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# Journalism 351A: Public Relations Media

## Spring 2008

**Meeting Time and Location**  
Grace Ford Salvatori Hall  
Room 207  
Thursday 6:00pm – 9:20pm

**Instructor**  
Darryl Ryan, B.A., M.S.  
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 (JOUR351A) 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.
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- 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 Thursday).

**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.

### **USC School of Journalism Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Policy**

“Plagiarism” is defined as taking ideas or writing from another and passing them off as one’s own; in journalism, this includes appropriating the reporting of another without clear attribution.

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.

### **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](mailto:rberger@usc.edu)

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

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

### **Academic Accommodations**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is 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. to 5 p.m. The office is located in the Student Union room 301 and their phone number is (213) 840-0776.

### Elements of 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 low

### Schedule of Classes

#### Thursday, January 17, 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 24**

**\*This assignment will NOT be graded**

**Thursday, January 24, 2008**

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

**Read: Chapter 3 & 11**

**Thursday, January 31, 2008**

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

**Read: Chapter 4 & 12**

**Assignment # 1 - Brochure (Due: February 7)**

**Thursday, February 7, 2008**

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

**Read: Chapter 5**

**Assignment # 2 – News Release, Media Advisory (Due: February 14)**

**Thursday, February 14, 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 21)**

**Thursday, February 21, 2008**

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

**Read: Chapter 9 & 10**

## **Assignment # 4 – Public Service Announcement (Due: February 28)**

### **Thursday, February 28, 2008**

- Review for Midterm

### **Thursday, March 6, 2008**

- Midterm Exam

### **Thursday, March 13, 2008**

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

**Read: Chapter 13 & 14**

**Assignment # 5 – Fact Sheet (Due: Due March 27)**

### **Thursday, March 20, 2008**

**SPRING BREAK – (No Class)**

### **Thursday, March 27, 2008**

- Government Relations
- Corporate Public Affairs
- Pitch Letters

**Read: Chapter 8**

**Assignment # 6 – Pitch Letter (Due: April 3)**

### **Thursday, April 3, 2008**

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

**Read: Chapter 16 & 17**

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

### **Thursday, April 10, 2008**

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

- Executive Bio

**Read: Chapter 15 & 18**

**Thursday, April 17, 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 17)**

**Thursday, April 24, 2008**

- Pitch Final Project
- Final Project Due

**Thursday, May 1, 2008**

- Hand back Final Project

**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**

I received my Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Public Policy from UCLA and my Master of Science degree in Public Relations and Communication from Boston University.

Currently, I serve as the Senior Press Deputy for the Mayor of Los Angeles. In this position, I manage the development and implementation of media strategies, and communicate the Mayor's decisions, policies and positions to print, radio and television mediums. I also manage and produce all press conferences and media events, as well as plan, implement and manage community outreach programs.

I am the primary spokesperson and communication manager for the Mayor and the City of Los Angeles in the following areas: Transportation, Airports, the Los Angeles Fire Department, Sports, Neighborhood and Community Services, and Public Works.

Additionally, I write speeches and talking points for the Mayor, as well as press releases and media advisories. Also, I supervise and coordinate the work duties of the press aides. Furthermore, I liaise with the Legislative and Communication Deputies of local, state and federal government officials, as well as with the Public Information Directors for City, County and State agencies.

Prior to working in the Villaraigosa administration, I served as the Public Relations and Marketing Communications Manager with All Nippon Airways (ANA), a Japanese airline company. At ANA, I developed all public relations and strategic advertising campaigns for the company within the United States.

In addition, I managed advertising related efforts of ANA's satellite offices and the Tokyo-based headquarters. I also managed a \$1.125 million budget for all public relations and strategic advertising campaigns, along with managing a team of Senior Marketing Analysts. Additionally, I created the ANA news information, as well with served as the primary ANA media relations contact and spokesman.