University of Houston Communications 3369  
“Public Relations Writing”  
Fall Semester 2006 - Tuesday/Thursday

Instructor:  Julie B. Fix, APR  
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Office Hours: Mondays 11 a.m. - noon., Tuesdays/Thursdays 10 – 11 a.m., or by appointment

Text:  PR Writing 7th Edition - Newsom & Haynes

Learning Outcomes:
1. Adapt media writing skills for public relations purposes  
2. Polish all writing skills to better prepare for employment  
3. Further develop public relations "thinking" skills  
   • Students making an "A" in this course have excellent writing skills and are writing at near the professional level.  
   • Students making a "B" in this class have good writing skills but need continued professional development training/mentoring in writing.  
   • Students making a "C" in this class have average writing skills and will need additional writing training at the professional level.  
   • Students making a "D" or "F" in this class have not completed all work or have shown no progress in developing the required skills.

Attendance:  A sign-in sheet will be posted for each class. Attendance is expected and five points will be deducted from your participation grade for each class missed. Excused absences will be given only for valid medical reasons, unavoidable work conflict or professional development opportunity. **View this class as a job and be absent only when you would be absent from paying work.** As you would in the workplace, please e-mail or phone me if you find you cannot attend class for some reason. Absences are “excused” only for medical reasons, professional development, work and family emergencies, and only with the consent of the instructor.

Assignments:  Assignments are due when they are due. None will be accepted late without penalty.  **Deadlines are important in public relations.**

Prerequisites:Communications 2310  
Communications 3368

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>93-100 = A</th>
<th>77 - 79 = C+</th>
<th>59 - 0 = F</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>90 - 92 = A-</td>
<td>73 - 76 = C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scale:</td>
<td>87 - 89 = B+</td>
<td>70 - 72 = C-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83 - 86 = B</td>
<td>67 - 69 = D+</td>
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<td>82 - 80 = B-</td>
<td>63 - 66 = D</td>
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<td>60 - 62 = D-</td>
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Note: You are responsible for submitting error-free assignments. An uncorrected error in your copy (typo, misspelling, incorrect grammar or otherwise) will cost 2.5 points. (In the “real world,” you would be expected to correct and reprint your copy. However, I will accept editing marks.)

Policy: The university's Academic Honest Policy will be upheld. See http://www.uh.edu/dos/hdbk/acad/achonpol.html if you are unfamiliar with it. In this class, a student who plagiarizes from any source will fail the assignment with “0” points and be advised that if the offense is repeated he or she will automatically fail the course.

Policy: Cell phones and other personal communication devices must be turned off or to “silent” mode during class and kept out of view during class time.

Writing Assignment Summary: (Note due dates are subject to change.)
1. News story (100 points) - Due Class 2 (Aug. 24)
2. Directions (100 points) - Due Class 4 (Aug. 31)
3. Test Your Writing IQ Pass/Fail (30 points) - Due Class 7 (Sept. 12)
4. Memo (100 points) - Due Class 8 (Sept. 14)
5. Cover letter (100 points) - Due Class 10 (Sept. 21)
6. Boilerplate (pass/fail) (30 points) - Due Class 12 (Sept. 28)
7. Client news release (100 points) - Due Class 12 (Sept. 28)
8. Client fact sheet (100 points) - Due Class 13 (Oct. 3)
9. Narrative Bio (pass/fail) (30 points) - Due Class 14 (Oct. 5)
10. Client feature story release (100 points) - Due Class 15 (Oct. 10)
11. "Crisis" news release (100 points) - Written In Class 16 (Oct. 12)
12. Media Kit Content List (pass/fail) (30 points) - Due Class 21 (Oct. 31)
13. Tip Sheet (pass/fail) (30 points) - Due Class 22 (Nov. 2)
14. Pitch e-mail (100 points) - Due Class 22 (Nov. 2)
15. Web page writing (100 points) - Due Class 24 (Nov. 9)
16. "Breaking" news release (100 points) - Written In Class 24 (Nov. 9)
17. PR Writing Test (150 points) - Taken In Class 26 (Nov. 16)

Participation: 100 points maximum

Media Kit (25 percent of grade - 500 points) - Due Class 28 (Nov. 30)
Must be all new content to support a special event. (Complete instructions will be given during Class 19)

Minimum Content:
1. News release
2. Feature story
3. Fact sheet
4. Narrative bio
5. Tip sheet

Plus: Other content as specified on Media Kit Content List
Scheduled Class Holidays: Nov. 21, Nov. 23

Tentative Course Outline: (Subject to change.)

Class (1)  Course Overview, Selecting A Client Company
Aug. 22  Assignment: Write a news story from fact sheet handout
          Assignment due: Class 2
          Reading Assignment: Chapter 6

Class (2)  Writing 101
Aug. 24  Assignment: Test Your Writing IQ
          Assignment due: Class 7
          Reading Assignment: Chapter 5

Class (3)  Writing For Clarity & Interest
Aug. 29  Assignment: Write clear and interesting directions
          Assignment due: Class 4
          Reading Assignment: Chapters 1-2

Class (4)  PR Writing, Ethical & Legal Responsibilities
Aug. 31  Reading Assignment: Chapters 3-4

Class (5)  Persuasion, Research
Sept. 5  Elements of News - Critique news story
          Reading Assignment: Chapter 7 pages 132-145

Class (6)  E-mails, Memos, Business Letters
Sept. 7  Assignment: Memo on client prospect
          Assignment due: Class 8
          Reading Assignment: Chapter 7 pages 146-150

Class (7)  Review PR Planning Process, Reports, Proposals
Sept. 12  Assignment: Cover letter to your client
          Assignment due: Class 10

Class (8)  Review Test Your Writing IQ, Writing “Boilerplates” & Mission Statements
Sept. 14  Assignment: Write a boilerplate statement for your client
          Assignment due: Class 12
          Reading Assignment: Chapter 9

Class (9)  Writing News Releases In Public Relations
Sept. 19  Assignment: News release on your client
          Assignment due: Class 12

Class (10)  NOTE: Class will not meet on Thursday, Sept. 21 so that the instructor and
Sept. 21  students may attend Houston PRSA Media Day.
          Organizing Stories, Message Crafting, Finding Stories, Delivering Messages, More
          Writing 101
          Reading Assignment: Chapter 8

Class (11)  Writing Fact Sheets, Backgrounders, Position Papers In PR
Sept. 26  Assignment: Fact Sheet on your client
          Assignment due: Class 13

Class (12)  Writing Leads: In Class Exercise, Writing Narrative Bios
Sept. 28  Assignment: Write a narrative bio of yourself
          Assignment due: Class 14
          Reading Assignment: Chapter 11
Class (13) Writing Feature Stories For PR
Oct. 3
Assignment: Write a feature story on your client
Assignment due: Class 15
Reading Assignment: Chapter 20

Class (14) Edit: Narrative Bio, Crisis Communications
Assignment due: Class 18

Class (15) Critique: Client News Release, Writing Brochure Copy
Assignment due: Class 19

Class (16) In Class: Write A "Crisis" News Release
Assignment due: Class 15
Reading Assignment: Chapter 17

Class (17) Newsletters
Reading Assignment: Chapter 19

Class (18) Critique: Feature Story, Writing For Magazines And Annual Reports
Reading Assignment: Chapter 15 pages 298-312

Class (19) Media Relations: Pitch Letters & E-mails, Tip Sheets, Advisories
Assignment: Write a tip sheet for your client
Write a pitch e-mail (from fact sheet)
Assignment due: Class 22
Reading Assignment: Read Chapter 15 pages 312-315

Class (20) Media Kits
Assignment: Media Kit Content List
Assignment due: Due Class 21
[Assignment: Special event media kit - Due Class 28]
Reading Assignment: Chapter 16

Class (21) Writing Speeches & Presentations
Reading Assignment: Chapter 14

Class (22) Writing For Web sites
Assignment: Write content for 3 Web pages for your client:
(1) About Us (2) Who's Who (3) Latest News
Assignment due: Class 24
Reading Assignment: Chapter 13

Class (23) Revisit Feature Writing (If Necessary), Writing Leads: In Class Exercise, Writing Advertising Copy

Class (24) In Class: Write A "Breaking" News Release (From A Fact Sheet)

Class (25) Résumé Writing, Portfolios - Bring yours for review

Class (26) In Class: PR Writing Test (Like The "Pros" Use)

Class (27) Words Of Advice From The "Pros"

Class (28) Media Kits Due

Media Kits Due