



MCOM 4673 Public Relations Writing

Spring 2022 | TR 5:30-6:50PM | Online

Instructor Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Eunji Cho

Office hours: Mon 11:00AM-1:00PM, Tue 4:00PM-5:00PM, Fri 11:00PM-1:00PM via Zoom and by appointments

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Instructor: Ashley Thomas

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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

- **Class activities:**

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

- **Homework (Zubaz Project):**

There is an individual homework assignment. 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.

- **Quizzes:**

Throughout the semester we will have weekly quizzes. 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.

- **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.

- **Participation**

This class includes various class activities. The activities are designed to be interesting and to help you learn. Thus, your active participation will affect how much you learn and how well you do in the course.

If emergencies arise or your circumstances change, please communicate with me. This will help us work together to try to find a solution for your situation.

In class and online meetings, please:

- behave professionally
- arrive on time
- be prepared
- pay attention
- actively participate
- treat others with courtesy and respect
- use language thoughtfully
- avoid inappropriate surroundings (online)

If you miss class, you miss the chance to participate in your education and the education of others in class. Your peers are counting on you to be in class and to participate.

Grading

- Class activities = 25%
- Quizzes = 20 %
- Homework = 10 %
- Local Business Project (group project) = 25 %
- Participation (attendance & presentation) = 20%
- 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%*

Statements Related to the Current COVID-19 Situation

- Scientific data shows that being fully vaccinated is the most effective way to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 and has the greatest probability of avoiding serious illness if infected in all age groups. Although MSU Texas is not mandating vaccinations in compliance with Governor Abbott's executive orders, we highly encourage eligible members of our community to get a vaccination. If you have questions or concerns about the vaccine, please contact your primary care physician or health care professional.
- Given the recent rise in cases, individuals are also strongly encouraged to wear facial coverings when indoors among groups of people, regardless of vaccination status. Although MSU Texas is not currently requiring facial coverings, they have been an effective strategy in slowing the spread.

- Safety and health of all are our top considerations. If you feel sick, do not come to class. If you need to miss class, contact me as outlined under class procedures, and I will work with you.

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

Week	Dates	Readings	Lecture / Discussion Topic
1	1/11	Chapter 1	Course introduction
	1/13		Annual Reports
2	1/18	Chapter 2	Audio News Release
	1/20		
3	1/25	Chapter 3	Brochures
	1/27		
4	2/1	Chapter 5	Direct Mail Campaigns
	2/3		
5	2/8	Chapter 6	Media Kits
	2/10		
6	2/15		Discussion: Local Business Project (with the client)
	2/17		
7	2/22	Chapter 8	Media Tours
	2/24		
8	3/1	Chapter 10	Newsletters
	3/3		
9	3/8	Chapter 11	News Release
	3/10		
10	3/15	Spring Break	
	3/17		
11	3/22	Chapter 12	Opinion-Editorials
	3/24		
12	3/29	Chapter 13	Public Service Ads and Announcements
	3/31		
13	4/5	Chapter 15	Video News Releases and Electronic Press Kits
	4/7		
14	4/12	Chapter 16	Web Sites
	4/14		Holiday Break
15	4/19	Group project development	
	4/21	Group project development	
16	4/26	Local Business Project Presentation	
	4/28		

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.