JOUR 3420-002  Public Relations Writing
Fall 2012  Room 111, General Academic Building
           Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30—11:00 a.m.

Instructor:  Samra Bufkins, MJ, APR
Office:  Room 113, GAB
Office phone:  940-565-2167
Email:  samra.bufkins@unt.edu (Always use Blackboard Messages for this class.)
Office hours:  Tuesday & Thursday 11-12, any time my door is open and by appointment.
Website:  Blackboard LEARN for JOUR 3420-002

Teaching assistant:  Amber Freeland
Email:  Blackboard Messages

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 PRoToolKit.

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 or minor status. **Additionally, students must complete JOUR 3321 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 Learn daily. To create an active learning environment, I assume that you have read the assigned materials before coming to class, and I 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, PRoToolKit and in-class exercises. Your final grade is based on a total score of 1,000 possible points. The breakdown of the total possible score is as follows:

**Exams (300 points)**
- Grammar & AP style exam: 100 points
- Midterm exam: 100 points
- Final exam: 100 points

**Written assignments (500 points)**
- Memo: 30 points
- Design: 30 points
  - (client logo, letterhead, business envelope and business card)
- Letter: 30 points
- Feature story: 50 points
- Query letter: 30 points
- Backgrounder: 50 points
- Position paper: 50 points
- Fact sheet: 40 points
- Print news release: 50 points
- PSA: 30 points
- Multimedia news release: 30 points
- Media advisory: 30 points
- Publication: 50 points

**PRoToolKit (100 points)**

**Participation (100 points)**
- In-class exercises: 100 points

**Readings:**


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):**

**Aug. 30**  
Introduction to Class; Discussion of Written Assignments.

**Sept. 4**  
Public Relations Writing and Research (**WR** Chapter 1).
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment/Notes</th>
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| Sept. 6 | Grammar/Style (KM Chapters 1–6).  
|        | ► Meet your potential client(s) and go over all the requirements together. |
| Sept. 11 | Grammar/Style (KM Chapters 7–11, Part 2), continued.  
|        | ► Get Blackboard approval on your client organization(s). |
| Sept. 13 | E-mails, Memos, Letters and Proposals (WR Chapter 14). |
| Sept. 18 | E-mails, Memos, Letters and Proposals (WR Chapter 14), continued.  
|        | ► Submit the original signed client agreement letter in class. |
| Sept. 20 | Strategic Planning; Theories of Persuasion (WR Chapter 2).  
|        | Assignment: Memo due; ► Start interviewing people for your feature story. |
| Sept. 25 | Theories of Persuasion (WR Chapter 2), continued. |
| Sept. 27 | Publicity Photos and Message Design Concepts (WR Chapter 8; RW). |
| Oct. 2  | Feature Stories (WR Chapter 7).  
|        | Assignment: Design and Letter due. |
| Oct. 4  | Feature Stories (WR Chapter 7), continued.  
|        | ► Fix your design materials. |
| Oct. 9  | Media Pitches (WR Pages 154–164 of Chapter 6).  
|        | Assignment: Feature Story with a Photo due; ► Start backgrounder research. |
| Oct. 11 | Backgrounders and Position Papers.  
|        | Note: Read the “Reading_BG_PP” file in the Module 08 folder.  
|        | Assignment: Query Letter due; ► Get Blackboard approval on media outlets. |
| Oct. 16 | Backgrounders and Position Papers, continued; Brief Review for Midterm Exam.  
|        | ► Gather information about a special event. |
| Oct. 18 | Midterm Exam (Chapters 1, 2, 7, 8 and 14; message design concepts;  
|        | backgrounders and position papers; everything covered in class). |
| Oct. 23 | Fact Sheets, Media Advisories, etc. (WR Pages 142–153 of Chapter 6).  
|        | ► Fix your feature. |
| Oct. 25 | Fact Sheets, Media Advisories, etc. (WR Pages 142–153 of Chapter 6), continued.  
|        | Assignment: Backgrounder due. |
| Oct. 30 | Print News Releases (WR Chapters 3 and 5).  
|        | Assignment: Fact Sheet due; ► Start pitching your feature to a media outlet. |
| Nov. 1  | Print News Releases (WR Chapters 3 and 5), continued. |
| Nov. 6  | Broadcast News (WR Chapter 9).  
|        | Assignment: Print News Release due. |
| Nov. 8  | Broadcast News (WR Chapter 9), continued; Brief Review on Grammar / AP Style.  
|        | Assignment: Position Paper due. |
| Nov. 13 | Grammar & AP Style Exam. |
| Nov. 15 | Writing for the Internet (WR Chapter 12), continued.  
|        | Assignment: PSA due. |
| Nov. 20 | Writing for the Internet (WR Chapter 12), continued. |
Nov. 22  Thanksgiving. No Class!

Nov. 27  Working with Journalists and Bloggers (WR Chapter 4).

**Assignment: Multimedia News Release due; ♥ Start working on PRoToolKit.**

Nov. 29  Ethics and Law in Public Relations (WR Chapter 11).

Note: Read the PRSA Member Code of Ethics 2000 in the Module 17 folder.

**Assignment: Media Advisory due.**

Dec. 4  Ethics and Law in Public Relations (WR Chapter 11).


**Assignment: PRoToolKit with Publication due.**

Dec. 13  *Final Exam* (Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11 and 12; everything covered in class) at 8:00 a.m. More details later.

**Grading:**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 percent or higher of total possible points:</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>80 percent–lower than 90 percent:</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70 percent–lower than 80 percent:</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 percent–lower than 70 percent:</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Lower than 60 percent:</td>
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**Mayborn School of Journalism Academic Integrity (Cheating) Policy**

The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind — including plagiarism and fabrication — is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school’s policy aligns with UNT Policy No. 18.1.16 (Student Standards of Academic Integrity) and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

When you submit work for this class, you are making a statement that you have produced the work yourself, in its entirety, specifically for this class and no other class or outlet. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people’s work and ideas are unacceptable and in most instances illegal. 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. Read through the “Categories of Academic Dishonesty” on Pages 3–4 of UNT Policy No. 18.1.16. **All assignments in this class are to be submitted via Turnitin. I allow no exceptions. Anything not submitted via Turnitin will receive a grade of 0 (zero). Turnitin is also set to lock out late submissions.** In this class, if you use a string of seven or more

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consecutive words, you must use quotation marks and refer to the original source. Avoid using extensive or too many quotes, which indicate the lack of your effort and originality and thus lower your grade. This is a writing course, not a copy-paste-attribute course. Plagiarism is using other people’s words as your own. Be sure to include citations when using other people’s writing because plagiarism is a serious offense. 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.

**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 school.

**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.

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2 Academic Integrity, [http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm](http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm).
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 school and the 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, Samra Bufkins, MJ, APR.

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