Georgetown University, MPS PR/CC | Fall 2016
MPPR-700-01: PUBLIC RELATIONS WRITING
Class Meets: Tuesday, 8:00 PM – 10:30 PM

Professor: Michael Long

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students learn to write essential public relations documents such as press releases, op-eds, speeches, fact sheets, and talking points. Each topic will be covered for two to four weeks beginning with a lecture, followed by homework, reinforcing and supplemental discussion, and in-class review by the instructor and other students.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students will:

- have strengthened their writing and editing skills for typical PR documents;
- be knowledgeable about the elements of public relations writing;
- be able to recognize strong writing in a variety of PR vehicles; and
- have a strong sense of how to write and edit well under time constraints.

ATTENDANCE

In-class discussion and practice are essential to mastering the content of this course. Students are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. If you are detained from attending a class or arriving before it begins, you are responsible for notifying me via email prior to the start of class. *Missing more than two classes will result in a final grade reduction of one level (for example, an A will be converted to an A-).* Absences from classes, beyond the initial two, will result in further reduction of the final grade. If you are absent for more than four classes, you will be in danger of failing this course.

WORK SUBMITTED

Assignments should be submitted according to the formats described in class. Your name, class name, and section number should appear in the upper right-hand corner of the first page. If you will miss a class, submit your homework by email prior to the start of class. Late work will be accepted on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the instructor. *In general, however, assume that late work will not be accepted and will be recorded as an F.*

COURSE POLICIES

Notify your instructor by email if you will be late, and why. Students who are consistently late for class may see their final grade reduced. Students who are absent are responsible for securing material provided in class by getting it from another student. The instructor will not provide slides or notes from class.

REQUIRED READINGS

This course does not use a textbook. At various times, reading assignments and materials may be distributed.

LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR MPPR-505
http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/researchcourseguides
http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/prcc

ASSIGNMENTS
Press release #1
Press release #2
Press release #3*
Press release #4*
Fact sheet, backgrounder, Q&A, talking point packet #1
Fact sheet, backgrounder, Q&A, talking point packet #2*
Peg/problem/promise set
Op-ed #1
Op-ed #2*
Spec sheet and outline*
Speech, outline, spec sheet set #1
Speech, outline, spec sheet set #2*
Letter to the editor
Portfolio

Assignments with an asterisk will be collected at instructor's discretion.

GRADING
Your course grade will be based on the following:

The instructor will assign letter grades instead of points. This is because assigning points for writing can be arbitrary. For example, there may be no discernable difference between a paper marked 82 out of 100 and one marked 84 out of 100.

All assignments have equal weighted value toward your final grade. For example, the A you receive for writing a short press release will have the same impact on your final grade as the A you receive for writing a long speech.

To calculate your grade, give yourself 1 point for each A, 2 points for each A-, 3 for each B+, etc. Add these numbers, then divide that sum by the total number of grades. Aside from penalties for being absent or late (see previous sections of this syllabus), the quotient is your current overall grade. (For example, a student with two As, two A-s, two Bs and an F would get 2 points for the As, 4 points for the A-s, 8 points for the Bs and 7 points for the F, totaling 21 points. Divide 21 by the total number of grades: 21/7 =3. By the scale below, a 3.00 is a B+.)

Graduate course grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C and F. **There are no grades of C+, C- or D.**

A	1.00-1.49		B-	4.50-5.49
A-	1.50-2.49		C	5.50-6.49
B+	2.50-3.49		F	6.50-7.00
B	3.50-4.49			

The instructors will provide a warning by mid-semester to any student who appears to be on track for a poor final grade.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES
Georgetown offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed on main campus or at the downtown location:

- MPS Writing Resource Program
  202-687-4246
  http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/

- Academic Resource Center
  202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
  http://ldss.georgetown.edu/

- Counseling and Psychiatric Services
  202-687-6985
  http://caps.georgetown.edu/

- Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action (IDEAA)
  (202) 687-4798
  https://ideaa.georgetown.edu/

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY
Students with documented disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

GEORGETOWN HONOR SYSTEM
All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and

students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Honor Code. The Honor Code pledge follows:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University 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.

PLAGIARISM
Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the Gervase Programs at http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html. If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing and the need to credit, check out http://www.plagiarism.org.

SYLLABUS MODIFICATION
The syllabus may change to accommodate discussion of emerging topics. Also, the schedules of guest speakers may require some shifting of the agenda. The instructor will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE/TOPIC	READING DUE	ASSIGNMENT DUE	IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES
WEEK 1 **Tuesday, September 6** **Press Releases**		Assignment: Write press releases for DPT and Michael Long	HANDOUT: Syllabus, press release template, DPT packet, Michael Long packet LECTURE: Procedures and Syllabus LECTURE: Writing the press release
WEEK 2 **Tuesday, September 13** **Press Releases**		Assignment: Revise DPT and ML releases per in-class discussion; write press releases for FAA and Cooper	HANDOUT: FAA packet, Cooper packet Review and revise press releases
WEEK 3		Submit: Press releases	Review and revise FAA

Tuesday, September 20		(instructor will select two to four from each student)	and Cooper press releases
Press Releases			Working in assigned pairs, write a press release in class, topic determined by instructor
WEEK 4 **Tuesday, September 27** **Fact Sheets, Backgrounders, Q&As, Talking Points (FBQT)**		Assignment: Write FBQT for IMF	LECTURE: Fact sheets, backgrounders, Q&As, talking points (FBQT)
WEEK 5 **Tuesday, October 4** **FBQT**		Assignment: Write FBQT for CIPE Submit: IMF FBQT	Review and revise IMF FBQT
WEEK 6 **Tuesday, October 11** **Op-eds**		Assignment: Write 10 PPP sets Submit: CIPE FBQT	Review and revise CIPE FBQT LECTURE: Op-eds (Part I)
WEEK 7 **Tuesday, October 18** **Op-eds**		Assignment: Outline, then write op-ed on topic provided by instructor	Review and revise PPPs LECTURE: Op-eds (Part II)
WEEK 8 **Tuesday, October 25** **Op-eds**		Assignment: Write second op-ed on topic provided by instructor Submit: Op-ed #1	Review and revise op-eds
WEEK 9 **Tuesday, November 1** **Speeches**		Assignment: Prepare spec sheet (and outline if that part of the lecture is reached) based on topic provided by instructor Submit: Op-ed #2	Review and revise second op-eds LECTURE: Speechwriting basics – structure and process (Part I)

WEEK 10 **Tuesday, November 8** **Speeches**		<u>Assignment</u>: Write first speech on topic provided by instructor; build on earlier spec sheet and outline	LECTURE: Speechwriting basics – structure and process (Conclusion) Review and revise spec sheets
WEEK 11 **Tuesday, November 15** **Speeches**		<u>Assignment</u>: Revise speech based on in-class talk	Review and revise first speech
WEEK 12 **Tuesday, November 22** **Considerations for Writing for Online Platforms**		<u>Assignment</u>: Write a document for use online per instructor guidelines <u>Submit</u>: Speech #1	Review and revise improved speech LECTURE: Online writing
WEEK 13 **Tuesday, November 29** **Letters to the Editor**		<u>Assignment</u>: Write a letter to the editor; get published for an extra A in the grade book <u>Submit</u>: Speech #2	Review and revise online writing assignment LECTURE: Letters to the editor
WEEK 14 **Tuesday, December 6** **Letters to the Editor**		<u>Assignment</u>: Portfolio <u>Submit</u>: Letter to the editor	Review letters to the editor
WEEK 15 **Tuesday, December 13** **Portfolio**		<u>Submit</u>: Portfolio for grading in class	