

Public Relations Writing

Fall 2011

JMC 3423-900 - 3 credit hours

6-9 p.m. M in Gaylord Hall, Room 1030

Instructor

Kenna Griffin

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Office: Graduate suite, third floor—Gaylord Hall

Office Hours: Monday before class. Appointments are encouraged.

Course website: <http://www.profkrgr.com/pr-writing>

I am happy to discuss public relations with you at any opportunity. However, if you want to guarantee an uninterrupted one-on-one that will take longer than 15 minutes, I encourage you to schedule an appointment. Email is the best way to communicate with me when I am not on campus. I will attempt to answer email within 24 hours of receipt.

Required Texts & Course Materials

Christian, D., Jacobsen, S., & Minthorn, D. (Eds.) (2011). *The Associated Press 2011 Stylebook*. New York: Assoc. Press. ISBN: 978-0-917360-55-8.

Kent, M. L. (2010). *A Rhetorical Approach to Public Relations Writing*. Boston: Pearson, Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 978-0-205595-44-0.

Materials posted on Desire 2 Learn and the course website throughout the semester.

Recommended Texts

Good media practitioners (and citizens) are well-informed news consumers. You should read *The Oklahoman* and *The Oklahoma Daily* every day. I recommend that you get into the habit of reading at least one daily metropolitan newspaper and a weekly news magazine. I also recommend that you watch at least one televised newscast each day. In addition, I would recommend that you visit and participate in discussions on my media blog, www.profkrgr.com. The site acts as a resource for students and an open forum for discussion of trends in our profession. You can follow the blog on Twitter @profkrgr or “like” it on Facebook at Prof KRG. Responsible citizens are avid news consumers. Information is the key to a democratic society. Develop the habit of daily news consumption now if you haven’t already.

Course Description & Objectives

Public relations professionals deal with diverse audiences and multiple stakeholders. Public Relations Writing teaches students the basic principles associated with writing in an assortment of styles and to multiple publics. Students learn how to construct specialized written documents such as backgrounders, brochures, business letters, pitch letters, infographics, social media, blogs, and news releases. Esthetics are a central focus of the class and students learn the features of effective design and what design options exist. Students begin credentialing and portfolio building. Associated Press (AP) style is emphasized. Sensitivity to cross cultural issues, multiple stakeholders and publics, and ethics, also are emphasized.

The objectives of this course are:

- To introduce students to more advanced writing activities, and to build on basic writing skills already learned.
- To instruct students on how to create a variety of written documents.
- To enable students to understand the rhetorical aspects of the public relations writing process.
- To teach students an assortment of communication, public relations, persuasion, and rhetorical theories used to create effective written documents.
- To raise ethical issues associated with communicating with multiple publics.
- To reinforce AP Style.

Grading

I will attempt to grade all class assignments and return them to you during the next class session. You are encouraged to visit my office to discuss any questions or concerns you have about your grades on individual assignments or in the course as a whole. You are strongly discouraged from openly discussing your grades during class sessions. Your grade for the course will consist of grades as follows:

Assignment	Points
Your Choice 1: _____	_____ %
Your Choice 2: _____	_____ %
Your Choice 3: _____	_____ %
Feature Story	10 %
New Technology White Paper	10 %
Online Media Kit	30 %
Exam 1	10 %
Exam 2	10 %
Exam 3	10 %
Total (must equal 100-110 %)	_____ %

The grading rubric for the class is as follows:

- A = 90 & above
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = Below 60

NOTE: You will receive an automatic F on any writing assignment that contains a spelling error and an automatic zero on any assignment that includes a misspelled name. Further information about course assignment submission will be provided by the second class session.

Exams

You will take three exams in this course. Exams will cover materials up to but not on the exam date. I will provide a review sheet for each exam. You are not allowed to leave the classroom during the exam without submitting it as completed. You are not allowed to talk during the

exam. No cell phones, PDAs, laptops or other electronic devices will be allowed in use or out during exams. You also are not allowed to use class notes during the exams. Any violation of this policy will result in you receiving zero credit for the exam in question. Make-up exams will be given only in extreme cases of emergency and should not be expected. Full documentation must be presented at the time any such request is made. Make-up exams must be requested prior to the missed exam. I will approve make-up exams on a case-by-case basis.

Attendance

Course attendance and participation are required. Excused absences should not be expected.

I will take attendance at the beginning of each class session. You must be present and ready to learn to be marked as attending. You may miss one class without penalty. Your second absence will result in a 10 percent reduction of your final grade. Any student who misses more than three classes on a once-a-week class schedule, regardless of the nature of those absences, will fail the course.

You are expected to arrive to class on time and leave when class is complete. You should plan to attend every class session. Being late to class or leaving early twice will be counted as one absence.

University closings

I will communicate with you on a case-by-case basis regarding school closings. You should assume that we have class unless the university officially closes. If the university closes for weather or any other reason, you should assume that the course will continue remotely. In other words, you should look for an email from me explaining how you should complete your work, even if the university is closed.

Missed assignments

Missed assignments cannot be made up without my approval. I will not accept assignments sent to class with peers. If you miss class it is your responsibility to obtain any assignments, handouts and notes that you miss. I will not contact you regarding your absence. I also will not save copies of course materials distributed during individual class periods. If you need an extension on an assignment because of an absence you must schedule a time to privately discuss these issues with me. If you miss an assignment and are allowed to make it up you must do so at the scheduled time or you will not receive credit.

Participation

You are required to participate in class. Participation could include commenting on readings and interactive lecture. Asking questions always is encouraged. Discussion of things unrelated to class is discouraged. You are not allowed to be disruptive in any way that takes class value away from your classmates. You must always attend class prepared for participation. This includes having paper, writing utensils, books, etc. during every class session.

Technology

You are not allowed to use cell phones, MP3 players, laptops or other electronic devices for personal purposes during the class. The use of university computers in the classroom for personal purposes like checking e-mail or surfing the web also is prohibited. Students found

using electronic devices inappropriately during class will be asked to leave and will not receive attendance or participation points for that class session. Cell phones are not allowed to be on during class.

Assignments must be completed and printed outside of class. All assignments must be typed. You will not be excused from class to print assignments. You also are not allowed to print assignments during the class session, unless I instruct you otherwise. Do not come to class to discuss printing with me or expect the class to wait for you to print. It is up to you to determine if you should be late to class to print. Printer and/or computer malfunctions (even those in Gaylord labs) will not be accepted as an excuse for tardiness or late work.

I will make every effort to update the class website as much in advance as possible. However, I will only guarantee that course materials for the week will be posted by midnight each Friday. I encourage you to check the course site and the D2L site (learn.ou.edu) before each class. You are responsible for printing and bringing any course materials from the site to class where applicable. I will not make handouts.

Course schedule

This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Readings and assignments should be completed before the class session where they're listed.

Monday, Aug. 22

- Course introduction
- Read – Kent Forward; Chapter 1: Introduction

Monday, Aug. 29

- Rhetoric
- Read – Kent Chapter 2: Rhetoric
- Submit completed contracts

Monday, Sept. 5 – Labor Day. No Class.

Monday, Sept. 12

- Editing and Proofreading
- Read – Kent Chapter 3: Editing and Proofreading
- Your Choice 1 due

Monday, Sept. 19

- Aesthetics
- Read – Kent Chapter 4: Aesthetics
- Request five media kits today.
- Exam 1 Review
- White paper draft (optional) due

Monday, Sept. 26

- Exam 1

Monday, Oct. 3

- Writing for Print, Broadcast and Web

- Read – Kent Chapter 5: Writing for Print, Broadcast and Web
- White paper due

Monday, Oct. 10

- Persuasion
- Read – Kent Chapter 6: Persuasion
- Feature story draft 1 due

Monday, Oct. 17

- PR Research
- Read – Kent Chapter 7: Research Basics
- Exam 2 Review
- Media kit draft 1 due

Monday, Oct. 24

- Exam 2

Monday, Oct. 31

- Research Technology
- Read – Kent Chapter 8: Archival Research and Technology
- Your Choice 2 due

Monday, Nov. 7

- Speeches and Presentations
- Read – Kent Chapter 9: Speeches and Presentations
- Feature draft 2 due

Monday, Nov. 14

- Ethics and Dialogue
- Read – Kent Chapter 10: Ethics and Dialogue
- Media kit draft 2 due

Monday, Nov. 21

- International and Intercultural
- Read – Kent Chapter 11: International and Intercultural
- Final feature due

Monday, Nov. 28

- Software
- Read – Kent Chapter 12: Important Software
- Final Media kit due

Monday, Dec. 5

- Law and Ethics
- Read – Kent Chapter 13: Ethics and Legal
- Final Exam Review
- Your Choice 3 due

Monday, Dec. 12 – Final Exam

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is the unauthorized or inappropriate use of the words or ideas of others. Plagiarism occurs when written or spoken material is borrowed (even from oneself), in whole or in part, and presented as original by a writer or speaker. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, presenting someone else's ideas, speech, presentation, essay, book review, or news release as original. Plagiarism also includes failing to document or cite the source of word-for-word or paraphrased material in oral presentations or written assignments.

All work submitted for this course must be your work. All sources used for information must be properly cited. Students should adhere to the *A Student's Guide to Academic Integrity* as defined by the office of the Senior Vice President and Provost at

www.ou.edu/provost/pronew/content/integritymenu.html:

"Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication and fraud. *Cheating* is "the use of unauthorized materials, methods, or information in any academic exercise, including improper collaboration." *Plagiarism* is "the representation of the words and ideas of another as one's own." Examples include: excluding others or claiming the work of others as one's own; presentation of the same material as original in more than one publication; inclusion of individuals as authors who have not made a definite contribution to the work published, and submission of multi-authored publications without the concurrence of all authors." *Fabrication* includes "the falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise." *Fraud* includes "the falsification, forgery, or misrepresentation of academic work, including the resubmission of work performed in one class for credit in another class" (OU Faculty Handbook, 2005).

Diversity

The University of Oklahoma and the Gaylord College respect diversity in all of its forms: race, sex, gender, age, religion, political orientation, country of origin, economic status, etc. Everyone in the United States has a right to their opinion and should feel comfortable expressing their opinion. As citizens, we are under no obligation to agree with what others believe, however, we must, as a civil society, support people's right to worship, act, look, and think, as they want. In this classroom, you will respect all of your peers and treat them accordingly.

Students with Disabilities

If any member of the class is disabled and is in need of special accommodations, the instructor and the Office of Disability Services will work with you to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to perform well in this class. Please advise me of such a disability, subject to verification, and the desired accommodations as soon as possible.

Religious Holidays

"It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays." (Section 3.13.2, OU Faculty Handbook)

If this course conflicts with a religious holiday, please inform me early in the semester of the day(s) you will miss. Prepare a single-page memo indicating the religious holiday and date(s) you will be absent. Notifying me the day before, day of or after a religious holiday is unacceptable. Upon proper notification, I will work with you to reschedule any assignments or exams as needed. You will not be penalized for the need to schedule around religious holidays.