

MCOM 3395 – Writing for Public Relations & Advertising
Syllabus – Spring 2015

I. Faculty Information

A. Dr. Mary Anna Kidd, Associate Professor of Journalism

1. HPR 268
2. Office Hours: MW 4:00-5:00, MF 10-11:00, and by appointment.
3. Phone: 903-566-7076 (o); 903-525-9449 (h)
4. E-mail: mkidd@uttyler.edu (best way to reach me, typically)

II. Course Description

A. JOUR 3395 Writing for Public Relations and Advertising exams and applies the writing skills required in public relations and advertising. Competency is developed in writing news releases, feature articles, newsletters, advertising copy, magazine articles, brochure copy, and other written tools.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Students will be able to:

1. Write correctly and clearly using the formats and compelling storytelling styles appropriate for the audiences and purposes for public relations/integrated communication.
2. Understand and practice the First Amendment and other legal principles.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and issues for public relations/integrated communication.
4. Demonstrate an ability to incorporate elements of visual design and composition into project design.
5. Understand and apply concepts and theories in the use and presentation of images and information using tools and technologies appropriate for public relations/integrated communication.
6. Conduct research and evaluate information using methods appropriate to public relations/integrated communication.
7. Construct a persuasive message, adapted to the audience, purpose, and context of the situation
8. Strengthen critical and creative thinking abilities.
9. Begin building a professional portfolio by offering opportunities to complete real assignments for real clients.

IV. Course Requirements

A. **Required Texts**

Wilcox, D.L., & Reber, B.H. (2013). *Public Relations Writing & Media Techniques* (7th Ed.). Boston: Pearson. ISBN: 13: 978-0-205-21167-8; 10:0-205-21167-4.

Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual. (MOST RECENT EDITION)

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Recommended Texts

Strunk Jr., W., & White, E.B. (2000). The Elements of Style 4th Edition, New York: Longman. (OR MOST RECENT EDITION)

A good dictionary

B. Tools

Flash Drive

Computer

C. Course Requirements

1. Mastery of Associated Press Manual writing style.
 - a) AP Stylebook Tests and Quizzes
 - b) Writing Assignments
2. Weekly scenario writing assignments
 - a) In-class writing assignments:
 - (1) Memorandum
 - (2) Newsletter/Magazine Stories
 - (3) Brochure
 - (4) News Releases
 - (5) Backgrounders
 - (6) Commercials
 - (7) Promotions
 - (8) Strategic Message Planners
 - (9) Print Ads
 - (10) Business Letters
 - (11) Fact Sheets
 - (12) Etc.
3. Client/Portfolio Projects – Take-home assignments for real clients
 - a) Media kit – Select your own client
 - b) Brochure – Client assigned
 - c) Integrated advertising project (IAP) – client assigned
 - (1) Situation Analysis
 - (2) Strategic message planner
 - (3) Print ad/copy planner/copy sheet
 - (4) Interactive Media element/copy planner
 - (5) Video script/storyboard/treatment sheet
 - (6) PPT of TV ad w/sound OR produced ad
 - (7) Brief Written Proposal with PPT presentation
 - d) Client/portfolio projects will go in your portfolio with any other real assignments for real clients from other courses or from internships.
4. Class participation and activities
5. Presentation of IAP project to client

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- D. **Electronic Devices:** Turn off all electronic devices including cell phones and MP3 players. Allowing a cell phone or other device to ring during class is rude and disrupts class. No text messaging or checking the time on your cell phone during class. Keep these devices in your back pack during class.
- E. **Use of Computers in Class:** Keyboards must be placed to the right of each monitor and remain untouched during class unless otherwise instructed to use the computer as part of an in-class assignment. Do not use computers during class for reading/writing e-mail, surfing the Web, playing games, working on assignments for other classes, or writing letters.
- F. **Assignment Policy:**
1. Assignments will be given throughout the semester. Students are responsible for all course materials, including, but not limited to, class lectures, handouts, workbook and textbook reading assignments.
 2. Assignments and due dates may be changed at the instructor's discretion with fair notice to students.
 3. Students must complete all assignments in order to pass the course. This does not mean that merely completing all assignments guarantees the student will pass the course.
 4. Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due at the beginning of class.
 5. ALL PAPERS MUST BE TYPED OR WORD-PROCESSED USING THE FORMAT REQUIRED FOR THE ASSIGNMENT.
 6. **Spelling, grammar, punctuation, style, and diction count. Deductions for each error are:**
 - a) -5 AP error
 - b) -5 punctuation
 - c) -5 grammar
 - d) -5 misspelled word
 - e) -10 factual error
 - f) -50 misspelled names
 7. **ALWAYS ATTACH EARLIER VERSIONS TO REWRITES.**
 8. Multiple pages must be stapled or paper clipped together, unless otherwise specified. It is your responsibility to see this is accomplished.
- G. **Late Assignments:** Late assignments will not be accepted. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the date specified.
- H. **Attendance and Tardiness Policy:** Attendance in the course is mandatory; however there are times when an absence is unavoidable. **Four** absences are allowed – this includes illness, university-sponsored activities, etc. A **fifth** absence will **lower the final grade by 5 percentage points**. A **seventh** absence will **lower the grade by 10 percentage points**. See the current UT Tyler catalog for the university's policy on student responsibility for missed classes and assignments. Be familiar with the university's drop policy. Students who anticipate being absent from class due to religious observance or university-sponsored activities should inform the instructor by

the second class meeting. **Students over 15 minutes late are considered absent. If a student must be absent the day an exam or presentation is scheduled, he/she must notify the instructor before class time. No make-up tests or presentations will be allowed if the instructor is not given a legitimate excuse before the time of the exam or presentation.**

Student Absence due to Religious Observance: Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities: If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

I. **Writing Center:** Take advantage of writing help. The U-T Tyler Writing Center provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning, as you will be asked to discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix, repair, or operate on your paper. Location: BUS 202. Appointments: 903-565-5995.

J. **Services for Students with Disabilities:** In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns, please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to cstaples@uttyler.edu.

V. UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

A. **Grade Replacement:** Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

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Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

B. The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

C. State-Mandated Course Drop Policy: Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Schedule of Classes for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Registrar's Office and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Registrar's Office if you have any questions.

D. Social Security and FERPA Statement: It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; **grades will not be transmitted electronically.**

E. Emergency Exits and Evacuation: Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

F. Students Rights and Responsibilities: To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/StudentRightsandResponsibilities.html>.

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G. The **U-T Tyler Writing Center** provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning, as you will be asked to discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix, repair, or operate on your paper. Location: BUS 202. Appointments: 903-565-5995.

VI. EVALUATION AND GRADE CALCULATION

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| AP Stylebook Tests/Quizzes & Writing | 15% |
| Participation | 5% |
| Weekly scenario writing assignments | 30% |
| Client/Portfolio Projects | 40% |
| Client Presentation* | <u>10%</u> |
| Total | 100% |

*Must be completed to pass course. You must also be present for all presentations or you will lose points from your final project grade.

Each assignment will be graded on

1. **Content:** Do the message and its execution clearly, gracefully and diplomatically fulfill the purpose? Does the message address the values of the client as well as those of the target audience? Is it factually correct?
2. **Organization:** Does organization enhance content? Does each part of the message lead logically and gracefully to the next?
3. **Grammar:** Is the message free, for the most part, of unintended grammatical, spelling, punctuation and style errors?
4. **Format:** Does the execution of the message look the way it should? Are unique requirements, such as headings in a business letter, correct and correctly placed?

A = Outstanding. This grade is for work of clearly professional quality (publishable or broadcast ready). The writing is clear and well-organized; it requires virtually no editing. The reporting is complete and leaves no significant questions unanswered. The work is turned in by or before deadline, needing no changes before submission to clients or editors. These strategic messages get results, win awards and, when appropriate, feature creative concepts; they are executed with comprehensive research, interesting presentation and nearly flawless writing.

B = Good. This grade is for work that could be raised to professional standards without extensive editing. Writing is grammatically correct but may lack the sparkle and fine organization of "A" work. The reporting answers the main questions but may miss the proper emphasis or the best sources. The work is turned in by deadline with little or no prompting and needs only minor revisions in such areas as reorganizing, rewriting, reformatting or providing more or better sources. "B" work doesn't necessarily have any errors, but it could be better, often with a stronger topic or subject, a more artistic

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presentation, better information or improved writing. "B" work demonstrates basic broadcast or print style.

C = Adequate. This grade is for work that indicates a problem in at least one area, such as grammar, diplomacy or strategy. It does not measure up to professional quality but could be saved by revision. Work is incomplete by deadline and/or needs more than minor revision before submission to a client or supervisor. These messages have weak ideas, concepts or presentation. They draw attention because they don't quite do the job. In summary, the work is an adequate first draft but isn't yet ready to show a client or supervisor.

D = Unacceptable performance. This grade is for work that is clearly unacceptable even in a classroom setting. The writing is confused and/or ungrammatical. The reporting is flawed and may contain major factual errors and/or omissions or may show little concept of basic strategic judgment. Work may miss the deadline.

F = Failing. This grade is for work that is not completed in a professional, timely way. For whatever reason, it suggests that the student did not take the assignment seriously. Such performance is often the result of personal or time-management problems that extend beyond a lack of skills or understanding of the research, writing or production processes.

Grading Assumptions

1. The grading process starts with the assumption that the work is "good," which earns a grade of "B." (See "good" definition above.)
2. You may write a story with no errors that earns a "B."
3. Strong and (when appropriate) clever leads, exceptional storytelling, effective and appropriate use of traditional literary devices such as alliteration, metaphors and parallel constructions help boost stories to the "A" category. Also, exceptional reporting, diplomacy and adherence to strategy can boost stories to the "A" category.
4. Fact errors, poor organization, grammar/spelling/usage errors, weak verbs, weak leads, unsound strategic judgment, bad diplomacy, missed deadlines and/or failure to follow proper style and format will lower an assignment's grade.

Reminder: Spelling, grammar, punctuation, style, and diction count. Deductions for each error are:

- a) -5 AP error
- b) -5 punctuation
- c) -5 grammar
- d) -5 misspelled word
- e) -10 factual error
- f) -50 misspelled names