Spring 2015 Course Syllabus • Strategic Communication Writing • JMC:3412:0003

Lecture: Monday 4:30 to 6:20 p.m. in W336 AJB
Lab: Wednesday 4:30 to 6:20 p.m. in W336 AJB

Instructor: Greg Johnson, gregory-johnson@uiowa.edu
- Office Hours: anytime by appointment
- Office Location: W 318 General Hospital

Course website: https://icon.uiowa.edu • JMC:3412:0003 Strategic Communication Writing

SJMC DEO: David Ryfe, david-ryfe@uiowa.edu, 319-335-3486

Course Objectives

This course offers journalism students an opportunity to
- Become familiar with a range of common public relations writing formats
- Practice writing with clarity, style, and rhetorical impact
- Revise and edit public relations content for length, style, and strategic success
- Become familiar with the public relations planning process
- Research and analyze information to produce targeted public relations content
- Produce quality public relations materials for a community client

Course Outcomes

- Class members will produce a portfolio of public relations content for print, on-line, spoken, and visual formats.
- Class members will work in small groups to research and analyze data and develop a significant public relations campaign suitable for a non-profit client.
- Class members will meet and interact with area business professionals to develop mentoring opportunities.

Readings

This class has no required textbooks. All readings and materials will be posted on ICON. You are expected to complete readings by the start of lecture in the week indicated. We also will use The Associated Press Stylebook, which was required for the prerequisite courses.

Grade Allocation

Out of 1,000 points possible during the semester, the breakdown is as follows:

400 points (40 percent of the grade) – Weekly Writing Assignments and Worksheets. Excellent written materials will demonstrate sound research skills, alignment with the goals of the exercise, proper use of format, exceptional readability, and flawless demonstration of usage, grammar, and spelling.

150 points (15 percent of the grade) – Semester Portfolio. The portfolio will include revised versions of major writing assignments from throughout the semester, brought together into a prospectus suitable for presentation in a job interview setting.

200 points (20 percent of the grade) – Service Project. Working in groups of four or five, class members will work over the course of several weeks to assist a nonprofit client in the preparation and launching of a suitable component that is part of a larger public relations campaign.

150 points (15 percent of the grade) – Quizzes. To ensure participation in and understanding of the readings, the instructor will conduct announced quizzes, usually on an every-other-week basis.

100 points (10 percent of the grade) – Final Exam. The final exam will consist of a take-home essay to be submitted electronically by the conclusion of the course’s assigned final exam date. Success on the final will include demonstrating command of strategic communication based on exceptional writing skills, sound information gathering and analysis, and relevance to the audience.
Grading Scale

A 94 and above
A- 90–93
B+ 87–89
B 83–86
B- 80–82
C+ 77–79
C 73–76
C- 70–72
D+ 67–69
D 63–66
D- 60–62
F 59 and below

A Note About Attendance

- Attendance is required in the weekly lecture and lab sessions.
- Missing four classes will result in an automatic half-grade deduction (5 percent).
- Missing five or six classes will result in a full-grade deduction (10 percent).
- Missing seven or more classes, without discussing the situation with me, could result in a failing grade for the course.
- I expect that you will come to lectures and labs prepared to participate.
- You cannot make up in-class work for unexcused absences.

Late Policy

No extensions will be given unless you have truly extenuating circumstances. In these cases, you must speak with me before the assignment is due to make an arrangement. Technology excuses are not acceptable.

Assignments turned in late without an approved extension will be marked down a letter grade for every day late. After five days late, the assignment will earn a 0.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss assignments including questions about technology.

A Note on Collaboration

I will make clear which assignments are to be completed individually and which are to be completed in collaboration with one or more classmates. Each student on a group project team is expected to complete a similar amount of work and to contribute equally to the project. For our larger group project, each student will complete an evaluation, describing this equality or the lack of it during the group’s work.

For more information, see the assignment sheet, the grading rubric, and the self-evaluation form for the project. Students who misrepresent themselves as equal partners in a collaborative project but who are actually letting others do the bulk of the work will be reported to the College for academic dishonesty. If you have questions, please ask me.

The Iowa Dozen (practices specific to the School of Journalism and Communication)

As one of more than 104 programs in journalism and mass communication accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC), we must assess student learning to assure that each of our graduates meets the following standards. In this course, we will especially focus on the points highlighted in bold.

We learn to ...
1. Write correctly, clearly and well.
2. Conduct research and gather information responsibly.
3. Edit and evaluate carefully.

We value ...
6. Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
7. A diverse global community.
8. Creativity and independence.

We explore ...
10. Theories and concepts.
11. The history, structure and economy of media institutions
12. The role of media in shaping cultures.
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Policies and Procedures

Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Electronic Communication
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences (Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11).

Accommodations for Disabilities
A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Honesty
All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the tenth day of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

Understanding Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather
In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Department of Public Safety website.

The CLAS policy statements have been summarized from the web pages of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.