

**Loyola University Chicago**  
**COMM 318/Writing for Public Relations**

Fall 2018

Wednesday 7 p.m., School of CMU 015

Instructor: Missy Maher

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**Course Description**

This course will introduce students to writing for those seeking careers in public relations or other marketing disciplines. Everything in PR is routed in writing, far beyond the press release. Writing is not a choice, it's a fact.

**Course Objective**

To understand how to create meaningful content for different audiences – consumers, clients, media and more.

**Learning Outcomes**

You will learn the key essentials when it comes to writing pitch letters, press releases, key messages, company fact sheets, social media content and presentations. Equally important, you will learn that **important stuff happens before** you write that first word. The formula for meaningful content = research, preparation, style, writing and editing. By the end of the course, students will have the confidence and strong writing samples needed for job interviews.

**Required Text**

*Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques, 8th Edition*, by Dennis L. Wilcox, Bryan H. Reber

*The Associated Press Stylebook 2015*, by the Associated Press.

**Class Requirements**

Over the course of the semester, students will write pitch letters, press releases, photo captions, social posts, presentations and more.

Additionally, students will be required to read daily news coverage of local, national and international significance. Short quizzes will be used to review discussions and readings. There will be a midterm and final exam. Attendance, **participation** and professionalism will affect final grades.

**Grading**

Students will be expected to know material covered in lectures. Our classroom will have a dynamic environment where real-time events will be threaded throughout the lectures. Therefore, it's critical you do the assigned readings and keep up-to-speed on news here and around the world.

You should expect to write and edit materials before receiving a final grade. Editing is an incredibly powerful skill. Students will have opportunities to improve their work for higher grades.

**Final Grade scale**

100-94: A  
93-90: A-  
89-88: B+  
87-83: B  
82-80: B-  
79-78: C+  
77-73: C  
72-70: C-  
69-68: D+  
67-64: D  
62-60: D-  
59-0: F

## **Instructor Office Hours**

By appointment

## **Classroom Environment**

Students are expected to act in a professional manner in class. This includes showing up and on time. You must let me know ahead of time if you'll be absent. Unexcused absences will affect your final grade. You are graded on a point system and points will include class participation.

## **Additional Classroom Policies**

- Students are responsible for all readings whether or not they are discussed in lecture.
- No late assignments will be accepted unless there are significant, extenuating circumstances. Students must communicate with me immediately if they are unable to meet a deadline.
  - All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced and proofread. Errors in grammar, spelling and organization will result in a lower grade.
  - Please turn off all laptops, cell phones, etc. Do not text or Tweet in class.

## **Academic Dishonesty Policy**

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher
- Providing information to another student during an examination
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work that is completed outside of the classroom
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at <http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source>.

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the appropriate area head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

A complete description of the School of Communication Academic Integrity Policy can be found at:  
<http://www.luc.edu/soc/Policy.shtml>

**Schedule 8/29-12/12 (Wednesdays) AT LEAST 3 TBD GUEST PRESENTATIONS**

**Week One 8/29**

Course Overview (bring textbook and style guide)

Introductions

Expectations and Outcomes

Assignments: About You, Find News Article, Pick a Shark Tank 17 or 18 Product

**Week Two 9/5**

Chapter 1: Getting Organized for Writing

Chapter 2: Becoming a Persuasive Writer

Assignments: Favorite Brand, Shark Tank/why, News Article Persuasion

**Week Three 9/12**

Chapter 3: Finding and Making News

Media List

Assignments: Media List, Article from Reporter

**Week Four 9/19**

Chapter 4: Working with Journalists and Bloggers + Crisis

Assignment: Crisis Article, Blog

**Week Five 9/26**

Chapter 5: Writing the News Release

Assignment: "Real" Press Release, Key Messages Draft 1, Press Release Outline Draft 1

**Week Six 10/3**

Chapter 6: Preparing Fact Sheets, Advisories, Media Kits and Pitches

Fact Sheet

Assignment: Key Messages Final, Press Release Outline Final. Pitch Letter Draft

**Week Seven 10/10**

Chapter 8: Publicity Photos and Infographics

Assignment: Write Press Release Draft 1, Find Photo Caption, Write Photo Caption, Pitch Letter Final

**Week Eight 10/17**

Chapter 9: Radio, Television and Online Video

Assignment: Press Release Final

Review for Midterm

**Week Nine 10/24**

MIDTERM

**Week Ten 10/31 NO CLASS...I HAVE 4 KIDS, AND IT'S HALLOWEEN**

**Week Eleven 11/07**

Chapter 11: Social Media and Mobile Apps

Chapter 10: Websites, Blogs and Podcasts

Assignment: Social Media Posts

**Week Twelve 11/14**

Chapter 13: Writing Email, Memos and Proposals

Chapter 14: Giving Speeches and Presentations

Assignment: Presentation, Email me

**Week Thirteen 11/21 NO CLASS**

**Week Fourteen 11/28**

**TEST**

**Working Session**

**Show me your presentation**

**Week Fifteen 12/5**

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Week Sixteen 12/12**

**PRESENTATIONS**