

Course	PBRL 5342 Writing for Media Communications
Instructor	Name: Dr. Gregg T. Cobb Phone: 502 228 5487 Email: GregoryCobb48@webster.edu
Term & Dates	Fall 1, 2008, August 14 to Oct 8, Thursday's , 6-10 pm <u>8/14, 8/21, 8/28, 9/4, 9/11, 9/18, 9/25, 10/2, 10/9</u>
Location	Louisville Metropolitan Campus
Course Description	This course applies public relations strategies and theories to writing for specific stakeholder audiences in a variety of complex public relations situations. Various persuasive techniques are applied to specific target audience needs, as indicated by audience analysis. Students examine professional copy and produce their own advanced public relations writing for inclusion in their portfolios. Topics include white papers, financial public relations writing, crisis communications, news releases, etc.
Prerequisites & Incoming Student Competencies	All students must have <u>oral and written</u> communication skills comparable to graduate level study. Completion of MEDC 5000 and PBRL 5322 or consent of the instructor.
Course Level Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full understanding of public relations and corporate communications strategies and tactics. • Thorough knowledge of the application of written messages in the public relations process. • Thorough knowledge of the various formats used in written public relations materials including press releases, speeches, white papers, audio/visual project proposals, corporate annual reports, brochures, employee information initiatives and Internet communications tactics including blogs, web sites and pod casts. • Writing skills necessary for producing professional quality written public relations materials.
Materials	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Public Relations Writing: The Essentials of Style and Format</i> by Thomas H. Bivens. McGraw-Hill <i>AP Style Guide.</i></p> <p>Texts can be obtained by calling MBS Direct at 1-800-325-3252, or at Virtual Bookstore at www.mbsdirect.net. <u>Credit cards and checks are accepted.</u> Other bookstores and vendors may have this text. Make sure you purchase the correct edition.</p>
Supplemental Resources	<p><i>A Pocket Style Manual</i> by Diana Hacker. Bedford Books. <i>The Everyday Writer</i> by Andrea Lunsford and Robert Connors. St. Martin's Press <i>Connections</i> – Blackboard (Make sure you have your ID and Password)</p>

**Policy Statements:
University Policies**

University policies are provided in the current course catalog and course schedules. They are also available on the university website. This class is governed by the university's published policies. The following policies are of particular interest:

A student may submit their term paper to the On-Line Writing Center in St. Louis by email and have a coach make suggestions/corrections. It is up to the student to allow sufficient time (generally 7-10 days) for this process to be utilized and still turn in the term paper on the assigned date. Go to <http://www.webster.edu/acadaffairs/asp/wc/online.html>

Academic Honesty

The university is committed to high standards of academic honesty. Students will be held responsible for violations of these standards. Please refer to the university's academic honesty policies for a definition of academic dishonesty and potential disciplinary actions associated with it.

Drops and Withdrawals

Please be aware that, should you choose to drop or withdraw from this course, the date on which you notify the university of your decision will determine the amount of tuition refund you receive. Please refer to the university policies on drops and withdrawals (published elsewhere) to find out what the deadlines are for dropping a course with a full refund and for withdrawing from a course with a partial refund.

Special Services

If you have registered as a student with a documented disability and are entitled to classroom or testing accommodations, please inform the instructor at the beginning of the course of the accommodations you will require in this class so that these can be provided.

Disturbances

Since every student is entitled to full participation in class without interruption, all students are expected to be in class and prepared to begin on time. All pagers, wireless phones, or other electronic devices must be turned off, or switched to vibrate, when you enter the classroom.

Disruption of class, whether by latecomers, noisy devices, or inconsiderate behavior is not acceptable. Students are expected to treat the instructor and other students with dignity and respect, especially in cases where a diversity of opinion arises. Students who engage in disruptive behavior are subject to disciplinary action, including removal from the course.

Student Assignments Retained

From time to time, student assignments or projects will be retained by The Department for the purpose of academic assessment. In every case, should the assignment or project be shared outside the academic Department, the student's name and all identifying information about that student will be redacted from the assignment or project.

Contact Hours for this Course

It is essential that all classes meet for the full instructional time as scheduled. A class cannot be shortened in length. If a class session is cancelled for any reason, it must be rescheduled.

Course Policies	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Instructor Policy: Class participation is critical to learning the content of this course; therefore, students are expected to attend every class meeting. Student absence will result in a total of 5% participation points deducted for EACH unexcused absence. Students who have more than two UNEXCUSED absences <i>will not pass this class</i> and are encouraged to withdraw from the course. An excused absence is defined as: Military Orders and Doctors Excuses. Both require documentation.</p> <p>This syllabus may be revised at the discretion of the instructor without the prior notification or consent of the student. The schedule below presents an approximate expectation of course progress. The instructor reserves the right to change the overall course grade weighting. Any changes will be announced in class.</p> <p>In line with the university's policy on academic honesty, please be advised that instances of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment and will be reported to the Director.</p>
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Weekly Schedule
Schedule of required readings, class participations and assignments, lectures, discussion, students presentations and exams.

Week One: News Releases

- The most often used tools of public relations writing and how they differ.
- What issue and message strategies are and why they are important to development one before you develop a public relations piece.
- How to write a variety of forms of news releases
- How to get your public relations messages placed in the media

Reading – Bivens, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7

Writing Assignment – *News Release, Create your own company*

Week Two: Pitch Letters

- What a pitch letter is and why it is often more valuable than a news release
- The five elements of a great pitch letter
- How to identify the best media to receive your pitch
- Tips for following up on your pitch

Reading – Bivens: Chapter 5, 9 – pp. 166-169

Assigned websites

Writing Assignment – *Pitch letter*

Week Three: Position Papers, Backgrounders and White Papers

- The differences between position papers, backgrounders and white papers
- Tips on how to write ones that people will want to read

Reading – Bivens, pages 124-130, and assigned web resources

Writing Assignment – *Position paper*

Week Four: Brochures

- How to plan, write and design a brochure
- The differences between brochures, flyers, booklets
- When a brochure is an appropriate communication tool

Reading – Chapter 10, Assigned web sources

Writing Assignment – *Brochure*

Week Five: Employee Communication Strategies/Crisis Management

- Things you should know about communicating during a crisis
- (Just about) everything you'd ever want to know about company newsletters and magazines
- How to write for diverse audiences, including global audiences, ethnically diverse audiences and low-literacy audiences

Reading – Chapter 6 & 9 , Assigned web sources

Writing Assignment – *Employee Bulletin*

	<p>Week Six: Writing for the Internet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Internet has changed – and continues to change – how PR people work • Tips for writing for the web • Writing websites and blogs <p>Reading – Chapter 15, Assigned web sources Writing Assignment – <i>Blog</i></p> <p>Week Seven: Speeches and Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The types of speeches and their uses • How to prepare, write and deliver a speech • How to use presentation materials to accompany speeches and presentations <p>Reading – Chapter 16, Assigned web sources Writing Assignment – Speech</p> <p>Week Eight: Writing for Broadcast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basic concepts of writing for television/video • How to write public service announcements for television and radio • How to write video proposals <p>Reading – Chapter 12, Assigned web sources Writing Assignment – Video proposal</p> <p>Week Nine: Putting it all Together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About additional public relations writing applications • How to put all the writing skills we’ve discussed together in a campaign <p>Reading – Chapter 8, 11 and 14 Writing Assignment – Term Project</p>
<p>Additional Information</p>	<p>DISCLAIMER This syllabus is intended to provide a basic structure to this course. Adherence to this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.</p>