

J452/552

STRATEGIC PR COMMUNICATION

Instructor: Wendy Ames

Term: Winter 2014

Days: Tues & Thurs

Time: 4:00pm – 5:50pm

Location: Room 304, Allen Hall

Office Hours or Time to Talk

Email me to schedule an appointment: wendya@uoregon.edu

Course Overview

This course will help you develop the professional writing skills expected of a beginning 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

Along with four hours of in-class contact each week, you should also expect at least four hours of outside research, writing and study each week.

J452/552 is a writing-intensive lab designed to produce strategic written and visual content using appropriate journalistic style and storytelling skills while incorporating ethical practices in direct-to-consumer communications. Based on a review of the required text and utilizing a series of assignments, this course provides an overview of writing across print and on-line media platforms. You will learn proper methods of information gathering, organizing and writing, as well as the development of strategic visual content, across a wide range of formats essential to the public relations practitioner.

Course Objectives

- Apply theories from J350: Public Relations Principles to write strategically for defined outcomes
- Build on the foundation from J452: Public Relations Writing by using an appropriate voice and style for publics
- Advance technical skills developed in J352, paying special attention to strong verbs, brevity and colorful language
- Execute specialized forms of writing for a portfolio, such as new media and presentations
- Confidently use new media communication channels while learning to visually and verbally present information and messaging

- Develop an understanding of direct-to-consumer communications in several contexts, including non-profit and corporate environments

Text and Readings

- ***Required***

- Made to Stick by Chip Heath & Dan Heath
- The Associated Press Stylebook
- Online or emailed articles as chosen by the instructor

- ***Recommended***

- Presentation Zen by Garr Reynolds
- Public Relations Writing: The Essentials of Style and Format by Thomas Bivins (UO SOJC professor)

My Expectations of You

You will be expected to think, to be creative, to manage multiple deadlines and to pay attention to detail. If something is unclear – ask me in person. If you want to brainstorm ideas – come and see me in person.

A Word About Grades & Success

J452 is, first and foremost, a writing class. We're here to make you a better writer. To get there, I hold you to high standards and provide you with constructive feedback. To do well, you need to be able to meet deadlines, self-edit, get help when needed and commit yourself to growth and improvement.

Resources for Success

UO's Teaching and Learning Center Writing Labs: 72 PLC

- Drop-in hours 9:00am – 4:00pm
- Tips for editing your own writing

<http://www.profkrq.com/11-tips-for-editing-your-own-writing>

GRADES

Basic Edit Examples

Include a spelling error, fragment, missing period, factual error or poor content.

Advanced Edit Examples

Include wordiness, weak verbs, passive voice, AP style, lack of strategic thinking, poor framing, organizational problems, comma placement, not following class format, or a lack of parallel structure. *I will accept passive voice when the object is the emphasis of the sentence.*

The Assignments

You will complete seven major communication assignments, some with multiple components. Please refer to the course schedule for deadlines. Graduate students will be expected to complete three additional writing assignments as determined by their interests and these will be added on to one of the topic units listed.

Criteria

Each assignment grade is taken as a raw score and the point value is assigned based on the complexity. Three assignments are eligible for a revision (Personal Social Media Plan, CSR Internal Memo and Shareholder Letter). In the case of a revision, the final grade for that assignment will be determined by averaging your original grade and your revised grade.

A (4.0 or 90-100): Excellent

You can make between zero and three advanced edits. Your work exhibits excellent comprehension and performance. The material is ready for publication and shows outstanding scholarship, mastery of facts, narrative flow, writing and news judgment.

B (3.0 or 80-89): Above Average

You can make four to seven advanced edits. Your work does not have basic errors. It exhibits good comprehension and performance. The material is written well. It shows mastery of the subject and good scholarship, but you need to make minor changes before publication.

C (2.0 or 70-79): Meets Minimum Standards

You can make eight to 11 edits (basic, advanced or both). If the work has a basic edit, it starts at a C. In the real world, a major edit jeopardizes a quick promotion and if caught by a client, it would damage the organization-client relationship. Firms have lost clients because of spelling errors.

D (1.0 or 60-69): Does Not Meet Standards

You would need to make 12-15 edits (basic, advanced or both). If the work has at least two basic edits, it starts at a D. The work exhibits borderline comprehension and performance.

F (0.0 or 59 or below): Unacceptable

You need to make at least 16 edits (basic, advanced or both). The work demonstrates unsatisfactory comprehension and performance.

GRADING SUMMARY

In-Class Activities <i>Including professionalism, attendance and in-class quizzes</i>	Points 10 per week 100 total	Weight 10%
Resume <i>Revision optional</i>	Points 100	Weight 10%
Personal Social Media Plan <i>Includes implementation memo Revision optional</i>	Points 100	Weight 15%
Personal Blog Assignment <i>15 posts (Bio + 2 per week) 5 comments</i>	Points 10 points/post 5 points/comment 175 total points	Weight 20%
CSR Report Internal Memo <i>Revision optional</i>	Points 100	Weight 5%
Shareholder Letter <i>Revision optional</i>	Points 100	Weight 5%
Infographic	Points 100	Weight 15%
Presentation <i>Slide deck & speech</i>	Points 100	Weight 10%
E-portfolio + Portfolio Review <i>Portfolio reviews occur dead week and finals week.</i>	Points 100	Weight 10 %

EXPECTATIONS

Deadlines

Public relations is a time-sensitive profession. All deadlines for this course are firm. Please do **not** ask me or expect me to accept late work for full credit. I won't. All late assignments will be penalized at 1/3 of a grade for each day.

Note that I reserve the right to make changes to the attached reading and topic schedule, which might affect the deadlines schedule. If this happens, due to, for example, guest speakers' schedules changing, I will be sure to let you know in class and in writing via email.

Assignments/Rewrites

All assignments must be submitted in hard copy in class. No assignments will be accepted via email. Rewrites are optional for the following assignments: bio/resume, personal social media plan, CSR memo to employees and annual report shareholder letter. Rewrites are due one week after the assignment is returned to you and must be submitted with the original graded assignment. If you don't submit the original, I won't grade your rewrite. The schedule of assignments is subject to change during the term.

Classroom Protocol

You are expected to be in class on time, every time the class meets. Every student is expected to accept responsibility for being aware of assignments and required reading, understanding precisely what is expected for each assignment, and getting the work done to a high professional standard on or before specified deadlines.

Communication from Me

I use email to communicate with students about things like changes to the schedule, tips on assignments, PR bits of interest and class cancellation due to weather. You will need to check your email regularly this term (at least a few times a week) to stay in the know about the details of this course.

Computer Use

You are encouraged to use the lab computers or bring your laptop or tablet (iPad or other) to class & use it to participate in team projects or research, share ideas and connect. Please do **not** abuse this policy by surfing the Internet or checking your email during class. Remember 10% of your final grade is based on your professionalism and participation.

POLICIES

Mandatory Attendance

All journalism courses are covered by the university's mandatory attendance policy: "Academic departments may require students to attend the first and/or second meetings of designated classes. These classes are identified in the class schedule. Students who do not attend the first two sessions of these classes may be directed by the academic department to drop the course so that the seat may be given to another student. Students are responsible for dropping the class; there is no automatic drop. The university refund schedule applies."

I may choose to invoke this policy if a student does not attend the first day of class, and the journalism advisers will enforce this policy rigidly. Students will be notified via email to withdraw from the course. If the student remains on the roster, he/she will earn an F grade at the end of the term.

Disabilities

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You are also welcome to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at (541) 346-1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu. If you are not a student with a documented disability through Disability Services, but you would like for me to know about class issues that will impact your ability to learn, I encourage you to come visit with me during my office hours so that we can strategize how you can get the most out of this course.

Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations, who have any emergency medical information the instructor should know of, or who need special arrangements in the event of evacuation, should make an appointment with the instructor as early as possible, no later than the first week of the term.

Academic Misconduct

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Preparing for Success in J452

January 7

Come to the first class on time and fully ready to participate actively in the discussion and activities.

We will get to know one another, review the syllabus and start writing bios.

January 9

Bring your updated and proofed resume to class for peer review. Also bring your bio typed (work in progress).

Read Chapter 1 in Made to Stick before class begins; come with questions/discussion points.

We will take a writing (pre)test, which does not count toward your grade, in class.

Guest Speaker: None

Assignments: None

Week 2 – Social Media, Personal Plan

January 14

Read HBR Article on Personal Branding before class begins; come with questions/discussion points.

Research how to use social media for personal branding before class begins; come with questions.

Assignments: Final Resume & Written bio due by beginning of class on Tuesday

Set up blog URL with personal online bio by end of class Tuesday

January 16

Work on personal social media plan in writing lab; come with questions/discussion points.

Guest Speaker: Kelli Matthews, Instructor of PR, School of Journalism and Communication, UO (Thursday)

Assignments: Draft Personal Social Media Plan by end of class on Thursday

Week 3 – Social Media, Blogging

January 21

Read Chapters 2, 3 & 4 in Made to Stick before class begins; come with questions/discussion points.

January 23

Work on blog posts in our writing lab; come with questions/discussion points.

Assignments: Final Personal Social Media Plan due by end of class Thursday

Blog posts #1 and #2 due by EOD Friday

Week 4 – Corporate Social Responsibility, Internal Communication

February 4

Read Chapters 5 & 6 in Made to Stick before class begins; come with questions/discussion points.

Assignments: Start Personal Social Media Plan implementation before class begins on Tuesday

February 6

Read Epilogue and Sticky Advice in Made to Stick before class begins; come with questions/discussion points

Read CRO Magazine Top 100 Methodology before class begins; come with questions/discussion points

Finalize/Perfect Internal Memo

Review Investor Relations and begin work on Shareholder Letter

Guest Speaker: TBD

Assignments: CSR Internal Memo due by end of class on Thursday

Blog posts #3 & #4 due by EOD Friday

Week 5 – Investor Relations & Visual Communication and Infographics

February 11

Work on Shareholder Letter (Investor Relations) in our writing lab

February 13

Work on conceptualization of Infographic in our writing lab; come with questions/discussion points.

Guest Speaker: Shan Anderson, Instructor, School of Journalism and Communication, UO (Thursday)
Assignments: Shareholder Letter (Investor Relations) due at start of class on Thursday
Blog posts #5 & #6 due by EOD Friday

Week 6 – Visual Communication and Infographics

February 18

1st peer review of draft Infographic & work on next iteration of infographic in our writing lab

February 20

2nd peer review of Infographic

Work on next iteration of Infographic in our writing lab

Guest Speaker: Steven Asbury, Instructor, School of Journalism and Communication, UO (Tuesday)

Assignments: Final draft of Infographic due by the start of class on Thursday for peer review
Blog posts #7 & #8 due by EOD Friday

Week 7 – Visual Communication and Infographics & Portfolio Overview

February 25

Work on final touches and perfections to Infographic in our writing lab; come with questions/discussion points

February 27

Portfolio Overview

Assignments: Infographic due to me by start of class on Thursday
Blog posts #9 & #10 due by EOD Friday

Week 8 – Standard and Online Portfolios

March 4

Portfolio discussion: come with questions and discussion points based on your work thus far

Time in our writing lab to work on Online and Standard Portfolios

Assignments: Begin Online Portfolio creation before the start of class on Tuesday

March 6

Writing lab time for Online and Standard Portfolio work

Come prepared with questions and discussion points regarding portfolio work

Assignments: Continue with portfolio creation – one-on-one reviews scheduled for Weeks 9 & 10
Blog posts #11 & #12 due by EOD Friday
Finalize presentation outline for next Tuesday

Week 9 – Presentations

March 11

Peer review of Presentation outline

Finalize all details, questions, discussion, text, visuals and other work on final presentations

Assignments: Personal Social Media Report due at start of class on Tuesday

March 13

First round of Final Presentations occur in class

Assignments: Blog posts #13 & #14 + 6 comments due by EOD Friday + 6 comments
Standard Portfolio reviews (one-on-one) begin

Week 10 – Delivery of Final Presentations

March 18

Second round of Final Presentations occur in class & Standard Portfolio reviews (one-on-one) continue

March 20

Third and final round of Final Presentations occur in class & Standard Portfolio reviews (one-on-one) continue

Assignments: Finalize Presentations (slide show and speech) for in-class presentation and peer review