



Communication 334
Writing for Public Relations
Section 2

Spring 2016

Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:00-3:15 p.m., CAC 201

Final Exam Thursday, May 19, 2016, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Instructor: Jim O'Connell

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Office: CAC 205

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OFFICE HOURS - SPRING SEMESTER 2016

1. Any time the door to CAC 205 is open (please come in and talk to me)
2. Any time by appointment (joconnel@uwsp.edu or leave a note in the door bin)
3. Open Hours: Tuesdays 10:00am to noon, Thursdays 1:00 to 2:30pm

I communicate via e-mail. Please check your UWSP account regularly.

Required Texts:

1. Thomas H. Bivins, *Public Relations Writing: The Essentials of Style and Format*, Eighth Edition (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 2014). Available: UWSP Text Rental.
2. *Associated Press Style Book and Briefing on Media Law*. Any edition after 2011. Available for purchase at the University Store.

Course Description *(Thanks to Professor Liz Fakazis for her work on this syllabus.)*

This course is designed to help you develop the research, writing and editing skills and knowledge that you need to produce a variety of successful public relations materials, including news releases, news advisories, fact sheets, promotional brochures, blog and twitter posts, news letters and press kits. You will do this through readings, class discussion, and individual and group assignments.

Division of Communication Learning Objectives for Communication Majors.

This course will help you achieve the Division's objectives for all majors, especially numbers 1 and 5.

1. Communicate effectively using appropriate technologies for diverse audiences
2. Plan, evaluate and conduct basic communication research
3. Use communication theories to understand and solve communication problems
4. Apply historical communication perspectives to contemporary issues and practices
5. Apply principles of ethical decision making in communication contexts

I look forward to experiencing this semester with you – to answering your questions, hearing your concerns, sharing your triumphs. We will set up at least one formal appointment during this semester. My office hours are noted above, but you are always welcome when the door to CAC 205 is open. *Please come in and talk to me.*

Course Requirements

The final grade will be based upon graded assignments (including a semester project), class participation, final examination, and attendance.

ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.

You are entitled to two absences. Illness and excused absences will count against this allowance. All other absences will reduce your final grade.

- If you miss class, you should arrange to get the day's information from a classmate.

1. Class Participation: Active participation in classroom activities is a course requirement. You cannot fulfill your responsibilities as editors if you are not present.

- Quality participation requires professional behavior: obvious preparation for class, asking pertinent questions, offering relevant comments, taking notes, engaging with guest speakers, participating in classroom discussions, and other activities.
- Unless the activity requires otherwise, **THIS CLASSROOM IS AN ELECTRONICS-FREE ZONE.** *Much of our work this semester will be done through discussion, so you need to participate fully and listen, not only to me but to your classmates, with respect and full attention.*

ALL PERSONAL ELECTRONICS MUST BE TURNED OFF BY THE TIME CLASS STARTS.

2. Guidelines for Class Discussions: As individuals with diverse experiences and backgrounds, we will not always agree on issues, and our interpretation of the subject matter being discussed will sometimes differ. I expect you to respect the opinions of others while asserting your own.

3. Submission of Assignments: Assignments will be submitted *in hard copy* by the beginning of each class period. When group editing is part of the assignment, please bring *three copies* of your work.

4. Late Assignments: Public relations professionals must meet strict deadlines. In keeping with that standard, all work for this course must be handed in on time. Work not handed in AT THE BEGINNING of the class period during which it is due, will be considered late. A late assignment will be lowered by a letter grade for each 24-hour period it is late. This policy applies to ALL work produced for this class.

5. Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: From the UWSP 14.01 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES – Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Students who violate these standards must be confronted and must accept the consequences of their actions.

For more info: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Academic-Misconduct.aspx>

Note: Submissions via D2L will be automatically screened for plagiarism.

6. Students with Special Needs/Disabilities: If you have a disability and require accommodation, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center (6th floor of the Learning Resource Center – that is, the Library) and contact me at the beginning of the course. More information is available here:

<http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>.

Grading

Grade Distribution

- 50% Individual Research, Written and Editing Assignments
(including class participation)
- 25% Group Projects (Newsletter)
- 25% Final Project (Brochure)

In addition to these graded assignments, you may be asked to complete a number of additional practice assignments. Though ungraded, these assignments will help you develop your writing skills.

Extra Credit: From time to time, optional supplementary and voluntary opportunities for earning extra credit will be announced in class only.

Grading Scale

I will grade most assignments on a 10-point scale and, to determine the final grade, convert total points to a percentage.

	Final Grade	Assignment Grade
A	93-100	9-10
A -	90-92	
B+	87-89	
B	84-86	8
B -	80-83	
C+	77-79	
C	74-76	7
C -	70-73	
D+	67-69	
D	60-66	6
F	Below 60	Below 6

Revision Policy

Because one of the goals of this course is that you improve your writing skills, those who earn less than a "B" (8 points) on a written exercise will be permitted to revise the assignment in order to improve the grade, according to the following policy:

1. No revisions will be allowed for written assignments earning a B or higher
2. A revision does NOT guarantee a higher grade. You must show significant improvement in order to earn a higher grade.
3. A revision can improve the grade by one point (out of 10).
4. No revisions will be permitted for group projects or the final project.
5. Revisions will be due one week after you receive feedback.

Course Schedule

This schedule reflects major readings and writing assignments. Additional assignments may be required throughout the semester. I may make changes to this schedule as I see fit to meet the needs of the class and take advantage of opportunities on your behalf.

Week	Topic	Readings	Major Assignments
Jan 25/27	Introduction	Bivins Chapter 1, 2	AP Style Review
Feb 1/3	Planning & Research	Bivins, Ch 3	Weekly Assignment
Feb 8/10	Message Strategy	Bivins, Ch 4	Weekly Assignment
Feb 15/17	Media Relations	Bivins, Ch 5	Weekly Assignment
Feb 22/24	Writing for Web & Social Media	Bivins, Ch 6	Weekly Assignment
Feb 29/ Mar 2	News Releases & Media Advisories	Bivins, Ch 7	Weekly Assignment
Mar 7/9	News Releases & Media Advisories		Weekly Assignment
Mar 14/16	News Releases & Media Advisories		Weekly Assignment
Mar 21/23	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Mar 28/30	Newsletters/Brochures	Bivins, Ch 8 & 9	
Apr 4/6	Pulling it all together		
Apr 11/13			Newsletters Due
Apr 18/20			
Apr 25/27			
May 2/4			
May 9/11			Brochures and Final Presentations Due
May 19 12:30-2:30	Final Exam Meeting		