Course Name: JOUR 4460 Public Relations Communications
Section Information: Section 001 (Spring 2010)
Class Meetings: Tuesday – 6:30 pm – 9:20 pm GAB 110

Section Information: Section 002 (Spring 2010)
Class Meetings: Tuesday – 9:30 am – 12:20 pm GAB 110

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Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 3:30-4:30 pm, Tuesday 12:30 – 1:30 pm or by appointment. I tend to be on campus most of the time Monday–Wednesday, so if my door is open, feel free to drop in.
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Course Description
Success in Public Relations communication rests on learning to manage ideas as well as possessing technological skills to ensure appropriately placed communications. Students will continue building skills that will increase their mastery of the PR process, blending technological and creative ability that will culminate in a PR campaign. The course places heavy emphasis on writing, along with appropriate writing for selected PR channels. (Prerequisite(s): JOUR major status; JOUR 3420)

Texts
If you have completed Journalism 3420 you should already own these books.
5. UNT class Blackboard
6. Selected Web sites
7. Twitter hashtag #untj4460 (You must also follow @samjb.)

In addition, please download (it’s free) the The APR Study Guide from the PRSA Web site at
http://www.praccreditation.org/documents/APR_StudyGuide_1stEd_final9.2009.pdf There is excellent information on developing a communications plan, and this is a reference book you should have on hand in your professional career. I will refer to it in class. It’s 152 pages, long—print it and have it spiral bound with a plastic cover.

Course Objectives
After taking JOUR 4460, each student will be able to:
• Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of individuals and 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 PR profession.
• Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, targeted audiences and purposes.
• Critically evaluate his/her own work for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style, and grammatical correctness.
• Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the PR profession.

Journalism Requirements and Guidelines
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.

By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required pre-regs according to your calendar year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you haven’t taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your pre-requisites, please see an advisor.

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.

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 present your written accommodation request to me by the 12th day of class.

Textbook Policy
The Mayborn School of Journalism does not require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online, and are available for rental.

SETE
The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a university-wide online evaluation and a requirement for all UNT classes. The Mayborn 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.

Academic Honesty
Introduction: 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. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people’s work and ideas are unacceptable.

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’s 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

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

You are expected to attend and participate in each class meeting, complete all assignments and online assessments on time and participate in any online and social media activities that are assigned.

This class meets once a week, so missing one class means you’ve missed an entire week of class. One excused absence is the limit without penalty toward your final grade, unless you have communicated with me from the beginning about an extraordinary problem (like you’re on life support). An excused absence is one about which you have communicated with me at least 24 hours in advance of the class time. “Not showing up” will constitute an unexcused absence.

One unexcused absence, or two excused absences: 20 points will be taken off your final grade. Two unexcused absences, or three excused absences: 40 points taken off your final grade.

Three unexcused absences or four excused absences: 60 points taken off your final grade.

Four unexcused absences or five excused absences: You will be dropped from the course.

Coming to class late or leaving early constitutes 1/2 of an absence for that day (excused/unexcused, depending on prior communication).

**Class Protocol**

Once in the classroom, you’ll need to silence your cell phone or PDA, and keep it packed inside your purse or backpack. During class lecture, you should not use the computer at all unless we are doing an in-class exercise. Do not surf the Web or check e-mail; if you do so, I will ask you to leave the class, and the dismissal will count as an unexcused absence. I will take roll in writing at the beginning of each class and again at the end.

**Class Format**

This course consists of lecture, discussion and lab exercises. It is writing intensive. I expect you to read the assigned material and be ready to produce quality work. That means you will have read the assigned readings before coming
to class and are ready to actively discuss or apply concepts from the readings. I’ll post announcements, activities and Web links on the class Blackboard and frequently will do so on Twitter. Please be sure you check this area often, and be prepared to discuss articles and links in class. You may see elements of these readings again on an exam.

**In this course, you will:**
- Practice applying good writing techniques and visual communications techniques to specific contexts in public relations
- Learn how to apply general design principles to your communications
- Create and present a public relations publicity campaign

As expected in a professional environment, deadlines are strictly observed. You can expect 12 online exercises, 12 written assignments, two exams, and one publicity campaign.

**Evaluation**
Blackboard exercises (12) 120 points  
Writing assignments (12) 240 points  
Exam 1 120 points  
Exam 2 120 points  
Blog 100 points  
Publicity campaign 300 points

**Grading System**
820 points or higher A  
720-819 points B  
620-719 points C  
520-619 points D  
Fewer than 520 points F

**Evaluation Explanation**
Blackboard exercises  
Grammar, style and AP style, and design principles  
You will have 12 assignments, and each assignment is worth 10 points. These assignments can be found on Blackboard, and will be timed and due by the closing posting time each Thursday. It is your responsibility to keep up with these assessments. I will not send email reminders of these.

**Writing assignments—listed in detail below.**
You will have 12 writing assignments, and each writing assignment is worth 20 points. You will be graded as follows:  
Content/key messages – 8 points  
Style and grammar – 8 points  
Design and format – 4 points
Be aware that if your assignment contains more than three grammar, spelling or AP style errors, you will receive 0 points for that section of the assignment.

**A word about Spell Check.** Spell Check is a great tool, and I couldn’t live without it, but IT IS NOT A PROOFREADING PROGRAM. If you’ve misspelled a word in such a way that it simply becomes another, correctly spelled word, it’s wrong, it will affect the meaning of your document, and it will affect your grade. YOU MUST GET INTO THE HABIT OF MANUALLY PROOFREADING YOUR WORK.

All assignments must be word-processed in 12-point, according to the format in The PR Style Guide: Formats for Public Relations Practice, unless the assignment involves graphic design. You will have freedom of choice for font and layout; however, be aware that you will be graded according to the style you choose, and its appropriateness for the project.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. You may not use a lab printer to print out your assignment; have a hard copy in hand. Late assignments will drop one letter grade for each day, unless you have communicated with me prior to the due date about an extraordinary circumstance. No e-mail submission of papers is allowed. Extensive Internet research is strongly discouraged for this class; library searches and academic journal/book reading are expected. All source material will be cited and listed on a separate sheet to be turned in with the assignment. Sources can be cited in the backgrounder. During this course, save all your work on your computer through the end of the course.

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

1. **Content and message appeals:** 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.

2. **Grammar, style and format:** The Associated Press Stylebook and When Words Collide will be your guide to writing. Your writing will be graded carefully for mechanical content and construction. Some examples of these are:
   - Misspellings, typographical errors or AP style mistakes
   - Improper heading format, use of difficult, unusual, big or dead words, awkward phrases, improper or other punctuation, long paragraphs or sentences, general sloppiness or lack of professionalism.

3. **Originality:** Your work must reflect your original ideas and existing facts. No form of academic dishonesty is
tolerated. No matter how well you have done before, one incident of academic dishonesty will have grave consequences on your college career. A typical example of plagiarism is a feature piece with minor modifications on a single news story you happen to find on the Web. Always research more than enough and use multiple sources to discover your own ideas and story angle. Cite all sources on a separate sheet attached to your assignment.

Blog Write a short, engaging blog about the concepts you’re learning in this class and the issues discussed each week. You will make 10 blog posts between February 9 and April 27, 2010. Upload your blog text as a Microsoft Word document in the Assignments drop box, bring me a hard copy, and include a link to the actual blog post. Tweet about your update.

News release - (two pages max.) Write a print news release covering information, as assigned.

Media list - Compile a targeted media list in Excel that contains 15 print journalists and 5 broadcast journalists with all contact information and relevant additional information.

Telephone pitch - Write a 30-second telephone pitch, and then pitch it, as assigned.

Radio PSA - Craft a 30-second PSA in the format used, as assigned.

Print PSA - Design a print PSA for newspaper, 1/4 page size, from the radio PSA you’ve created.

LinkedIn - Create a personal profile on LinkedIn that casts you as a new PR professional.

Newsletter editorial calendar - Create a 3-month editorial calendar for a 4-page newsletter, as assigned.

Twitter - Create a personal Twitter account. Tweet/retweet/respond to at least one #untj4460 Tweet per week and send tweets in a 48-hour window, as assigned.

Feature story (print) - Craft a feature story (not a personality profile), as assigned to you.

Feature story (Web) - Apply the Web format for the feature story you’ve crafted.

Newsletter - Design and write a 4-page newsletter from the editorial calendar you created.

4460 wiki - Create one page that covers the issue assigned to you on the class Wiki, and edit two other pages.
Exam 1 Wilcox chapters 5, 6 (partial), 7, 9 (partial), 10, 11, 12, 13, 16
The test will cover PR textbook material covered to date (listed above) and PR writing material we’ve covered in class; the test is worth 120 points.

Exam 2 Kessler, McDonald chapters 1 – 12; AP Stylebook; Williams, chapters 1 – 7, pgs. 123 – 130, 139 – 142 The test will also cover grammar, style and AP style, and design material covered in class (listed above); the test is worth 120 points.
Publicity Campaign
During the last six weeks of the class, you will be teamed with another person to create a publicity campaign for an actual client. Each team will “compete” to produce a unique campaign and materials for the same client; therefore, each team should work independently of other teams.

This assignment will be worth 300 points, graded as follows:
Communications plan - 100 (25 points reduced if you submit the draft plan late)
Tactics - 100
Timetables - 25
Budget - 25
Presentation - 75

These are the minimum requirements for the campaign:
Communications plan (100 points):
- Situation analysis
- Strategies
- Objectives
- Target publics
- Key messages
- Tactics
- Crisis plan for special event
Tactics (100 points):
- Print news release
- Media advisory, describing special event
- Organization backgrounder
- Photo shot or graphics to be used in campaign
- E-mail pitch
- Brochure or direct mail package
- Four additional appropriate tactics of your choice
Timetables (25 points):
- Six-month planning timeline
- 24-hour event timeline
Budget (25 points):
- Itemized budget list with approximate costs (provide sources)
Presentation (75 points):
- Visuals used
- How the campaign materials are packaged and presented
- Professional quality of campaign materials
- Professional persona
- Presented in allotted time (20 minutes)

Teams may choose to incorporate more tactics, which will earn the team an additional 10 points/per tactic up to a maximum of 40 points. Each tactical material produced with three or more grammar or style errors will receive a 10-point deduction from the Tactics category of the campaign. Teams that do not produce the required minimum for each component of the campaign will receive 0 points for that component.

Syllabus/Schedule
This class outline is subject to change. I will keep an updated version of the syllabus on the class Blackboard and announce any changes both there, in class and via email. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up with changes in this syllabus and assignments—in other words, check Blackboard daily, Twitter daily and your email accounts daily.

January 19 – Introduction to course; be able to access Blackboard. I’ve got my press release, now what? (Wilcox, ch. 5 and 10; Kessler, McDonald, ch. 1); student information sheet

January 26 – Recognizing who’s on the other side of the pitch (Wilcox, ch. 11 and ch. 6, pgs. 156 – 160; Kessler, McDonald, ch. 2); news release due.

February 2 – The I is not P. (Wilcox, ch. 12 and ch. 9, pgs. 215-222; Kessler, McDonald, ch. 3; Williams ch. 1-7); media list due. Link to blog emailed to professor

February 9 – Joining the conversation (Wilcox, ch. 12, ch. 7, pgs. 171 – 173; Kessler, McDonald, ch. 4); phone pitch assignment; PSA (radio script) and print PSA due. First blog post.

February 16 – Meet a workhorse (and then some!) (Wilcox, ch. 13; Kessler, McDonald, ch. 5; Williams, pgs. 139-142) LinkedIn due/4460 wiki begins.

February 23 – Write to be published (Wilcox, ch. 7; Kessler, McDonald, ch. 6; Williams, pgs. 123-126); Newsletter ed calendar due; Twitter assignment.

March 2 – Mailing your message (Wilcox, ch. 16; Kessler, McDonald, ch. 7); two feature stories (print and Web) due.

March 9 – Exam 1; Taking the first step and being proactive (Wilcox, ch. 18); 4-page newsletter due.

March 23 – Groups and intro of client publicity campaign; (Kessler, McDonald, ch. 8); draft communications plan due (late submission will reduce final project grade by 50 points)

March 30 – Mail out the message (Wilcox, ch. 16; Kessler, McDonald, ch. 9); 4460 wiki due

April 6 – Organize it! (Wilcox, ch. 17; Kessler, McDonald, ch. 10)
April 13 - Four score and seven years ago, and other presentation tips (Wilcox, ch. 15; Kessler, McDonald, ch. 11); draft brochure/direct mail package due

April 20 - Did we measure up? (Wilcox, ch. 19; Kessler, McDonald, ch. 12)

April 27 - Exam 2

May 4 - Complete campaign materials due at beginning of class

May 11 - Campaign presentations