

JOUR 3420-001 (30314)
Spring 2010

Public Relations Writing
Room 110, General Academic Building
Monday/Wednesday, 3–4:20 p.m.

Course Instructor: Koji Fuse, Ph.D.
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Office hours: Monday, 1–3 p.m.; Tuesday, 2–6 p.m.; or by appointment
Web site: Blackboard for JOUR 3420-001
(Always use your Blackboard e-mail for class purposes.)
Teaching assistant: Nicole Holland

Overview:

As the first writing-intensive course in the public relations sequence, JOUR 3420 is designed to help students develop the professional-level thinking and writing skills expected of beginning public relations practitioners. It emphasizes different approaches required for particular communication objectives, publics and media. In addition, students will organize their work in their PProToolKit.

It is important for you to cultivate “proactive” attitudes required of a true professional who does not make excuses. Many assignments are given on tight deadlines to train you to become an efficient and effective public relations practitioner.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Apply reasoning, theory and creativity to the message-medium-public strategy;
2. Write clear, concise copy that is accurate, mechanically correct and logically organized;
3. Find and use reliable sources of information;
4. Communicate a message through different media in different formats; and
5. Work proactively to complete your task under deadline pressure.

Prerequisites:

Journalism major status. **Additionally, it is strongly recommended that students complete JOUR 2320 before enrollment in this course.**

Course Structure:

This course consists of lecture, discussion and exercises. You must keep up with readings, turn in all assignments on time and actively participate in class discussion. Visit Blackboard frequently and regularly. **To create an active learning environment, I assume that you have read the assigned materials before coming to class and will ask you specific questions.** As expected in a professional environment, deadlines are strictly observed. You will have three exams, 12 written assignments, one external-publication requirement, PProToolKit and in-class/take-home exercises. Your final grade is based on your total score, with 1,000 points possible. The breakdown of the total possible score is as follows:

Exams (300 points)

Grammar & style exam:	100 points
Midterm exam:	100 points
Final exam:	100 points

Written assignments (500 points)

Memo:	30 points
Design:	50 points
(client logo, letterhead, business envelope and business card)	
Letter:	30 points
Feature story:	50 points
Pitch letter:	30 points
Backgrounder:	50 points
Position paper:	50 points
Fact sheet:	40 points
Print news release:	30 points
Broadcast news release:	30 points
Web news release:	30 points
Media advisory:	30 points
Publication:	50 points

PRoToolKit (100 points)

Participation (100 points)

In-class exercises:	50 points
Attention and performance:	50 points

Readings:

(Required) Wilcox, Dennis L. *Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques*. 6th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2009. (Abbr. DW)

(Required) Kessler, Lauren, and Duncan McDonald. *When Words Collide: A Media Writer's Guide to Grammar and Style*. 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2008. (Abbr. KM)

(Required) Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Design Book: Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice*. 3rd ed. Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press, 2008. (Abbr. RW)

(Required) The Associated Press. *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. 44th ed. New York: Basic Books, 2009.

Note: Do not sell your textbooks. You will use the same textbooks in JOUR 4460. The Mayborn School of Journalism does not require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

Course Schedule (subject to change at the instructor's discretion):

Jan. 20 Introduction to Class.

Jan. 25 Public Relations Writing (DW Chapter 1); Discussion of Written Assignments.
Personal Information Sheet and Résumé due.

Jan. 27 Research and Strategic Planning (DW Chapter 1);
Theories of Persuasion (DW Chapter 2).

- Feb. 1** Theories of Persuasion, *continued*.
- Feb. 3** E-mails, Memos, Letters and Proposals (DW Chapter 14).
Blackboard Approval on Client Organization due.
- Feb. 8** Publicity Photos and Message Design Concepts (DW Chapter 8; RW)
Assignment: Memo due.
- Feb. 10** Feature Stories (DW Chapter 7).
- Feb. 15** Feature Stories, *continued*.
Assignment: Design and Letter due.
- Feb. 17** Media Pitches (DW Pages 152–162 of Chapter 6).
- Feb. 22** Backgrounders and Position Papers.
Note: Download and print out the “Reading_BG_PP” file before coming to class. It is available in the Module 08 folder on Blackboard.
Assignment: Feature Story with a Photo due.
- Feb. 24** Backgrounders and Position Papers, *continued*.
Blackboard Approval on Print Media Outlet due.
- March 1** Grammar/Style (KM Chapters 1–6).
Assignment: Pitch Letter due.
- March 3** Grammar/Style (KM Chapters 7–12, Part 2), *continued*; Review for Midterm Exam.
- March 8** ***Midterm Exam (Chapters 1, 2, 7, 8 and 14; message design; backgrounders and position papers; everything covered in class).***
- March 10** Fact Sheets, Media Advisories and Media Kits (DW Pages 141–152 of Chapter 6).
Assignment: Backgrounder due.
- March 15** *Spring Break!*
- March 17** *Spring Break!*
- March 22** Fact Sheets, Media Advisories and Media Kits, *continued*.
Assignment: Fact Sheet due.
- March 24** Print News Releases (DW Chapters 4–5).
- March 29** Print News Releases, *continued*.
Assignment: Print News Release due.
- March 31** Broadcast News (DW Chapter 9).
- April 5** Broadcast News, *continued*.
Assignment: Position Paper due.
- April 7** Writing for the Internet (DW Chapter 12).
- April 12** Writing for the Internet, *continued*.
Assignment: Broadcast News Release due.
- April 14** Ethics and Law in Public Relations (DW Chapter 3).
Note: Download and print out the PRSA Member Code of Ethics 2000 before coming to class. It is available in the Module 16 folder on Blackboard.
Assignment: Web News Release due.

- April 19** Ethics and Law in Public Relations, *continued*; Review on Grammar & AP Style.
- April 21** ***Grammar & AP Style Exam.***
- April 26** Work on PProToolKit.
Assignment: Media Advisory due.
- April 28** Work on PProToolKit.
- May 3** Presentations of PProToolKit.
Assignment: PProToolKit with Publication due.
- May 5** Presentations of PProToolKit. Summary of Semester. Review for Final Exam.
- May 12** ***Final Exam (Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 12; everything covered in class) at 1:30 p.m. More details later.***

Attendance, Preparation and Participation:

You cannot have more than three inadmissible absences without penalty toward your final grade. Each additional invalid absence will cost you 10 points. You must sign the attendance sheet yourself and use the same signature throughout the semester; having someone sign your name is a form of academic dishonesty. In addition, three incidents of showing up after class starts or leaving before it ends constitute one absence. Although you may tell me why you must miss or missed a class, **only “unforeseeable” circumstances (i.e., serious illness, family emergency) substantiated by third-party documentation will be accepted. Submit documentation within a week after an absence occurs.** Printer malfunctions, arrests for traffic warrants, difficulties in finding library materials, etc. are not “unforeseeable.” You must document a valid time conflict (i.e., an academic conference, religious observance) before it occurs. Disappearing during class is another form of academic dishonesty. Keep in mind the following: First, the more classes you skip, the less education you receive and the lower grade you will earn; second, if you miss a class, you still must turn in an assignment on or before its due date; and third, avoid “passive learning” — sleeping comfortably, sitting leisurely at the back, text-messaging or having chitchat. I retain my nonnegotiable right to evaluate your in-class performance.

Exams:

All exams are closed-book, closed-notes exams. Latecomers cannot take the exam after the first person finishes it and exits the room. Except for valid excuses specified in the “Attendance, Preparation and Participation” section, you should assume no make-up is available. Also, if you cannot take the exam on the day it is planned, you must let me know in advance and make an arrangement to take it before the original exam date. However, the final exam schedule is beyond my control. Bring a couple of pencils and your student ID to the exam. Do not sit next to each other. Put everything in your bag under the table before an exam starts.

1. Grammar & style exam. You will have 50 grammar, spelling and AP style questions. However much or little you learned English grammar and style in JOUR 2310, it is time for you to aim to become a professional writer. Although most students find this exam extremely difficult, it is very basic from the professional standard. You must start reading *When Words Collide* and *The AP Stylebook* now and even memorizing some important rules.

2. Midterm and final exams. Each exam has 50 multiple-choice and true-false questions. In addition to the textbooks, the exams will cover everything discussed in class.

Written Assignments:

You must word-process all assignments in 12-point font (no “funny” font, please), apply double-spacing unless otherwise specified, and submit them at the beginning of class on the day they are due. You are not allowed to use a lab printer to print out your assignment. **Before class starts, you must first (1) submit each written assignment through Blackboard’s Turnitin and then (2) prepare a hard copy with a separate reference list attached to it to demonstrate your originality and constant research indicated by the increasing number of sources across the semester. Failing to prepare a hard copy, use Turnitin or attach a reference list will cost you one letter grade.** No e-mail submission of papers is allowed. Late assignments will drop one letter grade for each day. Exceptions are the same as specified in the “Attendance, Preparation and Participation” section. **In addition to Internet research, library searches and academic journal/book reading are expected.** Ask a librarian about how to use electronic databases (e.g., EBSCOhost, JSTOR). **Include endnotes for your backgrounder and position paper. For each assignment, attach a reference list. Remember that incomplete citations and references will cost you one letter grade.** Follow either the Modern Language Association (MLA) style or the American Psychological Association (APA) style for in-text citations and the reference list. Save all your work on your computer, or you may end up redoing the assignments when they get lost. Talk to me within a week of receiving your graded paper if you have questions. No consideration will be given beyond that time limit.

You will be held to high professional standards in your writing as follows:

- (1) Content and message appeals (50 percent of any written assignment): Your writing will be evaluated for organization of thought, strength of message, inclusion of the human element, persuasiveness, originality, and other content issues relevant to each assignment. **All page requirements refer to “full pages.”** Points to be deducted will vary depending on how significant a given error is.
- (2) Grammar, style and format (50 percent of any written assignment): *The AP Stylebook* and *When Words Collide* will be your guide to writing. Your writing will be graded carefully for mechanical content. For example:
 - Each misspelling, typographical error or AP style error will cost a half point.
 - One misspelling of a proper name will deduct one letter grade.
 - Other areas of concern will include improper heading format, use of difficult, unusual, big or dead words, awkward phrases, improper punctuation, long paragraphs or sentences, general sloppiness or lack of professionalism. Points to be deducted will vary depending on how significant a given error is.
- (3) Originality: Your work must reflect your original ideas and existing facts. No form of academic dishonesty is tolerated. A typical example of plagiarism is a feature story with minor modifications on a single news story available on the Web. **Always research more than enough and use multiple sources to discover your own ideas and story angle.**
- (4) “Credit”: If your work contains too many errors, you will receive only credit. That is, you have earned an F or 50 percent of the total possible score for the assignment.

1. Memo (one page max.; single-spaced). Choose an organization that is local or has a local branch. You should choose an organization for which you want to intern or work in the future. **You are not allowed to choose any of the following organizations as your client:**

- Well-known organizations (e.g., American Airlines, American Heart Association, Bank of America, Brinker, Dallas Zoo)

- Campus groups or organizations (e.g., sororities, fraternities)
- Organizations in which you have ever worked in any way, of which you have ever been a member, or for which you have ever done any other coursework
- Churches or faith-based organizations
- Bars, restaurants and music bands
- Organizations posted on Blackboard's Discussions, which your classmates have already taken as their clients
- Organizations listed on Blackboard, which past students took as their clients

Seek my approval on your choice by discussing why you think it is a good organization to work on (e.g., a special event, an issue, a candidate for a profile, enough materials, friendly staff), what has made you interested in it, and how you contacted it and got a permission to write about it. You cannot change the organization once you choose it; you must continue to research and work on the organization for the remaining written assignments. **Take time to conduct thorough research and see if the organization is appropriate for all written assignments.**

2. Design. Apply design principles to create a new client logo, letterhead, business envelope and business card. The letterhead is a template you will continue to use throughout the semester. Podcasts that explain how to use design tools are available in the Mac Lab.

3. Letter on a New Letterhead (one page max.; single-spaced). Write a letter to a public relations professional of your client to explain at least three design principles incorporated into the new logo you have created and try to persuade the organization to adopt it.

4. Feature story (five pages min.). Write a personality profile related to your client. A photo will be for extra credit (five points), but if done well, it will increase your chance of publication.

5. Pitch letter (one page max.; single-spaced). Choose a few print media outlets, obtain my approval on them and find a journalist who has been covering news related to your organization. Write a pitch letter to promote your feature story.

6. Backgrounder (six pages min.). Look for and research an issue your client has been dealing with. Write a backgrounder about the issue.

7. Position paper (four pages min.). Take a stand on the issue you have identified above. Write a position paper to support your client's position on the issue.

8. Fact sheet (two pages min.; single-spaced). Write an event fact sheet for your client.

9. Print news release (two pages min.). Research your client's special event and write a print news release about it.

10. Broadcast news release (60 seconds and 30 seconds). Apply the broadcast news release format and style to the special-event print news release you have written.

11. Web news release (400 words.; single-spaced). Apply the Web news release format and style to the special-event print release you have written.

12. Media advisory (one page max.; single-spaced). Alert media to the special event you have been writing about.

13. External publication. You must get my approval on your target publication, obtain a permission from your client, and then publish a feature story with your byline in a credible print-media outlet I have approved. Complete this assignment by the time you turn in your PRoToolKit. However, show me your work as soon as you get it published.

PRoToolKit:

Why throw away everything once you graduate from college? Because no one can recall all the detail about a particular topic, it will be helpful to have your own reference book. The objective of the PRoToolKit is to get you started in compiling your professional resource guide, which also includes your writing and design samples — both coursework and professional work.

Organize your materials by subject, such as fact sheets, backgrounders, position papers, print news releases, pitch letters, grammar and AP style, etc.

Your PRoToolKit must include the following:

- Table of contents
- Updated résumé
- Clean, error-free copies of your work produced in this course
- Examples — available on Blackboard and on the Web — of memos, letters, designs, features, pitch letters, backgrounders, position papers, fact sheets, print news releases, broadcast news releases, Web news releases, media advisories, and other collateral materials and copies of parts of your textbook. Annotation or summary attached to each example to explain what’s right and what’s wrong.
- Reprints/copies/summaries of pertinent industry articles, their complete source citations, and your summaries of the articles
- Word-processed class notes, including non-writing PR topics (e.g., basics of PR, strategic planning, grammar and AP style, and social media PR) and all PR materials, and additional notes (for extra credit of up to 20 points).
- Any other elements (e.g., professional writing samples) that demonstrate your skills

Prepare a three-inch, three-ring binder with tabbed dividers now. Use plastic sheet protectors to include items you do not want to or cannot punch three holes on; class assignments that are “cleaned up” and portfolio-ready are also easily stored this way.

Grading:

90% or higher of total possible points:	A
80%–lower than 90%	B
70%–lower than 80%	C
60%–lower than 70%	D
Lower than 60%	F

Basic Course Policy:

This is a course in a professional field, and you are expected to accept and abide by the dictates of professionalism in the workplace. You must follow rules regarding deadlines and attendance. The sheer volume of assignments you must complete and submit on or before their due dates is overwhelming, so work on them proactively. **Get things right the first time by always checking the *AP Stylebook* and *When Words Collide* because you will not have an opportunity to rewrite your work after the deadline in the professional world.** It would be extremely difficult for you to earn even a passing grade if you did not seriously and continually study by attentive listening, meticulous note-taking, active class participation, proactive professional attitudes and timely submission of assignments. **Keep in mind that no study guide is available; I will only provide a very brief review for each exam.**

When you submit work for this class, that is the same as making a statement that you have produced the work yourself in its entirety and you have not previously produced this work for submission in another course or any other outlet. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people's work are unacceptable. Read through the "Categories of Academic Dishonesty" on Pages 3–4 of UNT Policy No. 18.1.16 (Student Standards of Academic Integrity).¹ Saying "I didn't know that," "He copied my work," or "Others also plagiarized" will not save you, and the consequences of academic misconduct will be grave. Plagiarism, in a nutshell, is using other people's written words as your own. Some people consider the use of 7–10 words in a row, copied from another source, as plagiarism. Be sure to include citations when using other people's writing, because plagiarism is a serious offense in any discipline, especially in journalism. It is a firing offense in the professional world. Any situations involving potential academic dishonesty will be handled through procedures established by the UNT Office of Academic Integrity. The process also includes the opportunity for students to appeal the outcome. Read specific procedures at <http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>. In this course, if you use a string of seven consecutive words, use quotation marks and refer to the original source. In addition, avoid using an extensive quote or too many quotes. In short, you must present your original work.

In addition, you are not the only person enrolled in this class. Even small noises you make will negatively affect its learning environment. **Furthermore, you are allowed to neither bring your laptop to class nor use a lab computer during class unless you are told to.** I expect you to behave as a responsible adult in class. Therefore, if you continually cause distractions (e.g., no participation, chitchat, frequently leaving the room or disappearing during class, disturbances such as cell phones, beepers and computers), I will remove you from class. **I make no exception for this.**

Finally, consider various options discussed at <http://www.unt.edu/transit/> to save on fuel costs.

Journalism Course Registration

1. The Mayborn School of Journalism, in conjunction with the Registrar's Office, has eliminated the need for individual class codes for the majority of journalism courses. Registration will begin on the dates noted in the schedule of classes each semester. The system is a live, first come/first serve program; thus, we are unable to maintain the traditional waiting list as has been done previously.
2. By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required prerequisites according to your catalog year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you have not taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your prerequisites, please see an adviser.
3. A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed the GSP test, all pre-major courses, and Math 1680 and also have applied for major status. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses. Pre-majors must file a formal application for major status in the final semester of pre-major status to be eligible for early registration of major-level classes in the following semester.

¹ UNT Policy Manual, Volume III, http://www.unt.edu/policy/UNT_Policy/volume3/18_1_16.pdf.

Re-taking Failed Courses

Students will not be allowed to take automatically a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for 12 months. Once you have waited 12 months after failing a course twice, you may make an appeal to the professor teaching the course to be allowed to enroll a third time.

Disability Accommodation

The School of Journalism cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodations to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students. If you have not registered with ODA, please do so and present your written accommodation request to me by the 12th day of class.

SETE

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a university-wide online evaluation and a requirement for all UNT classes. The School of Journalism needs your input to improve our teaching and curriculum. This short survey will be available at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Prompt completion of the SETE will mean earlier access to final semester grades. You are a critical part of our growth and success. We look forward to your input through SETE.

Statement of Student Learning Outcomes, UNT Journalism

Since 1969, the UNT Department of Journalism (Mayborn School of Journalism effective Sept. 1, 2009) has been accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, the only accredited professional master's program in Texas. About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here because it certifies that the department and graduate institute adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences.

This course, JOUR 3420, will help to meet the student learning outcomes that have been checked by your professor, Dr. Koji Fuse.

Each graduate must:

- Understand and apply First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to professional practices.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications.
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Jan. 18, 2010