

Journalism 351A: Public Relations Media

Spring 2008

Meeting Time and Location

Room GFS 207
Tuesday 6:00pm – 9:20pm

Instructor

Eric Moses
University of Southern California
Annenberg School for Communication
School of Journalism

Required Text

*Public Relations Writing and
Media Techniques*, by
Dennis L. Wilcox

About the Course

Public Relations Media (JOUR 351A) is a four-unit course that will focus on uncontrolled media. We will delve deeply into the roles of and relationship between the media and public relations, while you build on your understanding of basic public relations concepts and principles.

Through lectures, readings and hands-on practice, you will learn to produce the most important and most common media relations tools according to commonly accepted standards. In addition, you will learn to strategize persuasive efforts and put them into action. Principles of ethics and social responsibility will be woven throughout the course.

The success of the public relations professional has as much to do with writing ability as anything else. The ability to write well, write creatively and capture the audience's attention can be your ticket to a successful career.

Public Relations is...

A management function that maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its successes or failures depend.

To become the best public relations practitioners --- and managers --- we can, our training should be broad and deep. A "broad" training is one through which we learn the practical skills, the tactics and techniques that make public relations practices "work." A "deep" training, on the other hand, is one through which we come to understand the importance of strategic communication, the theories that speak to our field and the essence of what it means to be an effective and ethical public relations professional and practitioner.

Course Objectives

- To understand the fundamental communication, behavioral and organizational principles that serve as the foundation for the practice of contemporary public relations.
- To develop an understanding of the variety of organizational problems public relations professionals are engaged to solve, the challenges they face and the types of solutions they craft to achieve desired outcomes.
- To understand how to plan, execute and evaluate public relations campaigns.
- To enhance your written and oral presentation skills.
- To understand how to research, design, produce, write and manage public relations media and materials.
- To understand how to plan, execute and evaluate public relations campaigns.
- To understand how to strategize persuasive efforts in creating effective media coverage.
- To understand the roles of and relationships between the media and public relations.

Tasks in the Class

We will write and produce news releases, fact sheets, advisories, pitch letters, features, photos and captions, press kits, etc... We will also look at media events such as press conferences, special events, interviews, photo shoots and more.

All the varied collateral that public relations professional provide to the media will be dealt with in this class.

The success of the public relations professional has as much to do with writing ability as anything else. The ability to write well, write creatively and to capture the attention of your audience can be your ticket to an exceptional career.

Questions to address about the Media

1. What defines the media?
2. Who are the media?
3. What does the media do?
4. How do they get their stories?

Questions to address about the Public Relations Practitioners

1. What is the role of the public relations professional in regards to the media?
2. Who are we? What do we do?
3. What is our alliance with the media?
4. How do we best do our jobs: for our clients and for the media?

Deadlines

Deadlines are the norm in mass media and public relations work, therefore, deadlines will be firm and strictly enforced. Assignments will be collected at the start of class in printed form ONLY. NO EXCEPTIONS! In case an emergency prevents you from attending class, please e-mail homework to me on or before the deadline (6 p.m. on Tuesday).

NOTE: No part of the final project will be accepted by e-mail.

Reading Assignments

Reading assignments should be completed following the corresponding lecture.

Attendance

We meet once a week, and your participation is critical and valued. You do not need permission to be absent, nor do you need to present a written excuse. However, please keep in mind that missing a single class is equivalent to missing 7% of the semester and you will receive no credit for in-class work that day. Make-up classes, exams and assignments are not available.

Tardiness is disruptive and rarely tolerated in the workplace. By all means, do still come to class if you will be late, but please understand that if you arrive after we have taken a pop quiz or are already immersed in a graded exercise, you will not receive credit.

Writing Coaches

From basic skills to fine-tuning, USC Annenberg's School of Journalism writing coaches are available to assist journalism students of all levels. Students can schedule sessions to consult one-on-one about their work and tips on how to make improvements. Contact the writing coaches by e-mail to set up an appointment.

Bob Berger, Print Writing Coach
ASC 227
Phone: (213) 821-2224
E-mail: rberger@usc.edu

Ed Boyer, Print Writing Coach
ASC 227
Phone: (213) 821-1541
E-mail: edjboyer@ca.rr.com

Mike Daniels, Broadcast Writing Coach
ASC 227-9
Phone: (310) 823-2310
E-mail: danielsm@usc.edu

THE FOLLOWING IS THE USC SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM'S ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY.

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own; in journalism, this includes appropriating the reporting of another without clear attribution. The following is the Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalog: "Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed as a major from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to this policy."

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. The office is located in the Student Union room 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776.

Elements of Journalism 351A

- In-class assignments
- Take home writing assignments
- Class discussion
- Quizzes
- Reading
- Midterm exam
- Final project

Graded Assignments

- In-class assignments/Participation * (10%)
- Midterm exam (25%)
- Quizzes ** (15%)
- Take home assignments *** (15%)
- Final project **** (35%)

* **The in-class assignments will be practice media writing assignments geared to help you master the art of writing for public relations media.**

** **The quizzes will be “pop” and will be based on the readings and lecture.**

*** **The take home assignments are denoted on the syllabus as “Assignment #.” Each take home assignment will involve you having to write and/or produce a variation of news releases, fact sheets, advisories, pitch letters, features, photos, captions and any other varied collateral that public relations professional provide to the media.**

**** **For the final project, you will produce a media kit.**

Grading Scale

The USC School of Journalism’s grading scale applies to work in this course.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
A	95-100%	B-	75-79%	D+	55-59%
A-	90-94%	C+	70-74%	D	50-54%
B+	85-89%	C	65-69%	D-	45-49%
B	80-84%	C-	60-64%	F	44% or lower

Schedule of Classes

Tuesday, January 15, 2008

- Student/Instructor introductions
- Course and Syllabus Review
- What is Public Relations?
- Writing for Public Relations

Read: Chapter 1 & 2

***Assignment (Corporate Biography) – Due January 22**

***This assignment will NOT be graded**

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

- Slander and libel
- Ethics
- What makes news?
- Persuasive Speaking
- Media Communication Theories

Read: Chapter 3 & 11

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

- Entertainment Public Relations
- Sports/Travel Public Relations
- Public Relations Arenas

Read: Chapter 4 & 12

Assignment # 1 - Brochure (Due: February 5)

Tuesday, February 5, 2007

- Media Advisory
- News Release
- Types of News Releases
- Press Releases
- Media Placement

Read: Chapter 5

Assignment # 2 – News Release, Media Advisory (Due: February 12)

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

- Public Relations Agencies
- Public Relations Services
- Media (Preview)
- More of News Releases
- More on Media Advisories

Read: Chapter 6 & 7

Assignment # 3 – News Releases, Media Advisory (Due: February 19)

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

- What makes news
- “On the Record – Off the Record”
- Public Service Announcements

Read: Chapter 9 & 10

Assignment # 4 – Public Service Announcement (Due: February 26)

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

- Review for Midterm

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

- Midterm Exam

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

- Crisis Communication
- Working with media
- Statements
- Fact Sheets

Read: Chapter 13 & 14

Assignment # 5 – Fact Sheet (Due: March 25)

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

- **Spring Recess: No class**

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

- Government Relations
- Corporate Public Affairs
- Pitch Letters

Read: Chapter 8

Assignment # 6 – Pitch Letter (Due: April 1)

Tuesday, April 1, 2008

- Public Relations campaigns
- Product Placement
- Visual Techniques in the mass media
- Speechwriting

Read: Chapter 16 & 17

Assignment # 7 – The Speech (Due: April 10)

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

- Corporate Public Relations
- Marketing Communications
- Cause-related Marketing
- Public Relations Advertising
- Executive Bio

Read: Chapter 15 & 18

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

- **Assignment # 8 – In class (Spin Doctor)**
- Newspaper Public Relations
- Magazine Public Relations
- Tabloid Public Relations
- Measuring public relations success

Read: Chapter 19

Assignment # 8 – Spin Doctor (Due: April 15)

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

- Final project due

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to some adjustment throughout the semester to accommodate timely, late-breaking topics and events, as well as the availability of guest speakers.

Instructor Background

Eric Moses is a vice president at Consensus Planning Group, Inc., where he heads the public relations practice. He has nearly 15 years of public affairs and strategic communications experience from a career built in journalism, politics, public policy and public relations. With the knowledge of how the media works from the inside out, he specializes in using the media to manage clients' reputation.

Eric began his career as a journalist, working as a reporter at City News Service in Los Angeles, where he covered state and federal courts (including the O.J. Simpson civil trial), and Los Angeles city and county government. He then worked for the *Daily News of Los Angeles* as a reporter and editorial writer. He also worked at *National Journal* magazine in Washington, D.C.

After six years of covering government issues as a member of the media, Eric joined the office of Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan as a Policy Analyst, beginning the first of two stints in Los Angeles City Hall.

As an assistant deputy mayor in the Riordan administration, Eric oversaw policy initiatives for the Department of Water and Power, Port of Los Angeles, Transportation Department, Environmental Affairs Department and Community Redevelopment Agency. He served as the mayor's top aide on energy issues during California's energy crisis in 2001. He later served as Communications Director for City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, for who he oversaw all aspects of public relations.

Eric combined his media and government backgrounds as a member of the public affairs teams at two of the world's largest public relations firms. Most recently, he was a Vice President at Hill & Knowlton, focusing on labor issues, economic development, media training, communications strategy and media relations. He worked on reputation management programs for Wal-Mart Stores, an architecture firm facing potential lawsuits and a state higher education agency facing labor strife. At Fleishman-Hillard Inc., Eric worked on a variety of accounts, including the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau and Department of Water and Power, and he developed the media strategy for Mayor Jim Hahn's first "One Book, One City" program.

Eric is a vice president of the Los Angeles chapter of the Public Relations Society of America and serves as the chapter officer to the national PRSA Advocacy Advisory Board. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Rochester and a Master of Arts degree in Print Journalism from the University of Southern California.