

JMC 123 | Public Relations Writing

Class Meets Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Instructor: Eric Kwame Adae, Ph.D. | **Office:** MER 110 (RM 110 at the new office on 25 St.)

Email: eric.adae@drake.edu | **Twitter:** @erickadae

Prerequisites: JMC 54 (News Writing), JMC 85 (PR Principles)

Overview: In this course, you will develop the writing and editing skills necessary to succeed in a public relations career. You will also learn to think critically about current events and how they relate to public relations practice. Some of your work will be completed on behalf of community partner(s); other work will be completed on behalf of a dream employer of your choice. Final work will be shared with the community partner(s), as well as your dream employer.

Why study public relations:

- Public relations' core function is to forge and manage crucial relationships between an organization and its publics.
- While there are specific, technical skills in public relations, it is also the only function that must look holistically at an organization and think long-term for the organization.
- Public relations skills are applicable in any industry. Every organization needs effective communicators and ethical relationship managers.
- Public relations is growing... quickly. Business analysts increasingly rank public relations as one of the fastest-growing careers. Yahoo! Education ranked "Public Relations Specialist" as the #1 career in the US for 2014, citing the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' projected growth for PR at 23 percent between 2010 and 2020.
- Public relations changes... quickly. Professionals must constantly redefine themselves. The industry's leadership in social media management, "big-data" measurement and analysis keep organizations forward-thinking, environmentally aware, and part of the conversation.

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand how public relations principles affect day-to-day content development and management across industries.
- Understand how to develop content across multiple channels in this age of media convergence, with sensitivity to multicultural audiences and an appreciation for global perspectives.
- Apply reasoning, critical thinking, persuasion and creativity through the writing and editing processes.
- Analyze global news, trends and emerging issues with an eye toward possible public relations implications.
- Critically evaluate your own work and that of your peers.

- Evaluate a community partner’s market position, and create, present and defend a portfolio of public relations writing on behalf of that client.

Required Materials:

- *Public Relations Writing: Form and Style (Eleventh Edition)*, by Doug Newsom and Jim Haynes
- *The Associated Press Stylebook*
- *Current events/News Articles, as assigned*

SJMC Core Values (*Values in bold are of particular focus in this course.*):

SJMC graduates should be able to . . .

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context and in the United States.
- **Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.**
- **Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.**
- **Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.**
- **Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.**
- **Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.**
- **Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.**
- Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
- **Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.**
- **Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.**
- **Take ownership of their own academic experience.**
- **Be engaged with the community: the university, the local community and professional groups.**
- **Cope and thrive in the workplace.**

Policies:

Attendance: To be successful in this class, and in your career, showing up is important. You’re expected to attend each class session. If you know you will miss class, you must plan and turn in assignments ahead of time. Excessive absences cause a reduction in your grade in this class. At the SJMC, this is defined as more than three unexcused absences in a class that meets three times a week, more than two for a class that meets twice a week, and more than one for a class that meets on a weekly basis.

Participation: Attending every class on time, meeting deadlines, doing the reading and engaging in a bit of discussion in class are minimal requirements of every student. You are all expected to make thoughtful and insightful comments and contributions in class. The assessment of your participation in this class does not only depend on the frequency, but also on your group work peer reviews. Active engagement by everyone is crucial to make the class work. I want you to contribute in class, show interest in our speakers and be professional. Let's have a discussion regarding what makes sense and what doesn't. Don't be afraid to question what we're reviewing. If you don't feel comfortable talking in class, email me. That counts!

Accommodations: If you have a disability and require academic accommodations, please let me know or contact Student Disability Services, 107 Old Main, 515-271-1835.

Student Services: The Coordinator for Sexual Violence Response and Healthy Relationship Promotion's primary role is to act as a resource for students who have been subjected to interpersonal [gender] violence including sexual assault/harassment, dating/domestic violence, gender-based discrimination, and stalking and will advocate on behalf of the student victim's requests if services are voluntarily initiated. The coordinator can explain how to initiate a complaint within the university and through criminal/civil processes, assist with referrals to a confidential crisis advocate and/or counselor and appropriate medical or legal professionals. The coordinator must report "known" student campus assaults to the Dean of Students and/or Title IX Coordinator, but the complainant still has rights to participate or withdraw from the university process. Other services include providing crisis intervention (safety plan, crisis counseling, rights information), and assistance in academic and housing accommodations as needed.

To contact the coordinator, Lynne Cornelius, call [515-271-4141](tel:515-271-4141) or email prevention@drake.edu. The Violence Intervention Partner (V.I.P.) program through this office provides peer-based 24/7 confidential advocacy services. To access a V.I.P. advocate call or text [515-512-2972](tel:515-512-2972). For more information about these services visit www.drake.edu/sexual-assault/

Cheating: The School of Journalism and Mass Communication does not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty. No help from any AI tool will be tolerated. The School has adopted an Honor Code with which you should familiarize yourself: <http://www.drake.edu/catalog/ugrad/sjmc/regulations.php>

Deadlines: Assignments are due on time. Late work will receive no credit, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Instructor – and then only in exceptional circumstances.

Inclusion: I strive for an inclusive classroom that values everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity and orientation, faith practice, economic class, political views or anything else we use to divide ourselves. I'd appreciate your help in creating an environment:

- In which everyone feels safe, supported, included, and encouraged to be themselves;

- Where each person is recognized as a diverse individual connected to a community;
- Where we can discuss divisive issues with the goal of true understanding of the views of others.

Professionalism: This is a world where deadlines, standards, results, and conduct matter. To prepare students for this transition, students are expected to adhere to the highest levels of professionalism while enrolled in this course. This includes:

- Demonstrating courtesy toward and respect for your instructors, peers, and classroom guests.
- Ensuring that you are aware of, understand, and follow all classroom policies, both those stated in the instructor's syllabus and those presented verbally in class.
- Acknowledging that instructors have a responsibility to be fair and to maintain the integrity of the learning process; this means that instructors are unable to make exceptions to policies (attendance, grading, etc.) for individual students.

Instructions for Students about Self-Monitoring and Experiencing COVID-19

Symptoms. Please carefully monitor your own health and wellbeing throughout the semester, including frequently taking your own temperature. If you experience [Covid-19 symptoms](#) or a fever, even if you do not test positive, *please do not attend an in-person class meeting*. Make sure you alert the Dean of Students' office at dos@drake.edu.

Instructions for Students who Test Positive for COVID-19: If you test positive for Covid-19 or have been exposed and need to isolate yourself, please send an email to dos@drake.edu from your Drake email account and include your full name and student ID along with information about your situation. College and schools' deans' offices will then contact your professors, who will work with you to provide fully virtual learning opportunities during your quarantine and/or recovery.

Your Responsibilities:

- Come to class on time and stay the duration of the class to actively participate in discussions and in-class workshops.
- Know how to navigate the course Blackboard site.
- Print a copy of the syllabus/course calendar and bring it to every class.
- Acquire a 3-ring binder to hold course readings and other materials.
- Complete assigned readings in a timely manner, keeping up with the course schedule – especially by reading given chapters and other readings/handouts before class.
- Bring to class the text and/or readings assigned for each given class because often we will refer to them as part of class discussion and/or small group activities.
- Ask questions about course content.
- Check your email and the course Blackboard site regularly. Print PowerPoint lecture in notes/handout mode for note taking prior to class meetings (3 frames per page with lines to the right for taking notes).
- Make an office appointment to discuss questions regarding your grades and any other issue(s).

- Use Microsoft Word (not "Pages" or any other platform, double spaced, 1" margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt. type for all assignments).
- Notify me in writing **within two weeks** of the beginning of the semester (or **three days** before any holidays which fall within the first two weeks of class) if you will be absent to observe a faith-based holiday and arrange to make up any work missed.
- If you are a student athlete, within the first two weeks of the semester, be sure to present me with the official letter from your coach notifying me of which days you will be unable to attend class.

My Responsibilities:

- Fairly evaluate students' work.
- Hold regular office hours for the purpose of meeting students' needs one on one.
- Check email weekdays in order to respond to students' needs as soon as possible.
- Ensure students' privacy by discussing grades only in my office – not via email, telephone, in the classroom, or in the hallway.
- Provide students with timely, honest feedback.

Course Requirements: You may earn up to 1,000 points this semester, as follows:

- Attendance, Participation and Peer Reviews – 100 points
- Leadership of "In the News" Class Discussion – 50 points
- Quizzes – 100 points
- Writing Assignments – 10 @ 50 points each, or 500 points total
- Midterm "Exam" – 100 points
- Final Portfolio – 150 points

Final grades: Final grades for the course will follow this scale:

- A 93-100% (930 points or higher)
- A- 90-92.9% (900-929 points)
- B+ 87-89.9% (870-899 points)
- B 83-86.9% (830-869 points)
- B- 80-82.9% (800-829 points)
- C+ 77-79.9% (770-799 points)
- C 73-76.9% (730-769 points)
- C- 70-72.9% (700-729 points)
- D+ 67-69.9% (670-699 points)
- D 63-66.9% (630-669 points)
- D- 60-62.9% (600-629 points)
- F Below 60% (below 600 points)

Descriptions of Course Requirements:

Attendance, Participation and Peer Reviews – There will be strict attendance and participation requirements, given that this is a workshop-style course. Additionally, you will review and critique one another's work on most assignments.

Leadership of "In the News" Class Discussion – You will identify a public relations situation in the news, relevant to topics from class, and lead class discussion on an assigned day. In so doing, you will analyze the tactic(s) and/or key message(s) for their use of reasoning, critical thinking, persuasion and creativity, and you will prepare a typed analysis discussing these aspects. You must submit the slides and the typed analysis paper you used in your formal presentation of your chosen news item on Blackboard for grading.

Quizzes – You will take a number of short quizzes throughout the semester, to ensure you are keeping pace with the reading and to help demonstrate knowledge of AP style requirements.

Writing Assignments – Most assignments you create this semester will be for a dream employer of your choosing and will consist of two parts: the new tactic being learned, as well as your choice of a tactic already learned in the class. This helps you learn how to write across media and adapt messages to specific audiences, all while giving you a chance to "strategize" a bit, in terms of tactical selection. Additionally, you will work in small groups to develop materials for a community partner (client) based on the organization's needs. The group assignment will include revisions based on client feedback and final presentation of materials to client reps later in the semester, wherein you will effectively articulate your rationale for creation of the materials.

Midterm "Exam" – This midterm is actually a timed writing assignment, designed to test your ability to write effectively under pressure. The "exam" will focus on a tactic you have previously learned; plus, there will be a timed practice session held in class before the exam is given.

Final Portfolio – During the course of the semester, you will collect the individual writing assignments you prepare for your dream employer, which you will subsequently revise and submit in a portfolio in lieu of a final exam. Additionally, you will submit your dream employer portfolio to a representative of that organization.

Other Notes about the Course:

Instructions for most individual writing assignments will contain "objective, strategies and tactics" – i.e., the core components from a public relations plan. This will help orient you to the strategic planning principles that will be covered in-depth in JMC 143: Public Relations Planning and Management, while also giving you helpful context for effectively completing each assignment. At the end of the semester, you will share your work with the community partner(s), as well as your dream employer. This raises the bar in terms of expected professionalism and accountability. Your work should be of the caliber that builds your professional reputation and further strengthens the reputation of Drake University.

Tentative Course Schedule: The schedule below may change depending on course progress and other factors, such as advocacy client availability, etc.

Course Schedule (Subject to change):

Module	Meeting Day	Subject	Readings / Assignment	Tasks Due (Drafts are due by 11:00am/ Beginning of Class; finished writing assignments are due by 11:59pm)
1	Mon.	Course Overview	Syllabus	
2	Wed.	Basics of Writing and Persuasive Writing	Ch. 1, 2 & 7; Ch. 10 pp. 233-237 Application Letter Assigned	
	Mon.	Labor Day – No Class		
3	Wed.	Research & Effective Writing	Ch. 3, 4, 6 & 10 pp. 233-237	Application Letter Draft
4	Mon.	Internal Communication	Ch. 11.	Quiz #1 Application Letter
5	Wed.	Client Initial Briefing: XXX XXXX, representative of the class client organization		Assignment #1: Issue Brief

Module	Meeting Day	Subject	Readings / Assignment	Tasks Due (Drafts are due by 11:00am/ Beginning of Class; finished writing assignments are due by 11:59pm)
6	Mon.	Consumer Relations - Intro	Ch. 12	Newsletter Article - Draft
6	Wed.	Consumer Relations – Wrap up <u>and/or</u> Total Recall – Review Progress, Housekeeping, Feedback	Ch. 12	Assignment #2: Newsletter Article & Email/Intranet Story Quiz #2
7	Mon.	News Media – Intro	Ch. 8-9	Magazine Article/Brochure – Draft
7	Wed.	News Media – Wrap Up	Ch. 8-9	Assignment #3: Magazine Article/Brochure Quiz #3
8	Mon.	Client Briefing – Sequel (if necessary) Small Group Work – Brainstorming/Ideation		News Release – Draft
9	Wed.	Advocacy and Nonprofit - Intro	Ch. 10	Assignment #4: News Release Quiz #4
9	Mon.	Advocacy and Nonprofit – Wrap Up	Ch. 10	
10	Wed.	Midterm Exam Prep. Small Groupwork		Quiz #5
-	Mon.	Spring Break. No Class		
-	Wed.	Spring Break. No Class		

Module	Meeting Day	Subject	Readings / Assignment	Tasks Due (Drafts are due by 11:00am/ Beginning of Class; finished writing assignments are due by 11:59pm)
10	Mon.	Midterm Test		
11	Wed.	Digital/Social/Mobile Media	Ch. 5	Quiz #6
12	Mon.	Stakeholder and Investor Relations - Intro	Ch. 6	Digital Media Content - Draft
12	Wed.	Stakeholder and Investor Relations - Wrap Up	Ch. 6	Assignment #5: Digital Media Content Quiz #7
13	Mon.	Impact Reception Event		Assignment #6: Group Advocacy Work- Fact Sheet CEO Shareholder Letter - Draft
14	Wed.	Community Relations	Ch. 7 & 13	Assignment #7: CEO Shareholder Letter Quiz #8
15	Mon.	Government Relations Small Group Work	Ch. 7	
16	Wed.	Crisis Communication & Management	Ch. 14	Quiz #9
17		Expanded Group Advocacy Project Assigned		
17	Mon.	Small Group Work		Assignment #8: Revision (subject to change)
17	Wed.	Small Group Work		

Module	Day	Subject	Readings / Assignment	Tasks Due (Drafts are due by 11:00am/ Beginning of Class; finished writing assignments are due by 11:59pm)
18	Mon.	Multiculturalism		Individual Portfolio Draft - Due 9.30am in my mailbox at the office (next to Denise Ganpat's office)
19	Wed.	Mock Client Presentation		
20	Mon.	Client Reception Event		
21	Wed.	Portfolio Work		Quiz #10
20	Mon.	Client Contact Report Discussion		Assignment #9: Expanded Group Advocacy Project; Rationale and Reflections
21		Portfolio Work		
22	Wed.	Course Recap & Stock Take	Lecture Slides & Assigned Readings, etc.	Assignment #10: Dream Employer Portfolio Due

Note: You will need to attend the following community partner event:

- Class briefings by representatives of the class client
- Impact Reception
- Client Presentation

- end -