



## Syllabus



### BLHS 185, Writing for the Public Relations Professional Fall 2009 3 credits

This class has four face-to-face meetings: 5:10-6:10 p.m. on Thursdays September 3, October 8, November 5, and December 3, at 3307 M Street NW, Suite 202, Room 201A.

Other coursework will be completed on this Blackboard site.

In the BALS curriculum at Georgetown, this course carries credit toward the Public Relations path of the Communication concentration. Students in other BALS concentrations may use the course for elective credit.



#### Overview

BLHS 185 will focus on improving the writing skills needed for the public relations and corporate communications professionals. Students will review the basic principles needed to write public relations materials, however, with an emphasis on creating superior news/press releases--the keystone to all public relations activities. In addition, students will learn how to create usable media/information kits and materials that are necessary to conduct communications activities, such as backgrounders, fact sheets, letters to the editor, pitch letters and biographies.

This course is organized in a non-traditional way: The course includes four in-person meetings, but the bulk of the classwork will be done independently online.

That means that much of your learning will rely on materials from the Web site and your text book, from your interactions with me and your fellow students, and from your assignments.

Some people sign up for a Web-based course out of the impression that it will be easier compared to a traditional, face-to-face course. **This is not true**, and laboring under that misconception can cause some heartache as the semester draws on.

It **is** true that this course is more flexible than a traditional class. You can log on at any hour of the day or night to complete your assignments and participate in discussion.

But that flexibility means that you will need better study discipline and organization than in a traditional class. Do not allow yourself to fall behind.

All in all, I hope that you find this to be a stimulating, enjoyable learning experience. Please let me know if you have any feedback or suggestions about the course.

--Vincent Kiernan



#### How the online part of the course will work

The online portion of this course is organized by weeks. **This is not a self-paced course; you are expected to complete assignments by set deadlines.** This approach allows the class as a group to work through material together and will help prevent you from falling behind.

The class week starts on Monday and concludes on Sunday. Each week, you will be asked to read portions of your text book or other materials and to visit relevant Web sites.

Each week also includes an online discussion question related to the current week's topic. You are expected to make one posting by **midnight Wednesday**. Then you should read your classmates' postings, and make followup postings by noon Saturday. The Discussion Board provides details.

Written assignments are due each week as well. In general, these are due by **midnight Sunday**. The Assignments section of Blackboard contains details.



#### Office hours

Feel free to call or email me at any time. But I also will hold office hours every Thursday from 1-2 p.m.

My office is located in the School of Continuing Studies on the second floor of 3307 M Street NW in Georgetown. Note that this is not on campus, but rather in Georgetown proper.



### Response time

This course uses amazing online technology, but it still includes a flesh-and-blood instructor. This means:

- In most cases, your assignments are **not** graded by the computer. They are graded by me, and I cannot do that instantly. You can expect to receive grades on an assignment within a week after the assignment's due date.
- I am online frequently but not 24/7. That means you will not get instant responses to email inquiries. I will answer e-mails, questions posted to the discussion board and telephone messages as quickly as I can -- within one business day after I received it.



### Grading policies

#### Course grades

Each assignment has a specific weight in the final grade. These weights are listed in the online gradebook and are described in the description of each assignment.

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- 90% to 100% = A
- 79% to 89% = B
- 68% to 78% = C
- 57% to 67% = D

You can determine your current grade percentage in the course by looking in the gradebook under the category **Running Weighted Total**.

#### Assignments

Grading standards for each assignment are included in the description of each assignment.

#### Online discussion

Most weeks, there is an online discussion question. Each week's discussion will count as 1 percent of your final grade.

Your week's discussion grade will take into account both whether you meet the deadlines for discussion postings and the substantiveness of your postings.

When responding to someone else's posting a *substantial* posting is one that says more than "Me too" or "I disagree." A substantial response will explain *why* you agree or disagree and will provide evidence or examples to support your position.

#### Class participation

The class will have four face-to-face meetings. Participation in each class session is worth 0.5% of your final grade.

#### Extra credit

There may be an opportunity to earn extra credit by submitting extra writing assignments. Details will be posted in the Announcements section of Blackboard.

#### Late assignments

**Important:** Media professionals live and die by deadlines. **No credit will be given for any assignment that is submitted late without the instructor's prior approval.** "*Prior approval*" means that the student must communicate with the instructor *before* the assignment's deadline.

An assignment that is submitted late **with** the instructor's prior approval will have its grade reduced by 10 percent for every day it is late.

#### Accuracy

Your writing must be factually accurate. Errors, even seemingly minor ones, will have a heavy impact on your grade.

#### Grammar and style

Similarly, your writing must conform to professional standards. Written assignments should contain no grammatical or spelling errors, and your writing should conform to AP style.



### Academic Misconduct policies

#### Plagiarism

The presentation of someone else's ideas or work as your own, or without proper acknowledgment, is the worst crime a mass-communication professional or a scholar can commit.

The sources for all information and ideas in your assignments must be documented. In addition, all quotations must be identified as quotations, using quotation marks and documentation of the source of the quotation. Anything less than these standards is plagiarism.

Plagiarized work will be reported to Georgetown's Honor Council (see below). If the council finds that the work has been plagiarized or in some other way violates the Honor Code, the student will receive a failing grade for the course.

### Georgetown Honor System

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at [gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu](http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu) and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

### Turnitin.com

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be added as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers in the future. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

### Submitting Assignments

Written assignments must be submitted electronically, in both Blackboard and Turnitin.com. An assignment will not count as submitted until it has been uploaded to both Web sites. Printed assignments will not be accepted and will earn **no credit**. Similarly, assignments submitted by e-mail will not be accepted and will earn **no credit**.

All work for this class should be typed double-spaced, spell-checked, have one-inch margins, and use 12-point font. Follow AP style.

A. To submit an assignment in Blackboard, do the following:

1. Click on the ">>View/Complete" link for the assignment.
2. Click on the Browse button if you have a file to attach. (For best results, make sure your filename consists of only letters or numbers. There should not be any other symbols or characters in the filename.)
3. Attach the file and complete all other items on the page.
4. Click on the Submit button at the bottom of the page.
5. Look for the confirmation indicating that your assignment has been uploaded. Note: At this point, your gradebook will show an exclamation point, indicating that your instructor has received the assignment but has not yet graded it. If you see a padlock icon instead, it means that you did **not** successfully submit the file and that you should repeat the above steps to submit it. If you are still having problems, contact the [support center](#) and indicate what message you received after you clicked on the Submit button.

B. To submit your assignment to Turnitin.com, do the following:

In order to submit your papers to Turnitin you will have to go to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). The first time you go to the site you will click on the link **new user** and create a user profile. To do this you will need the following information:

Class ID: 2733861  
Password: blhs185

A movie located at <http://www.turnitin.com/static/training.html> will walk you through the process of setting up your account and submitting papers.

Once you have set up your account you can login and click on the link for this class. Then click on the correct assignment link and upload your paper.

### Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource

Center at 202-687-8354 or [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu).

### **Snow and other emergencies**



During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check [the university's Web site](#) or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will not meet.

Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to inclement weather.

The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up at [Student Access +](#).

### **Some Cyber-Advice**



You are investing lots of time and money in your online study. Unfortunately, any number of technical problems can destroy that work -- a lightning strike to the power line that supplies your computer, an attack by a virus that makes your hard-disk unreadable, or even an editing error on your own part. As a result, you should consider some simple steps that can help prevent problems from happening and help you cope with them if they do crop up.

#### **Antivirus software**

Obtain, and use, antivirus software on your computer. It can be a heartbreaking experience to discover that your computer--and perhaps your backed-up files as well--have been corrupted by a virus or worm.

And simply installing the software is not sufficient. Because new viruses and worms are constantly appearing, it is vital that you periodically update your computer's database of antivirus information. Follow the instructions in your antivirus program to do so, or preferably configure it to automatically update itself periodically.

#### **Antispyware software**

Spyware is another type of computer pest. It secretly installs itself on your computer and may monitor and record everything you type, including passwords, bank-account numbers, and Social Security numbers.

So install, and use, antispyware software. Free programs available online include Microsoft's Windows Defender (<http://www.microsoft.com/spyware>), Ad-Aware SE (<http://www.lavasoft.com>), and Spybot Search and Destroy (<http://www.safer-networking.org/en/index.html>).

#### **Firewalls**

It is likewise important to use a firewall to shield your computer from hacking attacks. Windows XP and Windows Vista have basic firewalls that will provide a sufficient degree of protection, but you must be sure to activate the firewall. Unfortunately, sometimes a firewall will interfere with legitimate online education programs, so if you run into any problems, contact the IT support department.

#### **Windows updates**

A fourth way to help make sure that your computer is not derailed by a hacker attack is to keep your computer's copy of Windows up to date. Microsoft periodically issues patches that are aimed at correcting weaknesses in Windows that can be exploited by hackers. By downloading and installing these patches, you can improve your computer's security. To check for patches for your machine, visit <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com>.

#### **Software updates**

You can further strengthen your computer by downloading any patches for the software you run on it, particularly Microsoft Word. These patches include fixes for both bugs in the software and vulnerabilities that can be exploited by viruses and worms. For Microsoft patches, check <http://office.microsoft.com/officeupdate>.

#### **Back up frequently**

If you store your work on your computer, you should back up those files on a regular basis. Backups give you a fallback position if a file becomes corrupted by a software or hardware problem, and they also can be useful to consult if you change your mind about a new version of your writing. If your computer can write CDs or DVDs, you can make backups in that fashion. If your files are small, they may fit on a floppy disk.

#### **Other suggestions**

University Information Services has several other suggestions for safe computing. Please take a moment to [read through them](#).



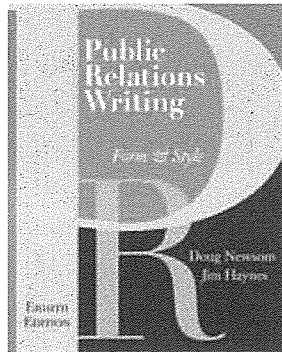
## Books



### Required Text

The following textbook is required:

**Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**, 8th edition, by Doug Newsom and Jim Haynes  
Published by Wadsworth Thomson  
Copyright 2008  
ISBN 0495095664



You can buy this book from Georgetown's [bookstore](#) or from any other bookstore that you wish. (If you use another bookstore, be sure to get the proper edition. If the cover doesn't look like the picture here, you do not have the correct edition.)

The publisher also sells [online versions](#) of the text. A copy of the printed text also is on [2-hour reserve](#) at [Lauinger Library](#).

If you order online from Georgetown's bookstore, you can arrange to pick your book up at the bookstore or have it shipped to you for a small fee. The bookstore is located in [Leavey Center](#), and its phone number is 202-687-7492.



### Dictionary

Get, and use, a good dictionary. (If you don't have a dictionary and don't want to buy one, you can use the online version of the *American Heritage Dictionary* at <http://www.bartleby.com/61/>)



## Initial Assignment



### Expectations

Please copy and paste the following text into a word processor. To signal your agreement, please type your name and the date. Then save the file and send it to me.

To submit your file, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the *Submit* button when done.** Otherwise, your file will not be submitted.

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The following are the expectations for your course:

- The instructor for this course is expected to provide clear, concise and complete information on all assignments and assessment components and to provide feedback in a timely manner.
- The instructor for this course is expected to respond to all student comments and questions in a respectful and timely manner, to facilitate learning with a high level of interaction and, to hold to standards indicative of the academic excellence required by Georgetown.
- In order to stay connected and engaged in this class, it is expected that there will be a great deal of interactivity, not just between student and the content (web site, text book, etc.) but also between the student and the instructor and the other students in the class. Students and instructors can expect to be involved in the course site at least 3 -4 times each week throughout the semester and should check email at least every other day.
- It is expected that students will understand that distance learning is not easier than on-campus learning and is not self-paced but follows a semester schedule in which students and instructor work together in an online learning community.
- It is expected that student conduct in this course will contribute to and support an online learning community that shows evidence of honesty, responsiveness, relevance, respect, openness, and empowerment\* for students to take responsibility for their own learning. \*Palloff & Pratt (1999) in Building Learning Communities Online Jossey-Bass: CA.
- Students are expected to be prepared prior to class participation and to discuss and answer questions on the content and its relevance to their individual and group experience. Their participation will be a factor in their grade for this course.
- Contributions to discussions are expected to be constructive, relevant and to contribute to the group knowledge in a way that either introduces new information or confirms, supports or challenges previous thoughts and statements.
- Students are expected to submit all assignments and complete all assessment components by the due date unless otherwise negotiated in advance. Stating that a submission will be late is NOT negotiation. Any submission received after due date may not earn full credit and may not be accepted.
- It is expected that all students will keep a copy of work submitted as back-up in case of error or dispute.
- It is expected that any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work either individually or as part of a group.
- It is expected that students will abide by Georgetown's Honor Code. Students may not compare papers, refer to texts, copy from others, or collaborate in any way unless specifically allowed by the instructor. Indications of this behavior during proctored quizzes or exams will result in failure of the quiz or exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.
- To withdraw from this course, the student must formally withdraw following the Registrar's procedures. Simply stopping to participate in this class is **not** withdrawing from it, and the student will receive a grade and will remain responsible for tuition for the course.

To ensure a successful distance learning experience students can follow these suggestions.

- Avoid procrastination;
- Keep track of the deadlines for your assignments;
- Look ahead and make plans according to your posted class schedule;
- Check your grade book and watch for feedback from the instructor about your participation and assignments;
- Always use your georgetown.edu account when using email for requests, questions and submissions;
- Stay in touch. Contact your instructor and other students frequently;
- Use the supplemental learning tools for your course;
- Call the Help Desk for technical support.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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This assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 6.

File the paper electronically through the link on Blackboard; papers sent by email will not be graded. Submitting this assignment is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

**Late Work: No credit will be given for any assignment that is submitted late without the instructor's prior approval.** *"Prior approval"* means that the student must communicate with the instructor *before* the assignment's deadline, and the instructor must have approved the extension. An assignment that is submitted late **with** the instructor's prior approval will have its grade reduced by 10 percent for every day it is late.

>> [View/Complete Assignment: Expectations](#)





## Weeks 1 & 2: Sept. 2-13



### Weeks 1 and 2 Introduction to PR Writing

Welcome to the course! BLHS 185, Writing for the Public Relations Professional, will focus on improving the writing skills needed for the public relations and corporate communications professionals. Students will review the basic principles needed to write public relations materials, however, with an emphasis on creating superior news/press releases -- the keystone to all public relations activities. In addition, students will learn how to create useable media/information kits and materials that are necessary to conduct communications activities, such as backgrounders, fact sheets, letters to the editor, pitch letters and biographies.

In this first two weeks of the course, we will try to get a better understanding of what public relations really is and the writer's role in it. Public relations is a time-honored craft of communicating information and opinion -- sometimes to the public directly and sometimes to journalists who in turn convey the information to the public. Because the information produced by PR professionals may go to the public or to journalists, a PR message must be carefully planned and written to deliver the message as it is intended. That's what this course is all about.

As a group, PR professionals often have a less than savory reputation. Often, they are seen (particularly by journalists) as folks who will exaggerate, lie, conceal information, or make things up in order to accomplish a goal.

This reputation, in my experience, is unfair. Most PR experts are ethical, upstanding professionals. A few are unethical -- but some journalists, politicians, professionals, and blue-collar workers are unethical too!



#### Readings

Please read:

- Chapters 1 and 2 of **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- Chapters 1-3 of **Ethics in Public Relations: A Guide to Best Practice**. (To get access to this reading online, you may need to download a small helper program, called a plugin, for your Web browser.) A printed copy of this book is on reserve at Lauinger Library.
- Dilemmas and Moral Questions: The Heart of Ethical Decision Making, on the Web site of the Public Relations Society of America



#### Self quiz

Go to the textbook's Web site and choose Chapter 2 from the drop-down menu. Then select Tutorial Quiz and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on Sept. 13. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 2.



#### Grammar and writing pretest

Click on the link on the preceding line to download a multiple-choice test of your skills in grammar and writing. Each question lists four sentences. One of the four choices exhibits a grammatical error. Pick the choice that has the error. Enter your answers in a word processing file in this format:

1. A
2. B
3. C

etc.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on Sept. 13. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 2.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 1 percent of your course grade. You will receive one point for each correct answer.

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the Submit button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be submitted. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

**Note:** Assignments must be submitted through Blackboard. **Assignments sent through e-mail will not be graded.** After uploading your assignment, double check that it is in Blackboard: Look up the assignment in the online gradebook. If you see an exclamation mark where the grade should be, then Blackboard received the file. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.) If you see **no** exclamation mark, Blackboard has **not** received the file, and you must upload it again.

If you have difficulty uploading your files to Blackboard, please contact [tech support](#).

**Turnitin:** Please note that this assignment must also be submitted to Turnitin.com. The assignment will not count as submitted unless it is also submitted there. For instructions on submitting to Turnitin.com, please see the **Syllabus** page.

**Academic Misconduct:** Your work must conform to Georgetown's Honor Code. Assignments that appear to be plagiarized, fabricated, or otherwise in violation of the Honor Code will be submitted to the Honor Council for investigation. **An assignment found to have been plagiarized, fabricated, or to have violated the Honor Code in some other way will result in a failing grade for the course.**

**Late Work: No credit will be given for any assignment that is submitted late without the instructor's prior approval.** "Prior approval" means that the student must communicate with the instructor before the assignment's deadline, and the instructor must have approved the extension. An assignment that is submitted late **with** the instructor's prior approval will have its grade reduced by 10 percent for every day it is late.

Once your assignment is graded, you'll be able to see your grade and review the corrected assignment in the online gradebook. Click on **Tools** at the left of this page, and then on **My Grades**. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

>> [View/Complete Assignment: Grammar and writing pretest](#)



### **Ethics**

Complete the exercise on page 36 of **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**. Type your answer into a word processing file.

Use 1-inch margins. Double space. Write at least 500 words for question 1 and 250 words each for question 2 and 3. Cite *specific* ethical and legal issues. Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on Sept. 13. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 2.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. Here is how you will be graded:

| Grading criterion   | Max points |
|---|------------|
| Answer to question 1 provides an ethical and legal strategy | 30         |
| Answer to question 2 thoroughly explores ethical issues     | 30         |
| Answer to question 3 thoroughly explores legal issues       | 30         |
| Correct format, grammar, and spelling                       | 10         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>100</b> |

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the Submit button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be submitted. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

**Note:** Assignments must be submitted through Blackboard. **Assignments sent through e-mail will not be graded.** After uploading your assignment, double check that it is in Blackboard: Look up the assignment in the online gradebook. If you see an exclamation mark where the grade should be, then Blackboard received the file. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.) If you see **no** exclamation mark, Blackboard has **not** received the file, and you must upload it again.

If you have difficulty uploading your files to Blackboard, please contact [tech support](#).

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Once your assignment is graded, you'll be able to see your grade and review the corrected assignment in the online gradebook. Click on **Tools** at the left of this page, and then on **My Grades**. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

>> [View/Complete Assignment: Ethics](#)

### **Browser setup**

We will be using online videos in this course. Please make sure **now** that your Web browser is configured to play Windows Media Player files.

To check whether your browser is ready, go to [a browser tuneup page](#). In the **Browser Plug-In** column, find **Windows Media Player**.

- If **yes** is listed under **Got it?** then test your setup by clicking on the **Test It** button. Then click the **click here** link in the section titled **About this plug-in**. If a video starts playing, then you're all set. (Be patient: It may take a minute or two for the video to start.)
- If **no** is listed under **Got it?** then you must install the Windows Media Player software. Click on the **Get it** button to be taken to a page from which you can download and install the software. If you need help with this process, please consult the [help desk](#).

### **Week 1/2 Discussion**

On the Discussion Board, post a 250-word introduction of yourself. Why are you taking this course? What do you hope to learn from it? How, if at all, does it connect to your career plans? What do you think about public relations?

Post your introduction by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 9.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, Sept. 12.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.

### **GrammarNOW**

Go to <http://www.grammarnow.com/newslettersignup.html> and sign up for the free GrammarNOW! Tip of the Week. Each week, the GrammarNow site will email you a brief discussion of a practical, real-life problem in grammar. If you conscientiously read this weekly e-mail and heed its suggestions, your grammar skills will steadily improve.

OK



## Week 3: Sept. 14-20



### Week 3: Persuasion, Research, and Planning

The best public relations efforts *appear* natural and effortless, but they are not! Like any other form of communication, public relations projects are successful only if they are well planned and well researched. This week, you will look at some of these elements.

Many public relations efforts aim at shaping public opinion, and so it is important to understand how opinions are formed and changed. *Persuading* people to change their views depends on structuring your presentation in a persuasive way, as you will read in Chapter 3 of the text.

But being persuasive often requires supplying people with *facts* that will back up those new views. Where do you get those facts? From research. Thus, Chapter 4 of the text will walk you through the process of researching a public-relations topic.

Once you have your facts and your persuasive strategy, the public relations professional plans an effective public-relations campaign that uses both. Chapter 5 will give you a glimpse of how that works.

#### Readings

Please read:

- Chapters 3-5 of **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- Chapters 4-6 of **Ethics in Public Relations: A Guide to Best Practice**. (To get access to this reading online, you may need to download a small helper program, called a plugin, for your Web browser.) A printed copy of this book is on reserve at Lauinger Library.
- Aristotle & Persuasion

#### Online video

Please watch this online video about writing persuasively. (You will have to register, but registration is free.)

If you have technical difficulty watching the video, please contact the help desk.

#### Self quiz

After reading Chapter 3 of the textbook, go to the textbook's Web site and choose Chapter 3 from the drop-down menu. Then select Tutorial Quiz and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on Sept. 20. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 14.

#### Online video

Watch an online recording of a discussion on how to attract media attention to drug-prevention programs. The recording lasts one hour, but you need not watch it all in one sitting. (Be patient; it may take a minute or two for the video to start.)

#### Position paper

Complete Exercise 3 on page 105 of **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**. When researching your paper, consult **in person** with a reference librarian at Lauinger Library, another college library, or your local library. Be sure to get contact information (name and phone/e-mail address) for the librarian. Simply searching Google does **not** satisfy this requirement; you must set foot in a library.

Type your paper into a word processing file.

Use 1-inch margins. Double space. Write at least 750 words. Cite *specific* evidence that will make your argument persuasive. Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on Sept. 20. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 14.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. Here is how you will be graded:

| Grading criterion                                      | Max points |
|--|------------|
| Letter makes a compelling persuasive argument          | 40         |
| Letter cites relevant evidence to support its argument | 40         |
| Includes contact information for reference librarian   | 10         |
| Correct format, grammar, and spelling                  | 10         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>100</b> |

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the Submit button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be submitted. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

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>> [View/Complete Assignment: Position paper](#)

**Week 3 Discussion**



On the Discussion Board, post a 250-word discussion of the drug-prevention video. What do you agree with, or disagree with, and why? What would you do differently? What key lessons did you learn?

Post your answer by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 16.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, Sept. 19.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.

OK



## Week 4: Sept. 21-27



### Week 4: Writing Style

All the effort that you devote to researching your press campaign and constructing an effective campaign will come to naught if you do not communicate clearly.

This is a particular challenge for PR materials that deal with complicated topics. Writing clearly and simply about topics such as environmental issues, tax law, and medicine takes much effort and skill. This week you will consider how to express yourself clearly.



#### Reading Assignment

Please read:

- Chapter 6 in **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- Parts I, II and III of **The Elements of Style**



#### Self quiz

Go to the textbook's [Web site](#) and choose Chapter 6 from the drop-down menu. Then select Tutorial Quiz and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on Sept. 27. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 21.



#### Online video

Please watch this [online video](#) about writing effective description.

If you have technical difficulty watching the video, please contact the [help desk](#).



#### **Press release critique**

Find a press release, of at least two pages, that is available on the Web. (Some sources include [prnewswire.com](http://prnewswire.com) and [businesswire.com](http://businesswire.com).) Pick a press release that, in your judgment, requires substantial revision.

Rewrite the press release so that it expresses its message more simply and clearly.

Type your revised press release into a word processing file. Include the URL of the original press release.

Use 1-inch margins. Double space. Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on Sept. 27. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 21.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. Here is how you will be graded:

| Grading criterion  | Max points |
|--|------------|
| Uses an appropriate press release, with URL reported     | 10         |
| Revised text uses a readable, natural style              | 40         |
| Revised text conveys complex material simply and clearly | 40         |
| Correct format, grammar, and spelling                    | 10         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>100</b> |

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the *Submit* button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be submitted. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

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>> [View/Complete Assignment: Press release critique](#)



#### **Week 4 Discussion**

On the Discussion Board, post a 250-word discussion of this week's readings. What did you learn from it? What surprised you? What do you disagree with? What confused you?

Post your discussion by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 23.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, Sept. 26.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.

OK



## Week 5: Sept. 28-Oct. 4



### Week 5: Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation

Few people who go into public relations do so out of a deep love for grammar or spelling. Rather, most people go into public relations because of a fascination with the chance to help shape public attitudes and knowledge.

Nevertheless, grammar, spelling and punctuation are important tools for the public relations professional. Nothing makes a message look less professional -- and therefore less convincing -- than careless errors in grammar or spelling.

In fact, you should consider good grammar, spelling and punctuation to be the foundation of all effective public relations communications.

#### Reading Assignment

Please read:

- Chapter 7 in **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- Parts IV, V and VI of **The Elements of Style**

#### Self quiz

Go to the textbook's [Web site](#) and choose **Chapter 7** from the drop-down menu. Then select **Tutorial Quiz** and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on October 4. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 28.

#### Online video

Please watch this [online video](#) about editing your own writing.

If you have technical difficulty watching the video, please contact the [help desk](#).

#### Discussion

On the Discussion Board, post a 250-word discussion of this week's readings. What did you learn from it? What surprised you? What do you disagree with? What confused you?

Post your discussion by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 30.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, October 3.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.

#### Grammar exercise

Click on the above link for a grammar exercise.

Correct each sentence. (Some sentences may contain no error.) This is an open-book exercise. You may use any books, Web sites or other materials that you wish. However, you may not consult with any person other than your instructor.

The assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on October 4. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 28.

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#### **Class survey #1**



I'd like your feedback on how the course is going. Please answer this very brief survey. Blackboard will not identify who gave what answers, so please be candid.

OK



## Week 6: Oct. 5-11



### Week 6: Email, Memos, Letters, Reports and Proposals

Probably, you think of public relations as involving press releases and various PR stunts aimed at the public.

While this is true enough, public relations also embraces more-mundane forms of communication such as e-mail, memos and letters. In each of these, an organization is trying to convey a specific message; as a result, public-relations techniques come to bear.



#### Reading Assignment

Please read:

- Chapter 8 in **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- Chapters 7-10 of **Ethics in Public Relations: A Guide to Best Practice**. (To get access to this reading, you may need to download a small helper program, called a plugin, for your Web browser.) A printed copy of this book is on reserve at Lauinger Library.



#### Self quiz

Go to the textbook's [Web site](#) and choose **Chapter 8** from the drop-down menu. Then select **Tutorial Quiz** and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on Oct. 11. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Oct. 5.



#### Online video

Please watch this [online video](#) about correct word usage.

If you have technical difficulty watching the video, please contact the [help desk](#).



#### Remodeling letter

Complete Exercise 1 on page 172 of **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**. You may make up facts -- regarding the location, name of the hotel, etc. -- as needed.

Write at least 250 words. Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Follow the format on page 164 of your textbook.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on Oct. 11. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Oct. 5.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. Here is how you will be graded:

| Grading criterion                                    | Max points |
|--|------------|
| Clearly explains the problem                         | 30         |
| Clearly explains the hotel's response to the problem | 30         |
| Takes appropriate tone toward affected customers     | 30         |
| Correct format, grammar, and spelling                | 10         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>100</b> |

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the Submit button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be

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>> [View/Complete Assignment: Remodeling letter](#)

### **Discussion**



On the Discussion Board, post a 250-word discussion of this week's readings on ethics. What did you learn from it? What surprised you? What do you disagree with? What confused you?

Post your discussion by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, October 7.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, October 11.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.

OK



## Week 7: Oct. 12-18



### Week 7: News Releases

Walk into any newsroom shortly after the day's mail has been delivered, and you'll find the wastebaskets full of rejected press releases.

Perhaps the release is boring. Or it conveys no news. Or it is of interest to another community, not this newspaper's. Or maybe it simply arrived too late.

Writing an effective news release is difficult, because it requires balancing two tasks: conveying the message that you want, and holding out the promise of *news* for reporters and editors who earnestly are seeking to fill their next edition or broadcast.



### Reading Assignment

Please read:

- Chapter 9 in **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- Chapter 5 of **The Linux Media Guide**
- Chapters 11 and 12 of **Ethics in Public Relations: A Guide to Best Practice**. (To get access to this reading, you may need to download a small helper program, called a plugin, for your Web browser.) A printed copy of this book is on [reserve](#) at [Lauinger Library](#).



### Self quiz

After reading Chapter 9 of the textbook, go to the textbook's [Web site](#) and choose **Chapter 9** from the drop-down menu. Then select **Tutorial Quiz** and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on Oct. 18. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Oct. 12.



### Online video

Please watch this [online video](#) about constructing effective sentences.

If you have technical difficulty watching the video, please contact the [help desk](#).



### News release

Complete Exercise 1 on page 194 of **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**.

Write at least 500 words. Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Follow the format on page 186 of your textbook.

You may construct quotations from individuals to use in the release, if you wish.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on October 18. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on October 12.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. Here is how you will be graded:

| Grading criterion                    | Max points |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Highlights the news                  | 30         |
| Clearly describes the position paper | 30         |
| Takes appropriate tone               | 30         |

|                                       |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Correct format, grammar, and spelling | 10         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                          | <b>100</b> |

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the *Submit* button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be submitted. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

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>> [View/Complete Assignment: News release](#)

### **Attracting attention**



Please watch and listen to this [recorded Webinar](#) discussing ways to attract media attention through public relations efforts.

### **Discussion**



On the Discussion Board, post a 250-word discussion of this week's readings on ethics. What did you learn from it? What surprised you? What do you disagree with? What confused you?

Post your discussion by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, October 14.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, October 17.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.

OK



## Week 8: Oct. 19-25



### Week 8: News for Broadcast

"A picture is worth a thousand words," goes the old adage. That doesn't just apply to static pictures: Broadcast images are very valuable tools for public relations professionals -- in many cases, a few seconds of airtime reaches many more people than would a lengthy, front-page newspaper article. In light of this, agencies and organizations increasingly are turning to *video news releases* as a tool for disseminating their messages.



#### Reading Assignment

Please read:

- Chapter 10 in **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- Chapters 12 and 13 of **Ethics in Public Relations: A Guide to Best Practice**. (To get access to this reading online, you may need to download a small helper program, called a plugin, for your Web browser.) A printed copy of this book is on reserve at Lauinger Library.



#### Self quiz

After reading Chapter 10 of the textbook, go to the textbook's Web site and choose **Chapter 10** from the drop-down menu. Then select **Tutorial Quiz** and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on October 25. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on October 19.



#### Online video

Please watch this online video about writing under pressure.

If you have technical difficulty watching the video, please contact the help desk.



#### Broadcast

Complete Exercise 2 on page 213 of **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**. You may make up facts -- regarding the celebrity, the location, etc. -- as needed.

Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on October 25. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on October 19.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. Here is how you will be graded:

| Grading criterion                                   | Max points |
|---|------------|
| Highlights the news                                 | 30         |
| Writing is appropriate for broadcast                | 30         |
| Makes effective use of graphics and visual elements | 30         |
| Correct format, grammar, and spelling               | 10         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>100</b> |

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>> [View/Complete Assignment: Broadcast](#)



#### **Ideas for PR feature**

Look ahead to next week's assignment to write a PR feature. This week, you will propose three different ideas for the feature.

Describe each idea in a paragraph. Explain why you think it would make an effective feature.

I will select one of the ideas for you to execute.

Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on October 25. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on October 19.

**Grading:** You can earn up to 90 points for this exercise: 30 points per idea (15 points for the description, and 15 points for your explanation of why it would be an effective topic). This assignment is worth 3 percent of your course grade.

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the Submit button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be submitted. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

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>> [View/Complete Assignment: Ideas for PR feature](#)

### **Week 8 discussion**



View the video news release *USDA Advice for a Safe Cookout Season (May 24, 2007)* on the [Web site](#) of the U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service. (You will need Windows Media Player to be able to watch the VNR. If you have difficulty viewing the video, please contact [tech support](#).)

Write a 250-word critique of the VNR. Do not just focus on positive feedback: Concentrate on specific comments about what you think should have been done differently or better.

Post at least 250 words by 11:59 p.m. on October 21.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, October 24.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.

### **Optional**



Additional examples of video news releases are available from the [American Dental Association](#) and the [American Medical Association](#).

OK



## Week 9: Oct. 26-Nov. 1



### Week 9: Features

Public relations does not just include disseminating information about, and responding to, news events. Public-relations specialists also produce feature material about people and trends that could be published or broadcast.

In some cases, these materials are published verbatim, such as in an industry magazine. In other cases, print and broadcast journalists may use the material in developing their own stories.

Regardless of how the material is used, you must make sure that the information is newsworthy, interesting, accurate and well written.



### Reading Assignment

Please read:

- Chapter 11 in **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- Chapters 14 and 15 of **Ethics in Public Relations: A Guide to Best Practice**. (To get access to this reading, you may need to download a small helper program, called a plugin, for your Web browser.) A printed copy of this book is on reserve at Lauinger Library.



### Self quiz

After reading Chapter 11 of the textbook, go to the textbook's Web site and choose **Chapter 11** from the drop-down menu. Then select **Tutorial Quiz** and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 1. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on October 26.



### Online video

Please watch this online video about "voice" in writing.

If you have technical difficulty watching the video, please contact the help desk.



### Feature

Write a 500-word feature on the topic that I approved last week.

Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Follow the format on page 186 of your textbook.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 1. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on October 26.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. Here is how you will be graded:

| Grading criterion                     | Max points |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Clearly highlights the subject        | 30         |
| Written in feature style              | 30         |
| Advances the PR message               | 30         |
| Correct format, grammar, and spelling | 10         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                          | <b>100</b> |

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the Submit button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be

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>> [View/Complete Assignment: Feature](#)

### **Discussion**



On the Discussion Board, post a 250-word discussion of this week's readings on ethics. What did you learn from it? What surprised you? What do you disagree with? What confused you?

Post your discussion by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, October 28.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, October 31.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.

### **Class survey #2**



Once again, I would like your feedback on how the course is going. Please fill out this brief survey. Blackboard will keep the results anonymous, so please be candid in your responses. Thanks for your input.

OK



## Week 10: Nov. 2-8



### Week 10: Brochures and Magazines

Because organizations and agencies are hungry to get out their messages in as many ways as possible, many produce brochures and magazines to disseminate to various publics. This week, you will learn the basics of planning, producing and distributing these materials.



#### Reading Assignment

Please read:

- Chapters 18 and 19 in **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- **Creating an Annual Report**



#### Self quiz

After reading Chapter 19 of the textbook, go to the textbook's [Web site](#) and choose **Chapter 19** from the drop-down menu. Then select **Tutorial Quiz** and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 8. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Nov. 2.



#### Online video

Please watch this [online video](#) about revising your writing.

If you have technical difficulty watching the video, please contact the [help desk](#).



#### Designing brochures and reports

Please watch and listen to a Webinar presentation on [designing effective PR publications](#). (You may want to fast forward to 2 minutes 30 seconds into the recording, to skip over some dead air at the start.)



#### Discussion

On the Discussion Board, post a 250-word discussion of the Atlantic Public Library's [annual report](#). What did they do well? What should be improved?

Post your discussion by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 4.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, November 7.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.



#### Brochure

Develop a brochure for a department at Georgetown University. You may choose the department that you wish.

Research the department by reading its Web site and publications, and interview administrators, faculty members, and students as appropriate.

The brochure should use 8.5x11 paper, folded once. Use front and back of the page. Color is not required

but is allowed.

Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on November 8. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Nov. 2.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. Here is how you will be graded:

| Grading criterion                                | Max points |
|--|------------|
| Brochure makes a compelling presentation         | 30         |
| Brochure provides accurate information           | 30         |
| Brochure presents department in a positive light | 30         |
| Correct format, grammar, and spelling            | 10         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                     | <b>100</b> |

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the Submit button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be submitted. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

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>> [View/Complete Assignment: Brochure](#)

OK



## Week 11: Nov. 9-15



### Week 11: Messages

The heart of the public relations effort is the *message* -- what you want the recipient to learn or be persuaded about. As important as words are in the message, designing an effective message goes far beyond choosing the correct words. The message designer also must bear in mind the visual impact of the message to be sure that it conveys the message correctly.

Advertising is one realm in which this comes into play. Advertising specialists concentrate as much effort on *how* to communicate a message as they do on coming up with *what* the message is.

### Reading Assignment

Please read:

- Chapter 12 and 13 in **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- Chapters 16 and 17 of **Ethics in Public Relations: A Guide to Best Practice**. (To get access to this reading, you may need to download a small helper program, called a plugin, for your Web browser.) A printed copy of this book is on reserve at Lauinger Library.



### Self quiz

After reading Chapter 12 of the textbook, go to the textbook's Web site and choose **Chapter 12** from the drop-down menu. Then select **Tutorial Quiz** and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).


Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on November 15. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on November 9.



### Online audio

Listen to this audio recording about the start of the public relations industry. (After you click on the link in the previous sentence, click on the  **Listen** button to start the recording.)



### Campaign ad

Write the script for a 60-second television campaign advertisement for any of the current candidates for president.

You may assume that all of the materials on the candidate's Web site (video clips, etc.) are available for use in your advertisement.

Use 1-inch margins. Double space. Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on November 15. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on November 9.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. Here is how you will be graded:

| Grading criterion                                  | Max points |
|--|------------|
| Ad makes a compelling argument                     | 30         |
| Ad is factually accurate                           | 30         |
| Makes effective use of visuals, graphics and sound | 30         |
| Correct format, grammar, and spelling              | 10         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                       | <b>100</b> |

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the Submit button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be submitted. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

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>> [View/Complete Assignment: Campaign ad](#)



### **Discussion**

Candidates for president have spent gazillions of dollars on televised campaign advertisements. This week's discussion will address the messages contained in those advertisements.

Browse the Web site [The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2008](#), where you can watch various presidential campaign TV ads. Watch at least 5 or 6 of the ads on the site. (You will need Windows Media Player or RealPlayer to view the ads. If you have difficulty watching the videos, please contact [tech support](#).)

On the Discussion Board, post a 250-word analysis of what you saw. What kinds of messages were being conveyed? How? Were they effective? Did you see any changes over time?

Post your analysis by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, November 11.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, November 14.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.

OK



## Week 12: Nov. 16-22



### Week 12: The Internet and Media Kits

It is not exaggeration to say that the Internet has revolutionized public relations, just as it has revolutionized all other communications professions. Online technology offers many new ways for an agency or organization to disseminate its message *and* to monitor how the public regards it. At the same time, online technology also creates new headaches for PR professionals in that it provides new avenues for critics and competitors to send out contradictory or conflicting messages.

The media kit is just one PR tool that has been completely revamped because of the Internet. Back in the day, the media kit was a boring set of press releases and background materials jammed into a folder; perhaps a colorful brochure would liven things up a little. Today, many media kits are online and take full advantage of computer technology, including Flash animations and even streaming video.



#### Reading Assignment

Please read:

- Chapter 14 and 15 in **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- [A Room with a Viewpoint: How to Create an Online Press Center That Reporters Return to Again and Again](#)



#### Self quiz

After reading Chapter 15 of the textbook, go to the textbook's [Web site](#) and choose **Chapter 15** from the drop-down menu. Then select **Tutorial Quiz** and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 22. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Nov. 16.



#### Online video

Please watch this [online video](#) on strategies for organizing your writing.

If you have technical difficulty watching the video, please contact the [help desk](#).



#### Media kit

Design a media kit for Georgetown University. Prepare an outline for all the materials to be included in the media kit; for each item, include a one-paragraph description and reason for the item. Prepare a fact sheet to be included as part of the media kit. Write a plan for disseminating the media kit: How will you distribute it, and to whom?

Use 1-inch margins. Double space. Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 22. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on Nov. 16.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. Here is how you will be graded:

| Grading criterion   | Max points |
|---|------------|
| Kit is comprehensive and has depth                              | 30         |
| Fact sheet portrays university accurately but in positive light | 30         |
| Distribution plan will be effective                             | 30         |
| Correct format, grammar, and spelling                           | 10         |

TOTAL

100

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the Submit button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be submitted. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

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>> [View/Complete Assignment: Media kit](#)



### **Week 12 discussion**

On the Discussion Board, post a 250-word critique of the online press room of the [Weather Channel](#). Don't limit yourself to compliments; cite specific concrete suggestions for improvement.

Post your critique by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 18.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, Nov. 21.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.

OK



## Weeks 13 & 14: Nov. 23-Dec. 6



### Weeks 13 & 14: Speeches and Newsletters

Sooner or later, you probably will be asked to write a speech for an official in your agency or organization. Speeches come in many flavors: Some are intended to explain a policy or program, while others intend to build public support. Like any other form of communication, a speech must be well planned and well written. Even the most natural sounding speech probably is the result of many hours of painstaking writing -- often by a public relations specialist rather than the speaker.

Newsletters are another vehicle for disseminating information. If you have a list of names and addresses of people who are interested in a specific topic, you have a potential audience for a newsletter on that topic. And in the online world, you don't even have to worry about postage; you can e-mail your newsletter!

Note: In recognition of the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, I have combined assignments for this week and next into a single set of assignments, which are due at the end of Thanksgiving weekend.

#### Reading Assignment

Please read:

- Chapters 16 and 17 in **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**

#### Self quiz

After reading Chapter 16 of the textbook, go to the textbook's [Web site](#) and choose **Chapter 16** from the drop-down menu. Then select **Tutorial Quiz** and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on December 6. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on November 23.

#### Online video

Many speeches are written by a team. Please watch this [online video](#) about collaborative writing.

If you have technical difficulty watching the video, please contact the [help desk](#).

#### Speech

Write a five-minute speech in which you describe and defend a position on the U.S. role in the Iraq War.

Type your speech into a word processing file.

Use 1-inch margins. Double space. Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on December 6. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on November 23.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. Here is how you will be graded:

| Grading criterion                               | Max points |
|---|------------|
| Speech makes a persuasive argument              | 30         |
| Speech cites evidence to support its contention | 30         |
| Text is appropriate for delivery as a speech    | 30         |
| Correct format, grammar and spelling            | 10         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                    | <b>100</b> |

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach

your file. **Be sure to click on the *Submit* button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be submitted. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

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>> [View/Complete Assignment: Speech](#)



### **Discussion**

View the [video recording](#) of President Obama's address on the economy that he delivered in Georgetown's Gaston Hall on April 14, 2009. [Text of the speech](#) also is available. (If you have difficulty viewing the video, please contact [tech support](#).)

Write a 250-word critique of the speech. Do not just focus on positive feedback: Concentrate on specific comments about what you think should have been done differently or better.

Post at least 250 words by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, November 18.

After all your classmates have posted their contributions, comment on each of your classmates' postings. Each response should be at least 150 words long. You might comment on the poster's conclusions or cite evidence that runs counter to it. Do not simply write "I agree" or "Good job!"

Post your response by noon on Saturday, November 21.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 100 points, which in turn is worth 1 percent of your final grade. You will receive up to 50 points for your original response and up to 50 points for your response postings. Postings that are shorter than assigned or that are not substantive will not receive full credit.

OK



## Week 15: December 7-9



### Week 15: Crisis Communications

A skilled public relations professional is worth his or her weight in gold during a crisis. Before the crisis even struck, such a professional will have built strong ties both within the organization and with journalists. And the skilled professional will know how to craft a truthful message that conveys the information and impression that the organization needs to convey.

One cardinal rule: Do not lie, whatever the temptation of the moment. Giving out false or misleading information during a crisis will permanently tarnish the reputation of the public relations professional and, even more importantly, of the organization for which he or she works.

---

Please note: Classes end Wednesday, but under university regulations this week's written assignment will not be due until Monday, December 14.

#### Reading Assignment

Please read:

- Chapter 20 in **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**
- Skim through Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication: By Leaders for Leaders, from the federal government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

#### Self quiz

After reading Chapter 20 of the textbook, go to the textbook's Web site and choose **Chapter 20** from the drop-down menu. Then select **Tutorial Quiz** and answer the questions. (This is an open book quiz. You may freely consult your textbook or any other materials that you want.) After you answer all the questions, click on **End quiz** and **view summary** and send the results to [vjk@georgetown.edu](mailto:vjk@georgetown.edu).

Your performance should give you an idea of whether you need to review any portions of the text.

Completing the quiz is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The report on the self quiz is due by 11:59 p.m. on **Monday**, December 14. Quiz results will not be accepted after this time. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on December 7.

#### Crisis plan

Complete the exercise on pages 413-414 of **Public Relations Writing: Form & Style**. (You may take more than 30 minutes.)

Type your paper into a word processing file.

Use 1-inch margins. Double space. Use excellent grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on **Monday**, December 14. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on December 7.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 5 percent of your course grade. The assignment is worth a maximum of 100 points:

- 20 points for the assistant plant manager's statement
- 20 points for the list of actions to be taken over 24 hours
- 20 points for the list of materials to reconstruct
- 20 points for the president's statement
- 20 points for the list of information

To submit your assignment, click on the >> **View/Complete** link below. Use the "Browse" button to attach your file. **Be sure to click on the Submit button when done.** Otherwise, your assignment will not be submitted. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

**Note:** Assignments must be submitted through Blackboard. **Assignments sent through e-mail will not be graded.** After uploading your assignment, double check that it is in Blackboard: Look up the assignment in the online gradebook. If you see an exclamation mark where the grade should be, then Blackboard received the file. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.) If you see **no** exclamation mark, Blackboard has **not** received the file, and you must upload it again.

If you have difficulty uploading your files to Blackboard, please contact [tech support](#).

**Turnitin:** Please note that this assignment must also be submitted to Turnitin.com. The assignment will not count as submitted unless it is also submitted there. For instructions on submitting to Turnitin.com, please see the **Syllabus** page.

**Academic Misconduct:** Your work must conform to Georgetown's Honor Code. Assignments that appear to be plagiarized, fabricated, or otherwise in violation of the Honor Code will be submitted to the Honor Council for investigation. ***An assignment found to have been plagiarized, fabricated, or to have violated the Honor Code in some other way will result in a failing grade for the course.***

**Late Work: No credit will be given for any assignment that is submitted late without the instructor's prior approval.** "Prior approval" means that the student must communicate with the instructor *before* the assignment's deadline, and the instructor must have approved the extension. An assignment that is submitted late **with** the instructor's prior approval will have its grade reduced by 10 percent for every day it is late.

Once your assignment is graded, you'll be able to see your grade and review the corrected assignment in the online gradebook. Click on **Tools** at the left of this page, and then on **My Grades**. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)

>> [View/Complete Assignment: Crisis plan](#)

### Online activity



Work through [Emergency Risk Communication for Public Health Professionals](#), an online training course about crisis communication.

After you are done, complete the online quiz to earn a certificate showing completion of the course. If you score less than 70 percent, you will have to take the quiz a second time.

Print out the certificate, and fax it to the instructor at 202 687 8954 or drop it off at 3307 M Street. Turning in the certificate is worth 1 percent of your course grade.

The assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. on **Monday**, December 14. It will not be accepted before 12:01 a.m. on December 7.

**Note:** Unlike other assignments, this must be submitted on paper. ***Assignments sent through e-mail will not be graded.***

**Academic Misconduct:** Your work must conform to Georgetown's Honor Code. Assignments that appear to be plagiarized, fabricated, or otherwise in violation of the Honor Code will be submitted to the Honor Council for investigation. ***An assignment found to have been plagiarized, fabricated, or to have violated the Honor Code in some other way will result in a failing grade for the course.***

**Late Work: No credit will be given for any assignment that is submitted late without the instructor's prior approval.** "Prior approval" means that the student must communicate with the instructor *before* the assignment's deadline, and the instructor must have approved the extension. An assignment that is submitted late **with** the instructor's prior approval will have its grade reduced by 10 percent for every day it is late.

Once your assignment is graded, you'll be able to see your grade and review the corrected assignment in the online gradebook. Click on **Tools** at the left of this page, and then on **My Grades**. (Click on **Technical Help** on the left hand of this page for a short video illustrating this.)



### Discussion

Because this is such a short week, there will be no online discussion this week.

OK