



MCOM 4673 Public Relations Writing

Spring 2020 | MWF 2:00-2:50PM | FA D101

Instructor Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Eunji Cho

Office: Fain Fine Arts Center D205

Office hours: MWF 10:00-11:00AM, MW 1:00-2:00PM, and by appointment

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Course Description & Objectives

The course emphasizes the research and planning required for effective public relations writing, as well as professionalism in executing PR documents. Discussions and in-class exercises will focus on recognizing an organization's public relations opportunities and on how to communicate effectively with organizations' audiences.

Through discussions, class activities, and assignments, this course is designed to:

1. provide an understanding of the importance of planning and developing public relations messages.
2. help you make effective decisions in planning public relations messages.
3. provide the skills for writing effective audience-specific public relations messages.
4. integrate public relations theory with the skills you need to be an effective public relations writer.

Required Text & Materials

- Diggs-Brown. The PR Style Guide, Formats for Public Relations Practice. 3rd ed.
- Additional materials will be distributed during class, through email, or posted to D2L (Desire-to-Learn).

Course Requirements

1. Class activities:

Over the course of the semester there will be various class activities. These activities will be done by 2-3 team members and should be submitted by the end of the class. More specific guidelines (e.g., clients, grading criteria) will be provided in class.

2. Homework:

There are three individual homework assignments. Each student will be required to develop a specific PR practice. Specific guidelines and procedures for this assignment will be discussed later on in the semester.

Late assignments will not be accepted and will receive a zero except in the case of excused absence (e.g., a documented family emergency or a documented personal illness or injury). If you know you will miss a class or will be away on the day an assignment is due, submit it to me before the due date.

3. Quizzes:

Throughout the semester we will have quizzes at the beginning of every Wednesday class. Quiz questions are from lecture slides, the textbook, and discussion. There will not be make-up quizzes if you are late or miss the class, unless it is an excused absence and you inform me of your absence in advance.

4. Local Business Project (group project):

At the end of semester, we will have a group project presentation. You will have a chance to show how you can apply your knowledge and understanding of the public relations process by 1) identifying the problem, 2) doing research, 3) coming up with solutions to solve the identified problem, and 4) presenting a comprehensive PR plan. This project will be for local businesses, so there will be a potential for a real-life relationship with the businesses. In the final presentation, the business owners or marketing teams may be invited to see and grade your presentation.

The group project will be graded by the instructor and/or clients (50%), other members of the class who are part of other groups (25%), and your peers within your group (25%).

Information explaining this project will be provided in separate handouts well in advance of the beginning of the project and will include grading criteria, due date, and other requirements.

Attendance & Participation:

Higher education takes place in a professional environment. You are expected to demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviors, including, but not limited to, on-time attendance, preparation for each class, active participation in class discussions, and attendance for the full class period.

Attendance will be taken at each class, and you will be allowed a total of three absences without penalty or question (i.e., unexcused absences). This does not apply to exam days or presentation days (see Tentative Class Schedule). After your third unexcused absence, however, you will lose points from your attendance grade, that day's participation grade, and credit for class activities for each additional class missed.

In case of excused absences, appropriate documentation (e.g., doctor's notes, obituaries) must be handed in to me within a week. If you arrive late or leave early for a class, you will not receive full credit for attendance on that day.

Finally, if you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and arrange with the instructor to make it up. As for missed assignments, if you have a legitimate explanation, alternate arrangements can be made at my discretion.

Grading

- Class activities = 15%
- Homework = 15 %
- Quizzes = 30 %
- Local Business Project (group project) = 30 %
- Participation (attendance, presentation, discussion) = 10%
- Total = 100 %

Grading Criteria

The following scale will be used to determine the final grade:

- *A = 90-100%*
- *B = 80-89%*
- *C = 70-79%*
- *D = 60-69%*
- *F: Less than 60%*

Student Responsibilities

- Students must arrive to class prepared, which means, among other things, that the assigned reading must be done.
- Students are expected to arrive on time, actively participate, and remain for the entire class period.
- Students are responsible for keeping all handouts and graded assignments.

Course Policies

1. Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is: (1) using someone else's source material (published or unpublished, including content from the Internet) without following accepted citation guidelines; or (2) submitting work that is not your own. The instructor will take appropriate disciplinary action for students if a

student is caught cheating, plagiarizing or fabricating information. The MSU Student Honor Creed in your student handbook and the university catalog reinforces this policy: "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so." Please acknowledge that you have learned the meaning the term *academic dishonesty*. Students cannot use the excuse that they do not understand the concept of academic dishonesty.

2. **Disruptive Behavior:** Any student's classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or other students' ability to benefit from the instruction – or violates any other Standard of Conduct applicable to the classroom environment – will result in his/her removal from the class. (See MSU Student Handbook, "Standards of Student Conduct.>").
3. **Special Accommodations:** Any student with a disability who is registered with the MSU Office of Disability Support Services (940-397-4140, CSC Room 168) and needs specific accommodations, or requires other considerations because of a disability, should notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester to ensure that these accommodations are provided. Please note that all information provided to me remains confidential.
4. **Cell Phones and Other Recording Devices:** The use of cell phones and other recording or electronic devices is strictly prohibited during class. The instructor may permit, from time to time, the use of cell phones for legitimate class reasons. Recording the class is prohibited, unless it is part of a reasonable accommodation under ADA, or unless students have special permission from the instructor. Laptops may be used for the purpose of taking notes during class; however, their use must be limited to course-related activities.
5. **Limited Right:** The university requires faculty to provide this statement to all students: By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a "limited right" in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The "limited right" shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student's work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and educational purposes.
6. **FERPA:** As a result of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, federal law bars the instructor from releasing information about students to parties outside the university – including parents/guardian - without the student's signed consent. Thus, in almost all cases the instructor will not discuss your academic progress or other matters with your parents. The instructor will only discuss grades with students. If there are any grade issues, the instructor will discuss grades during office hours.

7. Campus Carry: Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective Aug. 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at <https://mwsu.edu/campus-carry/rules-policies>. Please be advised that any violations of the law will be reported immediately.
8. Senior Portfolio: All mass communication majors are required to submit a portfolio as part of their internship course, which is a pre-requisite for Senior Production. This requirement is a part of MSU's reaccreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and is non-negotiable. Through the portfolio, students are required to demonstrate communication competence through the written word and visual communication; two examples of each competency are required. As you go through this and other classes, you are responsible for saving course work that could be included in your senior portfolio. Please see your instructor, adviser, the department chair or any Mass Communication faculty member for handouts with more information ("Mass Communication Senior Portfolio Competencies" and "Mass Communication Senior Portfolio FAQ"). These handouts are also available on the department web page: <https://msutexas.edu/academics/finearts/masscomm/>)
9. Social justice: Social justice is one of Midwestern State University's core values, and I consider the classroom to be a place where students will be treated with respect as human beings, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Moreover, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged. It is my expectation that ALL students be able to consider the classroom a safe environment.

Tentative Class Schedule

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to change and or move around scheduled lectures in order to facilitate for potential unplanned events (cancellations or guest speakers). You will be notified ahead of time of any changes to the schedule.

Week	Dates	Lecture / Discussion Topic
1	1/20	No class (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
	1/22	Course introduction
	1/24	Intro, Ch1 Annual Report
2	1/27	Ch1 Annual Report
	1/29	Ch2 Audio News Releases
	1/31	Ch2 Audio News Releases
3	2/3	Ch3 Brochures
	2/5	
	2/7	
4	2/10	Ch4 Communication Audits (First Assignment Due: 2/12)
	2/12	
	2/14	
5	2/17	Ch5 Direct Mail Campaigns
	2/19	
	2/21	
6	2/24	Ch6 Media Kits
	2/26	
	2/28	
7	3/2	Ch7 Media list
	3/4	
	3/6	
8	3/9	Ch9 New Media (Second Assignment Due: 3/11)
	3/11	
	3/13	
9	3/16	Spring Break
	3/18	
	3/20	
10	3/23	Ch10 Newsletters
	3/25	
	3/27	
11	3/30	Ch11 News Releases
	4/1	
	4/3	
12	4/6	Ch12 Opinion-Editorials
	4/8	
	4/10	no class (Easter Holiday)
13	4/13	Ch13 Public Service Ads and Announcements (Third Assignment Due: 4/15)
	4/15	
	4/17	
14	4/20	Ch14 Web Sites
	4/22	
	4/24	
15	4/27	Developing Business Project
	4/29	
	5/1	
16	5/4	Final Presentation
	5/6	
	5/8	