Spring 2021 Course Syllabus • Strategic Communication Writing • JMC:3412

Lectures: Tuesday & Thursday • 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. • W236 AJB

Instructor: Greg Johnson, gregory-johnson@uiowa.edu • 319-621-1476
• Office Hours: anytime by appointment

Course website: https://icon.uiowa.edu • JMC:3412 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 theoretical client

Course Outcomes

• Class members will produce a portfolio of public relations content for print, on-line and in-person formats.
• Class members will research and analyze data and develop a significant public relations campaign suitable for a client.
• Class members will meet and interact with business professionals to develop mentoring opportunities.

Readings

This class has no required textbooks. All readings and materials will be posted on ICON. We also will use the on-line Associated Press Stylebook. You are expected to complete readings by the start of lecture on the day indicated.

Proposed Writing Assignments, Point Values and Due Dates

Note that certain assignments (marked Y in the Rev column) will allow for students to submit a second draft after receiving instructor feedback before final points are recorded for the assignment. Also, certain assignments will be completed by team pairs (marked Y in the Team column). Grading for these team projects will be equal for both partners and will assume equal work done by each partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asn</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>Rev</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Assignment Name</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/26</td>
<td>1/26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>0126 Get Acquainted Survey</td>
<td>Complete a Qualtrics survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/28</td>
<td>1/28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0128 National News Briefing</td>
<td>Summarize three national stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0202 News Release 1 – Virtual Event</td>
<td>Create virtual event and writing up details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>0204 Stylebook Entry</td>
<td>Create new style entry on a health topic with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0209 Interview with a Travel Expert</td>
<td>Write a Q&amp;A based on expert interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>2/17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0211 PR Fact Sheet</td>
<td>Assemble a fact sheet on a top-50 travel spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>2/22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0216 News Release 2 – New CEO</td>
<td>Write a bio for an organization’s new CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/23</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0223 Executive Media Training</td>
<td>Assemble seven media training tips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/25</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>0225 Audience Survey</td>
<td>Create a Qualtrics survey on travel opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>3/15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0304 SWOT or Persona</td>
<td>Analyze results with recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/16</td>
<td>3/22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>0316 Media List</td>
<td>Choice of using one of two marketing tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/18</td>
<td>3/29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>0318 Create Online Press Room</td>
<td>Create prospects for earned media coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/23</td>
<td>3/31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0323 Open Letter from CEO</td>
<td>Propose press offerings for an established site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/30</td>
<td>4/12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0330 Content Marketing Feature</td>
<td>Write a thoughtful letter by an industry leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>5/4-6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0401 Formal Presentation</td>
<td>Produce a feature with valuable information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/6</td>
<td>4/6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0406 Annual Report Idea Memo</td>
<td>Deliver a business briefing using on-line slides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/8</td>
<td>4/8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>0408 Social Media Editorial Calendar</td>
<td>Develop a brainstormed idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/13</td>
<td>4/13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>0413 Advocacy Opinion Piece</td>
<td>Plan social media content delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/15</td>
<td>4/21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0415 Travel Book Chapter Pitch</td>
<td>Focus thinking on a social duty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapt an idea to fit an editorial construct
Proposed Reading Assignments by Due Date

Due Thursday, January 28
- Scientific American Podcast: "What Science Has Learned about the Coronavirus One Year On"
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "Understanding How COVID-19 Vaccines Work"
- Style Check from "American Heritage Dictionary": "Style Check Standard English Grammar"

Due Tuesday, February 2
- Meta G. Carstaphen and Richard A. Wells from "Writing PR, A Multimedia Approach": "News Releases Important Writing Tools"
- William Zinsser from "On Writing Well": "5 Tips for Becoming a Better Writer"
- NY Times: "How One Airline's Pandemic Hurt Becomes Everyone's Pain"
- NY Times: "Airbnb Reveals Falling Revenue, With Travel Hit by Pandemic"
- NY Times: "Help! My Travel Agency Shut Down and I'm Out $2,000"

Due Thursday, February 4
- Meta G. Carstaphen and Richard A. Wells from "Writing PR, A Multimedia Approach": "Style and Structure"
- AP Stylebook: "Guide to Punctuation" [Hawk ID log in required at http://purl.lib.uiowa.edu/APstylebook]
- NY Times: "When the Pandemic Ends Don't Put Off Any More Adventures"
- NY Times: "What's It Like to Cruise in the Covid Era? To Find Out, I Went Aboard"
- NY Times: "The Digital Nomads Did Not Prepare For This"

Due Tuesday, February 9
- NY Times: "The Evolving Travel 'Experience': Virtual, Actual and In Between"
- NY Times: "The Endless Debate: Cancel or Rebook"
- NY Times: "Nine Ways the Pandemic Will Change Travel in 2021"
- NY Times: "The Receding Horizon of Travel's Return"
- NY Times: "Europe's Museums Are Open, but the Public Isn't Coming"
- NY Times: "How Do You Have a Ski Season in a Pandemic?"

Due Thursday, February 11
- NY Times: "2 Places to Love in 2021"
- Online Writing Lab: "Sentence Punctuation Patterns"
- Online Writing Lab: "Independent and Dependent Clauses"
- Online Writing Lab: "Conquering the Comma"
- Online Writing Lab: "Commas vs. Semicolons"
- Online Writing Lab: "Apostrophe: Introduction"
- Online Writing Lab: "Hyphen Use"
- Online Writing Lab: "Using Quotation Marks"
- Michael L. Kent, Ph.D.: "Backgrounders and Fact Sheet"
- Lewis Perdue for Wine Industry Insight: "Naked Wines Backrrounder"
- San Francisco Maritime National Park Association: "USV Panamito Fact Sheet and Backrrounder"

Due Tuesday, February 16
- Online Writing Lab: "Prepositions—Time, Place, and Introducing Objects"
- Online Writing Lab: "Gendered Pronouns and Singular "They"
- Online Writing Lab: "Count and Noncount Nouns Basic Rules"
- Andrew Hindes from PR News Blog: "Bio Hazards - 9 Mistakes to Avoid When Writing a Professional Bio"
- Elizabeth Neff from Buzz Entertainment: "How to Write a Bio"
- From Write2market.com: "How to Write a Great Executive Bio"

Due Thursday, February 18
- Online Writing Lab: "Changing Passive to Active Voice"
- Online Writing Lab: "Proofreading for Errors"
- Anne Lamott from "Bird by Bird": "Shitty First Drafts"

Due Tuesday, February 23
- Meta G. Carstaphen and Richard A. Wells from "Writing PR, A Multimedia Approach": "Media Relations"
- Christopher Johnson from "Microstyle, The Art of Writing Little": "Teach an Old Cliche New Tricks"

Due Thursday, February 25
- William Strunk and E.B. White from "Elements of Style": "Principles of Composition"
- Steve Krug from "Don't Make Me Think": "Omit Needless Words"
Due Thursday, March 4

- Drew McElhannon: Are you selling what your customers want to buy.pdf
- Drew McElhannon: We have to earn our audience's attention.pdf
- Drew McElhannon: Write so they will hear you.pdf
- Christopher Johnson from "Microstyle, The Art of Writing Little": Push Buttons.pdf
- Joe Pulizzi from "Epic Content Marketing": The Audience Persona.pdf
- From Impact: Four Great Buyer Persona Examples
- From ClearPoint Strategy: How To Do a SWOT Analysis

Due Tuesday, March 16

- From Influencer Marketing Hub: What Is an Influencer?

Due Thursday, March 18

- Sarah Richards from "Content Design": Writing Content.pdf
- Mindy McAdams: Chunks - Writing for the Web.pdf
- Mindy McAdams: Tips for Writing for the Web.pdf
- William Comcowich from glean.info: Best Practices for Corporate Online Newsrooms

Due Tuesday, March 23

- Drew McElhannon: I Don't Write These Posts On My Own.pdf
- From Top Ten Reviews: Best Online Grammar Checkers 2021
- Caleigh Alleyne, Erika Owen, Lindsey Campbell for PRSA: How Digital Content Is Influencing Travel Trends
- John Tabbs from Entrepreneur: An Open Letter to 'Open Letter' Writers

Due Tuesday, March 30

- Joe Pulizzi from OpenView: Content Marketing Basics, Part 1
- Joe Pulizzi from OpenView: Content Marketing Basics, Part 2

Due Thursday, April 1

- AP Stylebook: Recent Changes (Hawk ID log in required at http://outil.lib.uiowa.edu/APStylebook)
- Melissa Marshall from TED Talk: Talk Nerdy to Me
- Michael Flocker from "Death by PowerPoint": The Corporate Sleeping Pill.pdf

Due Tuesday, April 6

- Arrow Writer's Handbook: Revising Your Writing.pdf
- Jane Yolen from "Writing Books for Children": Creative Research.pdf
- Gordon MacKenzie from "Orbiting the Giant Hairball": Where Have All the Geniuses Gone?.pdf

Due Thursday, April 8

- William Zinsser from "On Writing Well": The Sound of Your Voice.pdf
- Jennifer Finney from Copypress: The Importance of a Content Calendar
- From Geonetric: Six Tips to Build a Quick Editorial Calendar

Due Tuesday, April 13

- Christopher Johnson from "Microstyle, The Art of Writing Little": Choose The Right Word.pdf
- From Roget's Thesaurus: The Anatomy of a Thesaurus.pdf
- Arthur Potnick from "Spunk and Bile": How to Loot a Thesaurus.pdf
- NY Times: Oxford's 2020 Word of the Year?pdf
- Sarah Cavill from Digital Media Solutions: Five Best Advocacy Campaigns

Due Thursday, April 15

- Lindy Alexander from The Freelancer's Year: How to Get an Editor to Read Your Pitch
- Dana Sitar from The Write Life: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Writing Style Guides

Due Tuesday, April 20

- Craig Miyamoto for PRSA: How to Write a Comprehensive Public Relations Plan.pdf

Due Thursday, April 29

- Ann Handley from "Everybody Writes": Intellectual Property Primer.pdf
- White Paper from Nuance Communications: How to Engage with the Modern Traveler
- Online Writing Lab: White Papers - Purpose and Audience
- Online Writing Lab: White Papers - Organization and Other Tips
- Online Writing Lab: White Papers PowerPoint Presentation
Grade Allocation

Out of 700 points possible during the semester, the breakdown is as follows:

**450 points (approx. 60 percent of the grade) – Weekly Writing Assignments.** 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.

**50 points (approx. 10 percent of the grade) – Attendance and Participation.** Owing to the hybrid nature of the course this semester, students will have the key responsibility to be prompt in their attendance, in their submission of assignments and in their engagement in class discussions and partner projects.

**100 points (approx. 15 percent of the grade) – Quizzes and Midterm Exam.** Class members will be encouraged to participate in course readings through two announced in-class quizzes (Feb. 18 and March 11) and an in-class midterm exam (March 25).

**100 points (approx. 15 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90–93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87–89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83–86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80–82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77–79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73–76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70–72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67–69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63–66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60–62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Note About Attendance

- On-line and in-class attendance on alternating days is required in the twice-a-week 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 attend class 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.

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

As one of more than 100 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

Absences and Attendance
Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing course absence policies, which vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, unavoidable circumstances, and University authorized activities (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences). Students may use the CLAS absence form to aid communication with the instructor who will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused; the form is located on ICON within the top banner under "Student Tools."

Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have in essence agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Academic misconduct affects a student's related grade and is reported to the College which applies an additional sanction including suspension. Outcomes about misconduct are communicated through UI email (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code).

Accommodations for Disabilities
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as a mental health, attention, learning, vision, and a physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/.

Administrative Home of the Course
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and related policies. Other UI colleges may have different policies for courses offered by that college. CLAS policies may be found here: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Classroom Expectations
Students are expected to comply with University policies regarding appropriate classroom behavior as outlined in the Code of Student Life (https://dos.uiowa.edu/policies/code-of-student-life/). This includes related UI policies and procedures that all students have agreed to regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, each student must wear a face mask when in a UI building, including a classroom. The density of seats in classrooms has been reduced, and in some instances, this will allow 6 feet or more of distance while other cases, it may be less. Regardless, wearing a face mask and maintaining as much distance as is possible are vital to slowing the spread of COVID-19. In the event that a student disrupts the classroom environment through the failure to comply with a reasonable directive of an instructor or of the University, the instructor has the authority to ask that the student to leave the space immediately for the remainder of the class period. Additionally, the instructor is asked to report the incident to the UI Office of Student Accountability, with the possibility of additional follow-up with the student. Students who need temporary alternative learning arrangements (TALA) for a future semester related to COVID-19 should visit this website for more information: https://coronavirus.uiowa.edu/temporary-alternative-learning-arrangements-tala.

Class Recordings: Privacy and Sharing
Some sessions of a course could be recorded or live-streamed. Such a recording or streaming will only be available to students registered for the course. These recordings are the intellectual property of the faculty, and they may not be shared or reproduced without the explicit written consent of the faculty member. Students may not share these sessions with those who are not enrolled in the course; likewise, students may not upload recordings to any other online environment. Doing so is a breach of the Code of Student Conduct and in some cases is a violation of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
Communication and the Required Use of UI Email
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within or with UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

Complaints
Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. See this page for more information: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities.

Final Examination Policies
The final exam schedule is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals with a few exceptions made for particular types of courses such as labs or off-cycle courses: https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies.

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
The University of Iowa is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for people of all gender, sexual, racial, religious, and other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited in MyUI to optionally share the names and pronouns they would like their instructors and advisors to use to address them. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (https://diversity.uiowa.edu/eod; +1 319 335-0705 or diversity.uiowa.edu).

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 must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, please see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.