and messaging
- Execute specialized forms of writing for a portfolio, on paper or online, such as new media and presentations

### **Required Textbook**

Guth, D. W., & Marsh, C. (2012). *Public Relations: A Values-Driven Approach*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Boston: Pearson/Allyn-Bacon.

## Tentative Schedule of Course Flow

<p><b>March 10</b> Welcome &amp; Branding/Career Planning</p>
<p><b>March 17</b> Chapters 1 &amp; 2: What is PR? + Jobs in PR <a href="#">Draft resume for peer review due</a></p>
<p><b>March 24</b> Spring Break!</p>
<p><b>April 1</b> Chapters 3 &amp; 4: History + The Publics <a href="#">Polished resume due</a> <a href="#">Malaysia Airlines PR position paper due</a> First quiz!</p>
<p><b>April 8</b> Chapters 5 &amp; 6: Communication Theory &amp; Public Opinion + Ethics <a href="#">Two news releases (informational &amp; feature) due</a> <a href="#">Backgrounder due</a></p>
<p><b>April 15</b> Chapters 7 &amp; 8: Research &amp; Evaluation + Strategies <a href="#">Draft Infographic due</a> <a href="#">Personal Social Media Plan memo due</a></p>
<p><b>April 22</b> Chapters 9 &amp; 10: Tactics + Multimedia Messages <a href="#">Fact sheet due</a> <a href="#">Final infographic due</a></p>
<p><b>April 29</b> Chapters 11 &amp; 13: Cyber Relations + PR &amp; Marketing <a href="#">Draft Group Project (Media Kits) outline due</a></p>
<p><b>May 6</b> Wrap-Up &amp; Group Presentations <a href="#">Social media progress memo due</a> <a href="#">Final Group Projects (Media Kits) due in writing</a> <a href="#">Presentations on Final Group Projects (Media Kits)</a></p>

**All assignments are due by the start of class on the date indicated.** Remember to strive to turn things in at least 24 hours in advance of the due date via email if for some reason you are unable to attend class. Assignments submitted after the due date and time (6pm) will receive a zero grade. No exceptions.

## **Northwest Christian University (NCU) Academic Policies**

General undergraduate academic policies are found in the *NCU Catalog 2013-2014*, available online at <https://www.nwcu.edu/academics/registrar/catalog>.

The following specific policies relate to this particular course.

**Class Attendance:** Students are expected to arrive on time for class. Your participation grade will be affected if you are not in class or are late to class, for whatever reason. Excused absences will be allowed for activities such as serious illness, family or work emergencies, and recognized commitments with the University. The professor will determine the validity of the excuse. The student is responsible for knowing all information presented in the class(es) missed. If there are any problems, please let the professor know BEFORE the class.

**Missed Quizzes, Tests, and Exams:** No make-up exams will be allowed except for circumstances granted a legitimate excuse status. In the event that a student cannot take an exam, he/she must contact the professor BEFORE the absence, and the professor will determine whether a legitimate excuse is warranted. Final exams are not given before their scheduled time during finals week.

**Late Papers and Class Assignments:** Each instructor sets policies regarding papers and other class assignments that are turned in late. Professors reserve the right to set penalties, including lowering of grades, as well as rejection of late papers. *Note that in COMM 270, I record zeros for all late work or for work that you did not show up to complete in class. No exceptions.*

**Credit Hour Definition:** A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes, and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

- 1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time
- 2) Or at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph 1 of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practicum, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

### **Tutoring Services:**

#### ***1. For undergrads (ADP and TUGs) and non V-Campus grad programs:***

Free online tutoring can be accessed from the main Beacon Learning homepage. Select the 'Brainfuse' link under 'Web Links'. Live tutoring is available 7 days a week from 3pm-1am, or questions and papers can be submitted 24/7. Students can contact [tutor@nwcu.edu](mailto:tutor@nwcu.edu) with any questions.

#### ***2. For V-Campus programs:***

Free online tutoring is available through Brainfuse under the 'Resources' tab in V-Campus. Live tutoring is available 7 days a week from 3pm-1am, or questions and papers can be submitted 24/7. Students can contact [tutor@nwcu.edu](mailto:tutor@nwcu.edu) with any questions.

**Academic Honesty:** Our University's mission assumes the highest principles of virtue and ethics in the intellectual life. Plagiarism, cheating, and any other form of academic dishonesty are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. If a student cheats on a test or assignment, he/she will receive a zero for that work and, depending on the severity of the offense, possibly a grade of "F" in the course. All incidents will be reported in writing to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and to the Vice President for Student Development, who may consider additional actions, including dismissal from the University and/or denial of application for readmission.

**Disability Services:** If you need academic accommodations based on a documented disability, whether it is psychiatric, learning, physical, or sensory, you must process your request with Ms. Angela Doty, the designated Disability Officer. Contact Ms. Doty in the Pomajevich Faculty Building, by phone at 541-684-7289, or by e-mail at [adoty@nwc.edu](mailto:adoty@nwc.edu), and/or refer to the *Disability Services Handbook* (available online) for the policy and detailed procedures regarding disabilities. **Contact should be made prior to the beginning of each semester or within the first two weeks so that the Disability Officer can make reasonable accommodation for each eligible student.**

**Specific policies for this COMM 270 class are as follows:**

#### **Graded Components to the Course**

- Showing up every Tuesday night and actively participating in the discussions, activities and in-class writing assignments is absolutely critical to your success in this course. 30%
- Completing open-book, open-notes quizzes in class on the readings. 20%
- Assignments: all assignments MUST meet the quality standards of college-level writing. 30%
- Completing a final group PR project as your final exam. 20%
- If I see that everyone is completing the required readings on time, making an effort to actively participate in class and generally working hard, we will agree to drop the lowest quiz grade.

#### **Spelling and Grammar**

Sometimes students ask if spelling and grammar will affect their final grade. The answer is YES! All written work for COMM 270, a course in PR communication, must be at the quality of college-level writing. **Proofreading your work for all assignments is crucial**, as you will be graded heavily on spelling, grammar and the flow of your writing. PR is all about good writing. If you are not already an excellent writer, I strongly encourage you to engage with an NCU tutor right away in order to get help with writing and editing your work.

#### **Quizzes**

- You will be quizzed on assigned ALL readings for the course, text, articles, blogs, etc.
- All quizzes will be taken in class and on time. No exceptions and no make-ups.
- You may use the textbook and articles/other readings during quizzes. You may also use any notes that you have taken thus far in the course. You may **not** use any other human being as a resource as you take the quiz; consulting another person or their work constitutes cheating.

## **Clarity on your responsibilities and mine in this intercultural environment**

The following information is adapted from an article an English professor wrote, under a pen name, which appeared in the June 9, 2006, Chronicle of Higher Education. (And I stole it from Doyle Srader...)

### **Students and teachers have obligations to each other.**

#### ***Here is what I expect from you:***

- You will treat everyone in the course, including me, with the respect due to all human beings.
- You will participate in every course, give your full attention to the material, and conduct yourself in an appropriate manner.
- You will agree to do the work outlined in the syllabus on time.
- You will acknowledge that previous academic preparation (e.g., writing skills) will affect your performance in this course.
- You will acknowledge that your perception of effort, by itself, is not enough to justify a distinguished grade.
- You will not plagiarize or otherwise steal the work of others.
- You will not make excuses for your failure to do what you ought.
- You will accept the consequences - good and bad - of your actions.

#### ***Here is what you can expect from me:***

- I will treat you with the respect due to all human beings.
- I will know your name and treat you as an individual.
- I will not discriminate against you on the basis of your identity or your well-informed viewpoints.
- I will manage the course in a professional manner. That may include educating you in appropriate behavior.
- I will prepare carefully for every course.
- I will begin and end coursework on schedule.
- I will teach only in areas of my professional expertise. If I do not know something, I will say so.
- I will return your assignments quickly with detailed feedback.
- I will pursue the maximum punishment for plagiarism, cheating, and other violations of academic integrity.
- I will keep careful records of your attendance, performance, and progress.
- I will investigate every excuse for non-attendance of courses and non-completion of assignments.
- I will maintain confidentiality concerning your performance.
- I will provide you with professional support and write recommendations for you, if appropriate.
- I will be honest with you.
- Your grade will reflect the quality of your work and nothing else.
- I am interested in your feedback about the course, but I am most interested to hear what you learned and how that will impact your future, not just how you felt about the course.