

JOUR 341: WRITING AND EDITING FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS
FALL 2013: TUESDAYS, 9:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. (SEC. #10119), MZ360

INSTRUCTOR: Stacy K. Long
CELL: 818-458-4788
TWITTER: StaKLoPR

EMAIL: Stacy.Long@csun.edu
OFFICE HOUR: Tues. 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. (MZ 337)
MOODLE: <http://moodle.csun.edu/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This class provides students with an intensive experience writing for public relations. Students learn and employ a variety of public relations writing techniques for print, broadcast and new technologies. Examines and analyzes writing effectiveness in relevant public relations cases and current issues.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- "Public Relations Writing Worktext: A Practical Guide for the Profession"
 - (Joseph M. Zappala, Ann R. Carden). ISBN-13: 978-0415997546.
- "The New Rules of Marketing & PR"
 - (David Meerman Scott). Fourth edition. ISBN: 978-1118488768
- Associated Press Stylebook (2013)

PREREQUISITES: C or better in JOUR 110 or its equivalent, and in JOUR 340. Students must earn a C or better in this class in order to enroll in JOUR 398, JOUR 440 and JOUR 494 (internship). A grade of C- does not count as a C.

ASSIGNMENTS: There will be frequent writing assignments. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date, TYPED in the proper format: 1" margins, double-spaced, size 11 font in either Arial or Times. In addition to topic relevance, written assignments will be graded on spelling, grammar and format. As a rule, each gross factual error, or GFE, (misspelled proper nouns) will receive a deduction of 10 percent and each error in AP style, grammar and punctuation will lower your grade by 5 percent. No handwritten assignments will be accepted...because you're in college.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND FEEDBACK:

All assignment instructions, details and guidelines will be posted on Moodle Tuesday afternoon following each class. Scores will be posted on Moodle in the Grade Center within 24 hours after you have received a graded hard copy back in class. An explanation of your grade will also be posted. It is your responsibility to check Moodle to be sure you have received ALL your scores and that they accurately reflect the corrected hard copies you receive back. If there is a discrepancy or a score missing, please let me know as soon as possible.

QUIZZES: There will be short, weekly in-class quizzes based on assigned readings, lecture material and current events. **There are no make-ups, no exceptions.**

CURRENT EVENTS: Because public relations practitioners work closely with media, and within the court of public opinion, we are required to be aware of what's going on in the news – locally, nationally and internationally – and the impact these events have on the PR industry. Students should be knowledgeable of current events and able to discuss these topics in class.

POINT BREAKDOWN:

Attendance: 34 points (Your signature on the roll sheet is proof of your attendance at each class meeting.)
Writing Assignments: 200 points (20 points each)
In Class (Clip analysis, exercises): 150 (10 points each)
Quizzes: 130 points (10 points each)
Career Interview Paper: 100 points
Press Kit Project: 150 points
Total Avail Points: 754 points

In addition to the points available, the instructor reserves the option of raising a final letter grade based on participation, attendance and preparedness.

EXTRA CREDIT: From time to time your instructor will offer extra credit opportunities. No telling when.

LATE WORK: Late writing assignments may be submitted up to one week late with a 10% penalty. There are no make-ups for any in-class activities you miss.

GRADING: Grading is computed on the following scale, based on the percentage of points earned (the plus/minus system will be used):

100-90%=A 89-80%= B 79-70%=C 69-60%=D 59-0%=F

(more)

ATTENDANCE:

Students are expected to attend class regularly. It is your responsibility to sign the roll sheet at every meeting. Excessive absences (3 hours or more) as well as tardiness or leaving class early with no excuse will definitely (and negatively) affect your grade. The instructor may drop students who are absent on the first day of class and may also drop students who are absent two consecutive classes in the first two weeks of instruction. In the very unlikely event you miss class, please check your syllabus for the material discussed in your absence and connect with classmate for notes. It is your responsibility to make up missed assignments. Historically, I don't provide students the PowerPoint lecture slides.

There are no excused absences except a death in the family or a severe illness, which requires a doctor's note. Come to class. Every class. Period.

DROP DATE: Before the end of the second week of class, give special consideration about what you can reasonably manage, especially in light of other factors such as work, family, and study commitments and academic preparation needed for this course. If there is any possibility you will not be able to complete this course, drop by **SEPT. 13**.

INCOMPLETES ARE EXTREMELY RARE: Students will not be given an incomplete grade in the course without sound reason and documented evidence. Absence or previous lack of participation does not count as a reason. Additionally, for a student to receive an incomplete, he or she must be passing the class up until the time of petition and must have completed a significant portion of the course.

CSUN JOURNALISM PROGRAM MISSION:

The Department of Journalism strives to prepare its students to become well-educated, principled citizens who are capable of initiating careers as skilled journalists, public relations practitioners and other related communication professionals.

PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to report and write for diverse publics, using proper grammar and punctuation, word usage and spelling, sentence and storytelling structures across multiple journalistic formats.
- Students will be able to gather and analyze information, including basic numerical concepts, using reporting techniques, such as interviewing, observation, and researching primary and secondary sources.
- Students will be able to think critically, creatively and independently.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.
- Students will apply tools and technologies appropriate for the news media professions in which they work to communicate for and with diverse publics.
- Students will be able to understand and apply the historical, theoretical, legal and societal contexts for producing and consuming news media for consumers, ranging from local to global publics.

JOUR 341 STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will be able to create media releases, pitches, brochures, backgrounders, media alerts, fact sheets, biographies, blogs, web content and strategic public relations plans.
- Students will be able to demonstrate ability to write in active voice with correct grammar, punctuation and AP style.
- Students will be able to describe the use of social media tools as a part of a comprehensive public relations strategic plan.

CLASS ETIQUETTE:

- Arrive on time. Arrive prepared. Plan to stay in the room for the entire class.
- ABSOLUTELY NO cell phones allowed during class (unless you are specifically instructed to use them for a class activity). Please silence your phone and stash it out of sight. ***To be clear: this means no texting, no checking texts, no thinking about texting.*** It's only an hour and a half until the break. You can make it. You will get ***one very embarrassing verbal warning*** at the time of your first cell phone infraction, meaning I see or hear your cell, after which you will suffer the consequences...
 - Second cell infraction: 5-7 minute verbal presentation for the class and a written essay.
 - Third time you're caught with your cell phone in action, you will be asked to leave, make a visit to the chair and will lose all points available that day.
 - Yup, there is a penalty for not completing your presentation.
- If using your laptop computer/tablet to take notes in class, stay off the Internet completely: No Facebook, no Twitter, no Hulu, no Netflix, no HuffPo, no YouTube no email, no networking...social or otherwise. Even if you're looking something up related to the in-class discussion, don't.
- Please refrain from talking when others are speaking, even if you're discussing class topics.
- Most importantly, you don't have to agree with the opinions of your classmates, but you do have to show respect for those opinions.

A NOTE ON CHEATING: DON'T.

The Journalism Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating will receive a failing grade in the class and will be reported to the University for possible further disciplinary action. For a further explanation of the behavior defined as cheating, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 647-648 of the 2012-2014 CSUN catalog, also available online. Please also remember that much of the information posted on the Internet is protected by U. S. copyright laws. Passing this information off as your own is a violation of CSUN's plagiarism policy, and carries the penalties outlined above.

There is a zero-tolerance policy of cheating in this class. It is expected that all work submitted for grading is original, not copied from others, and that the work being graded is indeed done by the student who is receiving the grade. Cheating (i.e., talking or looking at others' papers during an exam or other in-class assignment) and plagiarism (i.e., using all or part of the work of others without giving them credit, *including web-based content* or quoting from a source without giving that source credit) are serious violations of the student conduct code.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY:

Students in this course are strongly encouraged to broaden their journalistic experiences, with the instructor's help, by including in their work people and subjects such as ethnic, racial and religious minorities; the elderly, disabled and poor; gay men and lesbians; and other similar groups. The intent is to ensure that student work reflects the diversity of the community.

A stated commitment to cultural diversity in journalistic work is as relevant in a photography or graphics course as it is in a reporting class. In addition, the statement applies to the practicum and their related publications/broadcasts. Some refinement of language may be needed to adapt the statement to specific classes.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

If you experience any difficulty with vocabulary, note-taking strategies, study skills, test-taking, memorization techniques, English grammar and punctuation or essay writing please arrange to meet with a tutor who can help clarify these concepts and/or skills. The Writing Center is located in Bayramian Hall 408. The Learning Resource Center is located on the third floor of the Oviatt Library, in the east wing. The LRC offers tutoring services, workshops and writing programs provided by peers and professionals. For detailed info check: <http://www.csun.edu/lrc>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a diagnosed or suspected disability that you think might affect your performance in this course and wish to discuss academic accommodations, contact Disability Resources and Educational Services in Bayramian Hall 110 or (818) 677-2684 for any available assistance. Please discuss your accommodations with me during office hours or after class and be sure to allow at least one week to arrange appropriate classroom or testing accommodations. For detailed information about student services available, including academic coaching, check: <http://www.csun.edu/dres/index.php>

ONE MORE TIME:

University policy: "Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Students who are absent from the first two meetings of a class that meets more than once a week or from the first meeting of a class that meets once a week lose the right to remain on the class roll and must formally withdraw from the class, following University procedures and deadlines. Failure to formally withdraw from a class will result in the instructor assigning to the student a grade of 'WU' (Unauthorized Withdrawl), which, in computing a student's GPA, counts as a grade of 'F.'"

No joke.

SEPT. 13 is the last day to drop this class.

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JOURN 341: WRITING AND EDITING FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS – SEMESTER SCHEDULE:

(subject to change)

AUG. 27, WEEK 1:

Explanation of syllabus & course outline, introduction.

READ: PR Worktext ch. 1-2, "New Rules" text ch. 1. **ASSIGN:** Obituary.

SEPT. 3, WEEK 2:

LECTURE: PR writing basics and AP Style refresher. **IN-CLASS:** AP writing exercise.

DUE: Obituary. **READ:** PR Worktext ch. 3. **ASSIGN:** AP Style edit.

SEPT. 10, WEEK 3: (FRIDAY, SEPT. 13 - THE LAST DAY TO ADD OR DROP)

LECTURE: The PR process.

DUE: AP Style edit. **READ:** PR Worktext ch. 5, "New Rules" text ch. 11. **ASSIGN:** PR Plan.

SEPT. 17, WEEK 4:

LECTURE: Planning and message design.

READ: PR Worktext ch. 4.

SEPT. 24, WEEK 5:

LECTURE: Public opinion research

DUE: PR Plan. **READ:** "New Rules" text ch. 20. **ASSIGN:** Product research survey

OCT. 1, WEEK 6:

LECTURE: Crisis communication

DUE: Product research survey. **READ:** PR Worktext ch. 6, "New rules" text 7, 19.

OCT. 8, WEEK 7:

LECTURE: Media releases, from headline to boilerplate, and media advisories

DUE: CAREER INTERVIEW PAPER.

READ: "New Rules" text ch. 4, 5. **ASSIGN:** Media release and media alert.

OCT. 15, WEEK 8:

LECTURE: Social media, blogs. **DUE:** Media release and media alert.

READ: PR Worktext ch. 7, "New Rules" text ch. 21. **ASSIGN:** Blog

OCT. 22, WEEK 9:

LECTURE: Media relations, media lists and developing the pitch.

DUE: Blog. **READ:** PR Worktext ch. 8, 12. **ASSIGN:** Pitch letter

OCT. 29, WEEK 10:

LECTURE: Biographies, speeches

DUE: Pitch letter. **READ:** PR Worktext ch. 13. **ASSIGN:** Biography

NOV. 5, WEEK 11:

LECTURE: Brochures, newsletters

DUE: Biography. **READ:** PR Worktext ch. 12. "New Rules" text ch. 6. **ASSIGN:** Brochure/Newsletter.

NOV. 12, WEEK 12:

LECTURE: Writing for broadcast, public service announcements, PR advertising

DUE: Brochure/Newsletter. **READ:** PR Worktext ch. 8. **ASSIGN:** PSA.

NOV. 19, WEEK 13:

LECTURE: Backgrounders, fact sheets, media kits

DUE: PSA. **READ:** PR Worktext ch. 9, "New Rules" text ch. 9, 15. **ASSIGN:** Media Kit Project

NOV. 26, WEEK 14:

LECTURE: Websites, content and design. **ASSIGN:** Resume.

DEC. 3, WEEK 15: PR job boot camp - Resumes, interviews, department vs. firm

DEC. 10, WEEK 16: **DUE:** Media Kit Project, PRESS KIT PRESENTATIONS

DEC. 17, FINALS WEEK: PRESS KIT PRESENTATIONS (8 – 10 a.m.)